

## TOPICS IN WALL STREET.

Stocks React After Early Strength—  
Trading More Active.

After the swift upward movement in stock prices which was in progress during the greater part of the trading on Thursday, the market continued firm during the early hours of trading yesterday. Before the close, however, selling increased in volume, with the result that many issues more than lost their early gains. The railroad stocks were firm, with a sharp run-up in some of the low-priced issues just before the closing. In the early trading many issues moved into new high ground. Steel common established a new high record of 129½, but sold off later in the day to 128, and closed with a fractional loss. Oil stocks were strong in connection with further announcements of higher crude oil and gasoline prices. Numerous specialties were prominent because of the sharp gains. These included American Sugar, which was up 4¾ points net; Cast Iron Pipe, which rose 1¼; Worthington, 1¼, and Pacific Oil, 2¾. The weak stocks in yesterday's market included American Woolen, which dropped back 4¼ points compared with the previous close. Baldwin, Allied Chemical and American Locomotive were each off more than a point.

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### An Estimate on Steel Earnings.

United States Steel common, in connection with the strength in the steel group yesterday, sold up to 129½, a new high-record price since 1917, when the shares sold at 136½. Steel was the leader during the early strength and also took a most prominent part in the late reaction. The setback in Steel started immediately after the publication of a report that the directors would declare only the regular extra dividend of 50 cents a share on the common stock in addition to the usual quarterly dividend. Reports spread about the Street lately had it that the extra dividend might be increased at next Tuesday's directors' meeting. An estimate of the company's earnings for the final quarter of 1924 appearing yesterday figured on net earnings of between \$28,000,000 and \$29,000,000, compared with earnings of \$30,718,415 reported in the September quarter. The earnings for the September quarter were equal to \$1.72 a share on the common stock after all deductions, which is just 3 cents a share short of the common stock dividend requirements, including the extra 50 cents dividend. In view of this, Wall Street does not look for more than the regular extra. The most interesting feature of the report will be the earnings by months for the last quarter. December earnings are expected to be on a more favorable basis, and the figures for that month will give some indication of probable earnings for the current quarter.

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### Today's Delayed Opening.

Wall Street is inclined to believe that today's trading in the stock market, which will be confined to one and one-quarter hours because of the eclipse, will be lively. Saturday, once the day for cleaning up loose ends, has become a very important day in the market scheme. With little more than an hour to go today, the brokers on the floor of the Exchange are looking forward to a busy period.

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### The Week in New Financing.

Because of heavy offerings of industrial bond issues during the current week, the total for the period ended yesterday was again in the \$100,000,000 class, against the previous week's figure of \$53,207,955. New oil issues alone amounted to \$72,500,000 and these were said to have found a ready market.

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### One Effect of France's Debt Stand.

Revival of the debt discussion in which French Deputies and American Congressmen are playing a part was said yesterday to have exercised a definite influence in favor of German financing. While new French issues were being held back, they said, an open track had been afforded German issues. The two nations, it would appear, are somewhat in competition in respect to meeting their corporate requirements through American loans.

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### Trying to Outguess the Pools.

Many speculators are having a difficult time trying to outguess those who are running pools in various stocks. For instance, during the last week or so in many of the speculative issues there have been swings of as much as three or four points up and down in many of the market leaders. The difficulty for the speculators lies in the fact that even though a stock is under strong pool control it is likely to be "let down" a point or so at any time, sufficient to scare out the traders. In the speculative game, of course, as Wall Street sees it, the pool has every advantage because it is "averaging" stock and controls the buying power. Some of the floor traders have given up entirely trying to outwit the pool managers and have either taken a position on their favorite stocks or have let them alone entirely.

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### The Erie Acceptance.

There was much comment in the financial district yesterday regarding the acceptance of the Nickel Plate lease by the directors of the Erie. Some of the discussion turned to just how much opposition the Van Sweringen brothers may meet in their efforts to consolidate the five railroad systems. Those usually best informed pointed out that the Erie's action foreshadowed the acceptance by the directors of the four other properties, and it was believed that little, if any, serious objection would be made in the stockholders' meeting. The next real obstacles in the way of the Van Sweringen brothers, it was declared yesterday, might come before the Interstate Commerce Commission. Some of the interests with fair-sized blocks of stock are talking of appearing before that body.

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### An Unknown Foreign Trade Factor.

It requires something more than the average foresight to gauge the future of the country's foreign trade, an authority remarked yesterday, although the past year's operations provided a good basis upon which to reckon. We are now exporting commodities that hitherto have been negligible items in our foreign trade, and the addition of new markets for these and other American products, it was agreed, has been most rapid. The question naturally has arisen as to whether any change in this situation is to be expected this year, due to a materially altered aspect of European financial affairs, particularly in Germany. As high an authority as the Director of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce corroborates the view of exporters and importers when he says that the much discussed trade competition by Germany is a totally unknown quantity, and that considerable study of this question is essential before a proper opinion may be hazarded as to the effect of that competition.

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### The Southern Pacific Report.

A net operating income for December 21 per cent. higher than for the same month of 1923, as reported by the Southern Pacific yesterday, was the first real test of the newly consolidated Southern Pacific-El Paso Southwestern System. Although the Southern Pacific took over the El Paso & Southwestern early in November it was expected that it would take several weeks to get the joint property in running order. For that reason the November report of the property was not considered as important as that of December. The fact that the consolidated system would earn 21 per cent. more than the two properties in the same month of 1923 was considered as exceptionally favorable, although, it was pointed out, the improved conditions in the Southwest also should be taken into account when analyzing the report.