

Imperial forum answers by designer Mac Gerdts

Hidden Money

If the money were not hidden, the last turns would take a long time as everyone would try to analyze the VP's of all other players before making his decision. Hiding money adds some extra spice of uncertainty and generally helps to accelerate turns!

Start of Game Investor Card

The investor-card is assigned to the investor sitting left to the investor who is controlling the government of Austria-Hungary. The investor who does the first move in the game, will get the investor-card last.

If another government is taken over in the first round (it is not possible in the very first move of the game because of position of investor-card), it will be highly reasonable for the new owner to strip his nation as soon as possible. This will give the old owner 4 million. If the old owner does not hold a flag anymore, he has the advantage to invest whenever anyone else invests. That could be used as a strategy for fast and early financial growth. Alternatively, only 2 million would be enough to retake control.

Play advanced or beginner rules

Apart from this considerations I strongly recommend to play the beginning with the rules for experienced players! The distribution of bonds as written in the rules is only a suggestion (which might have its flaws). It is meant for those players, who are beginners and therefore have no idea which bonds to take. The **real game** is with giving every player the opportunity to invest in every nation first, and after that starting the game with Austria-Hungary!

But if you want to stick to the suggested distribution of bonds, and do not like the possibility to loose control early, you could give every investor 2 million as extra starting money, enabling everyone to react instantly.

End of Game can investor still invest after nation has reached 25 power points?

You have to read it like this: No player can invest AFTER a nation reached 25 points, because the game ends immediately with the victory-condition. Investing is not possible anymore, as the game has already ended!

Only one nation can reach 25 points. Points are only granted on taxation. No other nation can enter the taxation-field after the game has finished with 25 points for a nation. It is not the round that has to be completed, it is the turn.

It has to be admitted though that maybe the rules are not clear enough on this. You may prefer the other variant as a house-rule, and you are right, the difference can be theoretically up to 15 points (pay 25 million and get $8 \times 5 = 40$ points in return). It wouldn't be a problem when everyone prefers it that way. But consider this: Usually every investment in the game has some degree of uncertainty with it. Only when no nation can move on the point track anymore, there will be absolutely no risk with any investment, and that wasn't intended with the rules.

Fleets move first and then armies

This was specifically done to help England especially. You move fleets and then you move armies - which means it is legal in the same turn for a fleet to move and convoy. I play tested the game and I played with the designer. This is the way it works. - (Ralph H. Anderson)

Yes, as Ralph already explained, a nation can move its fleets and use them for convoy in the same turn. This generally balances the possibilities of all nations.

The question is: How many regions can a nation occupy in one turn, given that it already owns 5 units (i.e. importing and producing once), and no other nation expanded before?

- GB 5 (without the convoy rules it would have been only 3)
- Germany 5 (no matter convoy rules)

- Russia 5 (without convoy rules only 3)
- Austria 4 (without convoy rules only 3)
- Italy 4 (without convoy rules only 2)
- France 5 (no matter convoy rules)

BTW, this is the reason why Austria starts the game: Austria and Italy are the only nations, who cannot reach the maximum of 5 occupied regions through their first expansion.

See errata of English rulebook on Eggert-spiele site. Or find it in the German rules if you know the language. There was some misprint in English rules about non-investor variant.

Advanced Rules playing without Investor Card

I played with no-investor-card variant twice and I'm never going back to basic rules. It allows you to react successfully, when there's constant fear about buying control in your nation by another player and you have to buy something to sustain it, when other players always have to consider that after the move they may lose control. It also in 99% of cases prevents hostile takeovers before the nation's turn. It adds so much to the game. If you have the money you can always invest it (as in real life), you don't need to wait a long time to do so in your turn (when investor card at last comes to you). -(Pawe Zaborny)

Basically after every nation's turn every player (starting from the player controlling the nation, proceeding clockwise) is allowed to buy one bond or improve previously owned bond from that nation. Moreover every player controlling no country can invest in anything he/she wants. -(Pawe Zaborny)

Players holding a flag are allowed to invest only

- after the turn of a nation, and
- only inside the nation who has just made its turn.

Therefore, under normal circumstances, ownership of a flag cannot change until the next turn of that nation has been done, BUT

if there is a player with no flag, he/she may invest in between at any time. There is no real difference between

- at the end of each turn, and
 - at the beginning of each turn,
- because in both cases, it's done between two turns. That was meant with "anytime".

Example:

The turn of Britain has ended.

Now every player may invest in Britain, only a player without a flag may invest in any nation (even in Germany!).

Now the turn of Germany begins...

No Money, No Flag

If a player has no flag, he may, each time the investor-card is triggered, either

- a) just as usual invest in a nation of his choice, or
- b) take 1 million cash from the bank.

This house rule may ease things a bit, especially for newbies in the early stages of the game. It would be an additional choice for the player with no government. Anyway, later on it is usually preferable to invest, rather than to collect this lousy 1 million.

This variant is helpful to punish poor play, because skipping the investor-field, although there is enough money in the treasury to pay interests, is mostly not a good choice! Remember: We are all ruthless investors, milking the nations where we can!

Moreover, this variant offers an additional choice to players not owning a flag, it is more food for thought...

Investor field if Nation is short in paying interest to all players

Every interest has to be paid. If the treasury does not have enough money to do that, the owner of the flag has to pay privately what is missing. If even that is not possible, he cannot afford to enter that field (apart from that, it does not seem to be a very reasonable move...)

Cannot enter Investor field if Nation and Controlling Player can't cover all dividends

EVERY investor has to get his money, and the government is responsible for that. This means, if the government cannot secure every other investor being paid interest out of the treasury or with his own cash, the nation simply cannot enter the playing field "Investor". The investor-card bonus, on the other hand, is paid by the bank.

In Great Britain no railroad to Dublin

Can the English player use the railroad to move armies between Dublin and his other home provinces? The rules don't say he can't, but railroads don't usually work well over large bodies of water. (David Norman)

There is no railroad to Dublin! Railroad is interrupted by enemy troops, or by the sea.

But there is hardly any reason to place troops there, unless all other four British cities are occupied by enemy troops...

Land Movement between certain areas

Dublin/Edinburgh, Spain/Morocco, Denmark/Sweden all require boats to cross. *Turkey/Bulgaria* not, because there is a red borderline between them (the "bump" belongs to *Turkey*). *Morocco* has no connection to *Western Mediterranean*, *Algeria* has no connection to *Bay of Biscay* (just in case there should be any doubts about it)

Bond Cards

1. Your new investment is up to your choice:

If you hold the 4M bond, you may buy the 2M bond additionally, or you return the 4M for the 6M bond. In either case you pay 2M and hold 6M in total.

2. The flag is held by the investor who gave the most money, he has the biggest influence on the nation's politics. Therefore 16M beats 15M.

3. Only one bond may be upgraded. If you want to upgrade to 16M, return either the 4M bond and pay 12 million cash, or return the 6M bond and pay 10 million cash.

Only One Bond Per turn

Don't forget you are only allowed to buy ONE bond per turn! Therefore you would need several investment actions to hold the 2M, 4M and 6M bond together.

If you have 20 million cash, and have the opportunity to invest, you certainly will not bother to take a 2M bond. What does that mean? It helps investors with less money, as they most likely get a better return on their investment, sort of catch-up mechanism. And consider this: it is quite helpful to investors who hold no flag at all, as they have extra investment actions!

Of course the game was tested with a restriction of one bond per country to a player (it even was our original approach to it). But this led to a very different play with different numbers of players, imagine 2 in comparison to 6 players! Finally that was considered as a bad thing. And it meant less flexibility and less options in play. I think the whole bond system now works quite well as it is.

Damaging a Nation

Don't ever worry to "damage" your nation! You are a ruthless international investor maximizing your profit! Any patriotic sentiments will cost you victory. Take as much money out of your nation as possible, and pump it back to its treasury by another bond. There will be no cash-problem as long as you invest, but you will increase your share and your VP's instead.

Nation can spend

There is not much a nation can spend money for (except paying interest!):

- importing max 3 units for 3 million
- building max 1 factory for 5 million.

And before a nation enters "factory", there is "taxation" in between. Paying units is done along with taxation.

Usually "investor" is a very good choice, if the nation has the money. Moreover, every million private cash is a VP in your pocket!

If you leave too much money in the treasury, there is a danger that other investors could take over government, and you might have not enough money then to react properly.

Investor and Taxation strategy

The only strategy reasonable to amass as much victory points as possible is to change between tax and investor phase regardless of the board situation if your nation has got an at least average size. -(Thomas Naumann)

It is not always reasonable to do so, because it is expensive. Remember that the advancement on the rondel has to be paid by the player holding the flag personally. The player has to sacrifice his personal money = victory points, and all other investors of that nation will get the benefit of it without cost. Very likely others will be encouraged to invest in that country, buying cheap VPs. Therefore this strategy may be reasonable at some point, but certainly not always, at least it has to be well considered!

Official Errata

Investor Card

At the start of the game, the investor card goes to the player seated to the left of the player with the Austria-Hungary flag. If no one has the Austria-Hungary flag, the investor card goes to the player to the left of the player with the Italian flag.

Variation Without Investor Card

Remove investor card from game.

This variation results in fewer changes in the ownership of governments, and a better overview of play, but perhaps a bit less excitement.

Instead of using the investor card, each player can invest in a nation immediately after that nation takes its turn.

For example:

After Italy takes its turn, its owner can invest in Italy. Then all the other players can invest in Italy, starting with the player to the left of the owner of Italy and going clockwise around the table. After that France takes its turn.

In addition to this procedure, players not owning governments can invest in any nation they wish, at any time.

On the rondel playing field "Investor," only the interests are paid. Passing through that field no longer has any special consequence.

These are the responses to questions about **Imperial** on boardgamegeek.com from the designer, Mac Gerds unless otherwise specified.

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