

and no special effort has been made to reach the man who is really at fault—the property owner who seeks excessive insurance, and who, if there is any punishment to be meted out, should be begun with first.

British Banks and Industry. Complaints are again being made by industrial circles in Great Britain that the banks are not so closely in touch as they might be with British industry and that, in consequence, the latter is being starved financially both at home and abroad. As regards local industries, the complaint is an old one, dating from the time when the absorption of the small country banks by the large London institutions, which has been so marked a feature of British banking in recent years, first became noticeable. It is probably true that the branch manager of a big London bank is not so closely informed on local conditions as was his predecessor, the old-fashioned country banker, and it is certainly the case that he is tied to a greater extent by rules and regulations. On the other hand, the big banks are in extremely keen competition among themselves in the small centres throughout the United Kingdom, and this competition is a very fair safeguard that no business that is at all desirable is turned away by any bank. With regard to English business abroad the complaint is made that the British banks do not follow the German example, and actively identify themselves with industrial undertakings. It has been the traditional policy of British banks not to identify themselves with speculative business of this kind, and beyond the occasional *ex parte* complaints of interested parties that in particular instances they have been unable to undertake works abroad, because banking facilities similar to those given to their German competitors, have been refused them, there is no evidence that the English banks would be justified in changing their traditional policy. The remedy, if one is needed, would be, it would appear, the foundation under powerful auspices in London, of an institution for this special work. We believe that a project of this kind was in embryo some time since, but apparently circumstances have not been found to be favourable to its carrying out. While the German models of pushing industrial interests abroad are not followed in London, the same end is practically achieved through different means, notably by the flotation of new capital issues in London. The question is really one of difference of method, of which a new illustration is to be found in the announcement that the British Government intends to establish a system of co-operative banks for the benefit of small farmers. The work which these will undertake is similar to that largely run in Canada by the various trust and loan companies; on the European continent, land banks are the media; in England since the question was first brought to the front it has been consistently regarded as a matter to be undertaken by the Government. In each case practically the same result is achieved, but the means employed are dissimilar. It may be added that the news agency, which informed Canada of this co-operative banking scheme added the gratuitous comment that it is Socialistic. Even for a news-agency this remark is singularly fatuous, since the essence of the co-

operative bank idea is to afford an easy means whereby a man may become the actual owner of a farm and not merely the tenant. Anything less like Socialism it is not easy to imagine.

The Grand Trunk Dividend. From the cabled summaries—at present the only data available—it appears that the Grand Trunk has for the last half-year paid a dividend upon its shares up to and including the 5 p.c. second preference. This is about as anticipated and is a distinctly better performance than that of the corresponding half year of 1909, when the dividend on the second preference shares was passed, although made up to them subsequently. The carry-forward does not appear. It is interesting to note that the engine and car renewal suspense account, which has been a bone of contention at meetings of the company for some time past, has now been reduced to £77,000, £120,000 having been devoted to it in the half-year just closed.

Our London Letter.

British Railways on the Up-Grade—Electrification a Success—Nationalization of Irish Railways—Special Correspondence of THE CHRONICLE.

Although business is not entirely suspended during the month of August in financial circles, there is a decided tendency to hold over any important schemes until after the holidays. The average investor, whether he is a speculative holder of rubber shares or an investor in gilt-edged securities, does not desire to worry about the price movements of stocks and shares whilst he is on holiday. Hence, the transactions on the Stock Exchange have been confined mainly to American Railways and Home Railways. The bulk of the dealings in American Railways have been on account of Continental sales owing to the uncertainty of the outlook in New York to which I referred in my last letter. The American market is regarded here at the present time as one of the most dangerous to operate in, for it is quite clear that Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam have lost heavily during the past few months on transactions in American railway stocks. Home railway movements have been almost entirely in response to the dividend declarations of the various companies. It is satisfactory to find that in nearly every case the optimistic views entertained regarding increased dividends have been realized. For the benefit of any of your readers who have not seen the announcements as they have appeared day by day I append a complete list:—

Company.	Rate p. c.	Company	Rate p. c.
Tilbury & Southend..	.4	Taff Vale.....	.4
City & South London..	1¼	Great Eastern....	1¼
Metropolitan.....	1¼	Great Western....	.4
South Eastern.....	.1	London & North West-	
Barry.....	.7	ern.....	5½
Central London.....	.3	London, Brighton... .	.3
Lancashire & York-		Great Central....	.5
shire.....	3¾	on 1881 pref.	
North Eastern.....	.5	Hull & Barnsley... .	.3
Great Northern.....	.3	North Staffs.....	.4
London & South West-		Metrop. District... .	.3
ern.....	.4	on 1st pref.	
North London....	.5	Baker St. & Waterloo..	.3