

and what he saved for the citizens in his fights with monopolies is now being recalled. Point is given to these recognitions of his merit by what letters from Detroit this week tell us. The very trip upon which he died was undertaken with two great public purposes in view; one was the reforestation of great wastes of pine land in Michigan, and he went to the Black Forest of Europe to see what had been done; then he had a plan for the rotation of crops, and went to Egypt to study the method there.

BANK FAILURES IN THE STATES.

Some enquiry, and perhaps not a little apprehension, has been caused by the suspension of three banks in New York State within a week. The Seventh National Bank of New York was placed by the Comptroller in the hands of a receiver on 29th June, the reason being advances of some \$1,600,000 to Henry Marquand & Co., secured by collaterals of a doubtful nature. This appears to be a case in which advances were made on securities at boom prices, such as those which occasioned the recent panic in New York. There was really no margin, and the bank must net a heavy loss.

As to the City National Bank, of Buffalo, which was fairly well known in Ontario, because of the connection with it of Mr. W. C. Cornwell, its suspension appears to be caused by local conditions. It is not improbable that advances which exceeded the limit of prudence had been made by this bank, in connection with the Pan American Exposition, an enterprise dear to the hearts of enterprising Buffalonians. The bank was not a large or a strong one; its capital was \$300,000, and surplus \$150,000.

The latest bank to fail, the Niagara Bank, in Elliott Square, Buffalo, was ten years old, and had \$100,000 capital. Mr. Superintendent Kilburn says of it: "I have closed the bank because it is insolvent. The main reason for the failure is the failure of the City National Bank. This bank is involved in that to an extent not yet to be announced, but I do not deem it safe to permit this one to continue business any longer." The Niagara seems to have leaned upon the City National.

STATE-OWNED CABLES AND TELEGRAPHS.

The president and council of the Ottawa Board of Trade have issued a circular letter, in which they urge that all British possessions should be directly connected by State-owned telegraph cables and wires, controlled by the Post Office. This scheme is "regarded by members of the Board"—they do not say the whole Board—as "a means of fostering trade and stimulating commercial activity," besides being a bond of Imperial unity. So far they are probably right; but would not this same fostering and stimulus and unity be just as likely to come without the Government's buying or controlling the land and water systems of telegraph? We are unable to agree in the opinion that such matters are better conducted by governments than by corporations. There is plenty of experience to the contrary, indeed. The letters and articles in British papers, and verbal complaints we have heard from American and Canadian residents in England, would convince any commercial man—any person, indeed, who was not a hide-

bound Imperialist, with the notion that everything English was necessarily perfect—that in telegraphic and telephonic service the American or Canadian business man is better served by their companies than the Englishman is by his government administration.

It is a noticeable circumstance that no fewer than 38 out of the 44 pages of the pamphlet are taken up with Sir Sandford Fleming's letters on the subject, written or read to various bodies or personages during the years 1898 to 1901. And the council of the Ottawa Board pin their faith to Sir Sandford, "in whose views," they say on page 5, "this Board entirely concurs." This strong statement seems to include the whole Board, although the one quoted in our second sentence above does not. Well, having pinned their faith to Sir Sandford's "matured views," let us examine these views and the workableness of some of them. In his letter of 1900 to Lord Hopetoun, he remarks upon the extortionate telegraph charges in foreign territories by some private companies on messages for Australia. And because of these excessive charges by certain parties or officials en route, he would have it that the Government shall, without touching the territory of other nations, build or buy wires and cables between every British colony or possession on the globe [a neat and simple little scheme], and have "the whole system of telegraphs, by land as well as by sea, brought under State control, in order that the fullest benefit to the British people everywhere, and to the Empire, be attained." After this elevated paragraph we look in vain through the letter for any practical argument or estimate to support so vast an undertaking. He repeats in substance in this letter, page 32 of pamphlet, his extraordinary statement made about the same time to the Postmaster-General. See communication to Mr. Mulock, on page 37, that "the cost of sending a message is not, as is generally supposed, governed by distance. . . . As a matter of fact there is practically no more current outlay incurred in transmitting long than short distance messages. . . . When once established, equipped with instruments, and manned by operators, messages may be sent 100 or 1,000 miles with as much ease and at no greater actual cost than one mile." It is a pity that so distinguished a man as Sir Sandford Fleming did not consult some telegraphic expert before making so broad a statement. Had he forgotten—for as an engineer, who has built railways, he could not be ignorant of their existence—the repairers employed by the telegraph companies by the hundred? The average annual cost for maintenance of line per mile of wire is in the United States \$2.50; in Canada it is somewhat less, say \$2.35 to \$2.40. And we happen to know that more than \$100,000 was spent last year by one of the Canadian telegraph companies for maintenance. These facts dispose of the absurd statement that telegraph lines, in contrast to railways, cost nothing to maintain. But we must devote another article to the subject.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN CITIES.

An ever-present danger, worst probably in cities and in towns, is that from typhoid, diphtheria, and scarlet fever infection. Plans are laid by municipal authorities, based on the advice of medical men, to fight these infectious diseases. Health officers order