

were therefore busy in finding ways to expend the enormous revenue of the country. It is also worthy of note that the national expenditure was increased in a way most likely to further party interests, rather than for the general good of the country. Perhaps the most notable increase in the expenditure was in the pension list. Thus the increase in the expenditure under the head of war pensions was something appalling during the term of the last republican administration though one would naturally suppose that so many years after the war the expenditure on account of pensions would be on the decrease. This vast expenditure for pensions had the effect of serving party interests, as well as helping to keep down the accumulating revenue.

While the United States was receiving a revenue so vast that it was taxing the administration to keep down the accumulating surpluses, there was no effort put forth to turn the increasing expenditure to account in the carrying out of any great national public works or improvements. The expenditures on account of the navy were largely augmented, but the principal direction of increasing expenditure was in the nature of dispensing party patronage. Now that a vast shrinkage has been shown in the revenue for the past two years, partly owing to the commercial depression, and partly to the late reduction in the tariff, it is of course a very difficult matter to reduce expenditure in proportion. Huge deficits have therefore been the rule of late.

Canada has made a vastly better showing than the United States in the matter of the construction of public works, in comparison with general expenditure and population. In a country so vast as the United States, and much of it comparatively young in settlement at that, there is of course room for great expenditures on public works. The heavy expenditure of the last republican administration, however, was on the lines of party rather than a national policy.

SETTLE TAX SALE LANDS

The Commercial can agree in the main with an article in the Winnipeg Free Press of Monday last, on immigration. The Free Press says:

"Active immigration agencies abroad are good and very necessary, but alone they are a very imperfect machine. We must also have something to offer the immigrant when he arrives."

This is a point which The Commercial has urged in times past. We should consider that the work has only been entered upon when the immigrant is induced to come here. Every effort should be made after immigrants have arrived here to assist them to locate and become permanent and prosperous settlers. The Free Press in the article referred to advances an idea which is worthy of some thought, namely that land sold for taxes should be retained for settlement. Considerable land which has been held for speculative purposes has been sold for taxes during recent years. If the provincial government could

come to some arrangement with the municipalities, whereby their tax lands could be thrown open to settlement, it would undoubtedly be a great benefit to the province at large. Such a plan would tend to fill in the vacant lands in the older settlement and would thus increase the value of adjoining lands, besides augmenting municipal revenues. The first effect might be to temporarily decrease sales of lands held by speculators, but in the long run it would be a benefit to the companies and private parties holding lands for sale. The value of lands generally would be increased more rapidly, by the larger number of immigrants who would be induced in this way to locate in the older organized districts. The idea to hold the tax sale lands for settlement is really a good one, and moreover it is one which should not present any serious difficulties in carrying into effect. At present immigrants are going into remote districts, where they can secure government land. By the plan proposed for dealing with the tax sale lands, a good many immigrants could no doubt be induced to locate in the older settlements, thus filling up the many vacant spaces, to the great advantage of such settlements.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

GREAT suffering is reported from the States of Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota and some other districts of the western States on account of a succession of crop failures. The suffering is most severe in the great plains region east of the Rocky Mountains, particularly in the western portion of Nebraska. Much of this vast region has been found to be too arid to permit of successful agriculture. Many thousands of settlers are leaving and moving eastward, while others are so reduced that they are unable to get away. An appeal for help has been issued by the sufferers of Nebraska.

THERE were 78 bank failures in the United States in 1894 as compared with 598 bank failures in the panic year 1893. Though the number of bank failures last year is much less than in 1893, the number is still large, showing that the effect of the panic had not entirely subsided. Of the failures in 1891, some 20 were national banks, 25 were state banks, 24 private banks, 6 savings banks and 3 loan and trust concerns. Assets have been considerably larger than liabilities in each of the two years named. The failures in 1893 included 151 national banks, 184 state banks, 136 private banks, 50 savings banks and 14 loan and trust concerns. Within two years 174 national banks closed their doors, temporarily or otherwise, with liabilities of \$73,718,000 and having assets of \$69,184,000. A large proportion of them resumed business. In the two years 219 state banks closed permanently or otherwise, owing \$10,897,000 and having \$45,409,000 assets. Private banks present a total of 220 closed within two years, with liabilities of \$28,935,000 and assets of \$27,828,000. The 56 savings banks embarrassed in 1893 and 1894 show

total liabilities of \$18,816,000 and assets of \$19,307,000. Loan and trust companies embarrassed within two years number 17 with \$23,100,000 liabilities and \$11,867,000 assets.

After the Musk Ox

Casper H. Whitney, of the staff of Harper's Magazine, and A. H. Heming, artist, of Hamilton, Ont., arrived on Thursday's train on their way to the Barren Grounds to write up and sketch the musk ox in his native haunts. They spent Friday in town making preparations for their long trip and started on Saturday morning for Lac la Biche, driven by Mr. Grierson of the Queen's hotel. They come with letters of credit to the Hudson's Bay company, and dog teams are already engaged at Lac la Biche, which is the end of travel by horses, to take them to McMurray. Chipewyan, Fort Smith, Resolution and Fort Rae on the most northerly arm of Great Slave lake, a distance of about 800 miles north of Edmonton. Fort Rae is within the Barren Grounds and is the nearest Hudson's Bay post to the haunts of the musk ox. It is intended to make excursions from Fort Rae to the musk ox haunts, in order to give Mr. Heming an opportunity to sketch that peculiar animal as he is, and Mr. Whitney to give him a creditable write up. The trip which these gentlemen are taking is a long and hard one and in starting they are showing an amount of courage quite equal to the enterprise of their employers. They expect to return to Edmonton in April by way of Fort Simpson, Peace river and Lesser Slave lake, but they will not be able to do this if they spend any time with the musk oxen. If the execution equals the design, this is a piece of journalistic enterprise that has seldom been excelled.—Edmonton Bulletin.

Track-Laying in 1894.

The table of the new railway construction in 1894 has just been prepared, and the figures fitly reflect the depressed business surroundings of the transportation interest during the year now closing; 1877 was the top-notch year with 19,000 miles. The figures for 1891 show:

State.	Miles.	State.	Miles.
Alabama.....	14	Montana.....	191
Arizona.....	193	New Hampshire.....	7
Arkansas.....	31	New Jersey.....	33
California.....	72	New Mexico.....	75
Colorado.....	65	New York.....	40
Florida.....	85	North Carolina.....	3
Georgia.....	30	Ohio.....	93
Illinois.....	147	Oregon.....	1
Indiana.....	58	Pennsylvania.....	128
Kansas.....	2	South Carolina.....	58
Louisiana.....	91	Tennessee.....	11
Maine.....	111	Texas.....	87
Massachusetts.....	4	Utah.....	19
Michigan.....	112	Virginia.....	5
Minnesota.....	69	West Virginia.....	49
Mississippi.....	20	Wisconsin.....	16
Missouri.....	59	Wyoming.....	20

Total in United States.....	1,910
Total in Canada.....	322
Total in Mexico.....	71
Total in United States in 1893.....	2,635
Total in United States in 1892.....	4,187
Total in United States in 1891.....	4,282
Total in United States in 1890.....	5,690

As the N. Y. Journal of Commerce remarks, all these figures take no note of the vast and rapidly increasing mileage of light roads, electrical and others, which now share with the steam roads in short distance passenger travel. In some instances important lines though populous regions have been well nigh paralleled. The 200 miles of the New York and New Haven road, between New York and Boston, is now thus treated for 150 miles.