

REVIEW OF THE YEAR.

Since the appearance of the fifth volume of the Annual, there has been no diminution in the prosperity of the Dominion, although there are not lacking signs that the public with its usual short memory has forgotten but too many of the lessons for which it paid so dearly in the previous years of depression. There has been a little too much speculation, and in some cases values have been forced to a point which is not altogether justified.

The prosperity and activity of the past few years naturally resulted in an expansion of business enterprises, in an advance in the price of commodities, and a consequent rise in wages, and while the situation in Canada is still distinguished for solidity, largely due to exceptional crops, the prudent will not forget that a rise in prices offsets a rise in income, and that heavy spending on the part of Governments, while an incentive to trade, is usually succeeded by a period of dullness when these expenditures are curtailed. The Dominion Government has been spending in an unprecedented manner, chiefly for purposes that will be to the advantage of the country, such as the improvement in transportation, but when the St. Lawrence route canals have brought to the proposed fourteen feet basis, and expenditures are curtailed, there will undoubtedly follow a more or less pronounced period of quiet which will hardly be atoned for by the resultant traffic produced by these improvements and the amelioration of the port of Montreal.

With these slight warnings it may be confidently said that the past twelve months in Canada have been exceedingly successful, and the success has been shared in by almost every branch of industry.

Cattle ranching in Assiniboia in 1898 exceeded that of 1897 by 80 per cent., the sales of cattle and their products amounting to \$500,000. The expansion of this industry is limited only by the ambition of those who are engaged in it, but it is a matter for study whether, in view of the long distance by rail and water which cattle have to travel before reaching the British market, it would not prove more satisfactory to export the beef in cold storage instead of landing weary cattle on the quays of Liverpool, to be immediately slaughtered in poor condition.

On Christmas day 1898, penny postage between various parts of the Empire went into force and was followed a short time later by internal penny postage in Canada. As a result a very large volume of correspondence has been carried and in Great Britain especially extra clerks have been required.