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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE.

Editorial:	PAGE
Nationalization of Coal Mines	1217
Business and Drugs	1218
The British Preference	1218
Northern Ontario	1219

Finance and Economics:

Western Canada	1221
Manitoba Government Telephones	1222
Investments and the Market	1224
Mexican Disturbances Reflected in Trade	1226
Commonwealth Bank	1226
Farmers Bank Enquiry	1232
February Bank Statement	1233-4-5
Manitoba's Budget	1240

Bonds and Municipal Credit:

Calgary's Finances	1240
Bond Market Active	1254

Mining:

Quebec's Mineral Production	1227
Coal, Petroleum and Gas	1242

Commerce and Transportation:

Control of Intercolonial Railway	1221
Additional Railways for British Columbia	1236

Insurance:

Insurance Laws of Quebec	1230
Life Insurance an Investment	1231
Recent Fires	1245

NATIONALIZATION OF COAL MINES.

The nationalization of the British coal mines was advocated at the Toronto Canadian Club this week by Mr. H. Phillips, an English sociologist. He contended that as now constituted the coal industry in Britain was a monopoly. If the mine owners showed any tendency to corner coal or paralyze production, the government must step in to insure the supply of a necessity to the life of the people.

While these words were being spoken, the disastrous coal strike in Great Britain continued. Its worst effects are likely to be felt in future months. The paralysis of the industry has kept the supply far below the demand, with the result that there is now an enormous shortage to overtake, not only in coal, but in the products of many industries depending thereon.

A minimum wage bill the British Prime Minister hoped would become law by the end of this week. The measure leaves to district committees the settlement not only of the amount of the minimum wage, but also the question of the employers' safeguards. No provision will be made for compulsory power to enforce the minima or penalties on either the employers or the men for the breaking of a contract.

Mr. Phillips, in Toronto, held that the nationalization of coal mines was no more socialistic than the nationalization of the post-office, telegraph and telephone systems of the United Kingdom. The suggestion is of interest to Canada because we are in an era of state and semi-state control of many utilities. Three provincial governments own and operate the telephone. The Ontario provincial government is a large distributor

of electrical power. These are two of many examples. In some cases state control has proved remunerative and successful. In others, it has neither met with success nor proved financially fortunate.

State-owned coal mines have been tried in Prussia, where conditions surrounding the country's economic and industrial development are probably more similar to those in Great Britain than in any other country. The London Mining Journal, examining the position in Prussia, says that neither the monopoly of the State-owned mines, as it practically existed until two or three years ago in the Saar district, nor even the prevalence of mines under state control in other districts, has given general satisfaction. On the contrary, so loud and general were the complaints raised by all sorts and conditions of consumers against the high prices and unfavorable delivery terms imposed, as well as the dictatorial and non-conciliatory attitude assumed by the state mines, that the whole Prussian press was practically unanimous in condemning the system from the consumers' point of view. On the other hand, the profits realized by the State from the exploitation of its mines had gradually dropped to such an extent that in 1910 a Parliamentary Commission was appointed by the Prussian Diet for the purpose of investigating "in what manner the state administration of the coal mines might, without prejudice to its social and economic tasks, be made more profitable than hitherto."

In his report, which was laid upon the table of the Prussian Diet on May 20th, 1911, this Commission practically comes to the conclusion that the state, as employer of labor or contractor, ought not to assume any special social or economic tasks. The report says textually: "The state-conducted mines ought not to have the character of charitable institutions for either working miners