

Industrial and Commercial.

MINE, MILL AND RAILROAD.

Pittsburg advises from a source evidently hostile to the Carnegies assert that steel rails have been sold for months by members of the steel rail firms. According to this source it is asserted that "has been an open secret that the \$34 rate has been frequently cut in the Southern and Western markets. Conclusive evidence was found this week showing that the pool had been broken. Some weeks ago the Carnegie Steel company placed a bid for the delivery of 15,000 tons of steel rails in Indian Territory. The Choctaw Coal and Railroad company is about to build a line of railroad there. The Colorado Iron & Coal company, which has small rail yards at Pittsburg, placed a bid amounting to \$1,000 per ton. This would make the Carnegie Steel company's selling price for their rails in Pittsburg \$21.60. This figure is almost \$4 lower than the rate officially proclaimed by the pool. The Colorado Iron & Coal company will be forced to make some allowances and enlargements in its mill to carry out the contract it obtained. Heretofore this company had not been regarded as a competitor of the Steel Rail Trust, but its success in bidding against the Carnegie company in this instance, it is argued, raises a competitor against the Carnegie company in the west.

The rate cutting of the steel rail pool has been confined principally to the west and southwest. In the market along the eastern seaboard and in the northeast the \$24 rate of the pool has been pretty well maintained. The cutting of rates in the west, however, was begun because the pool was forced to protect itself from foreign rails, which are brought to New Orleans by water. The lowered tariff on the rails in the new tariff law gave the foreign manufacturers further opportunity to compete with the American rails. This is also true of the European lines, where European rails are being brought in greater numbers than ever. It now seems certain that the American manufacturers will continue the pooling arrangement of this year. It is said that several meetings have already been held to discuss the project in New York. Chairman H. C. Frick, Vice-Chairman John G. A. Lehman, of the Carnegie Steel company, were in the east last week and it is reported that they have been attending a meeting of the steel rail magnates. A gentleman competent to speak authoritatively stated some days ago that the pool would certainly be continued next year. He estimated that it would be with the \$24 rate prevailing.

In the opinion of John H. Martin, an observer ex-railroader who now travels at the head of a leading theatrical organization, the most serious thing the passenger departments of the railroads have now to contend with is the trolley system, which promises to make serious inroads into their short travel and suburban business. He states: "The Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal company has bought four more sets of high pressure boilers for their No. 4 Wharton slope. Two cars will be hoisted each trip. Twenty-five machinists have been added to the force at the Lehigh Valley's Wilkes-Barre shops, as the company has ordered the engines which are out of repair. The Green Mountain slope, situated five miles from Honeybrook and operated by the Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal company, was idle four days last week, owing to high water. Henry Williams, for a long time foreman of the No. 2 branch of the company, has been promoted to the position of foreman for the Kington Coal company. The Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal company has bought four more sets of high pressure boilers for their No. 4 Wharton slope. Two cars will be hoisted each trip.

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