THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Saturday, March 2.

There is a quieter feeling in business circles now that the curlers have gone. Spring shipments are now the important feature, and these are going forward freely. In some lines jobbers report the volume of orders unusually large, which is probably due to the fact that Winnipeg houses are getting the trade more than ever this year. Eastern houses are not sending so many travellers west this year owing to the fact that they can get all the business they want nearer home, and are not anxious to undertake these long western trips while money is as hard to obtain in the west as it is at present. Houses which have a regular connection here are in the field as usual, but there are not so many transient travellers as usual. Demand for goods for quick consumption has also improved this week and dealers state that they are now doing a fair amount of trade. Values in every line are holding steady and there are very few changes to record this week. Railway traffic, both passenger and freight is increasing. Labor is in increased demand and there is every prospect that building operations will commence at the earliest possible date and be pursued with unusual vigor. Some in the trade predict that this will be the biggest building year in the history of Winnipeg. Bank clearings for the week ending Thursday were about $200,000 larger than a year ago.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

winnipeg markets

Saturday, March 2.

(All quotations, unless otherwise specified, are wholesale for such quantities as are usually taken by retail dealers, and are subject to the usual reductions on large quantities, and to cash discounts.)

CURED MEATS.

The market has become stronger and we note an advance in the price of hams. These are ½c higher, making the price now 13c. Lard is also higher, pure leaf lard being quoted now at $2.25, as against $2.20 last week. In cases lard is 25c higher at $7.25, and tierces are ¼c per pound higher at 10¾c. Fifty pound tubs are ¼c higher at 11c per pound.

DRY GOODS

There is an active business doing in spring goods. Shipping is in full swing and stocks in warehouses here are going down rapidly. Jobbers say that the volume of business exceeds their expectations. Travellers are getting out for sorting orders and are also taking some full samples.

FISH.

The Lenten demand is improving business greatly and there is an active trade doing. Prices remain unchanged as follows. Whitefish, 4 to 6c per pound, pickerel, 3½c, pike, 2½c, trout, 10c, salmon, 12½c, halibut, 12½c, Lake Superior herring, 20c per dozen, salt cod, 6½c, Labrador herring, per barrel, $4.15, salt mackerel, $2.25 per kit, shad, ½bbls $7.50, Digby chicks, 15c box, boneless cod, 7½c lb., boneless fish, 5½c lb.; finnan haddies, 7½ to 9c per pound fresh sea cod, big, 7c per lb; tommy cod, 5½c; flounders 5½c smelts, 7½c mackerel 13c shad 10c bass, 13c eels, 10c oysters selects $2 15 per gallon standard, $2 00

GREEN FRUITS.

draws to a close and we note a very fair volume of trade doing now. Travellers are sending in good sized orders. Apples are a very scarce article stocks brought in in the fall being now completely exhausted and the market is being supplied from Minneapolis. There have also been two or three cars in from Ontario. Prices are higher owing to increased cost of goods. Ben Davis apples, southern, are now worth $5.50 per barrel in a jobbing way. Other lines are unchanged. We quote Apples, Ben Davis, $5.50 in barrel. Northern Spies, to arrive, $5. Russets, $4 per barrel; California navel oranges, per box, $3.00 to $4.25; bitter oranges, $7.00 per case, lemons, per box, $4.50, as to size, bananas per bunch, $3.00 to $3.35; cranberries, per barrel, $9.50 to $10.50, cranberries, 50 1 pound boxes, $5, figs, $1.40 to $1.60 per box, onions, per lb., 2½c, mince meat in 25-pound pails, 10c per pound, cartoon dates, per package of 1-pound, 10c, new dates, 6c, cider in kegs or barrels, 35c per gallon, honey, 1-pound jars, $2.50 a dozen; maple sugar, 12c, maple syrup, 2-pound tins, per dozen, $2.25; half gallon tins, $6 per dozen.

GROCERIES.

Business has improved this week and there is a larger demand from both city and country for staple and fancy lines. Prices have held steady throughout the entire list and there are no changes to note. The market for Green Rio coffee has developed some strength since we last wrote, and the indications are that it will hold at the advance of ½c which we noted a short time ago. Some lines of cured fish are scarce, notably Digby chicks and bloaters. Now that evaporated and dried apples are dearer a better demand has set in for California dried fruits, and these are now moving freely. These show good value, especially prunes, peaches and nectarines. For prices see page 622.

HARDWARE.

There is very little doing in hardware so far as immediate demand is concerned, but spring business promises well and when the season opens will likely reach considerable proportions. The consummation of the scheme to amalgamate the steel interests of the United States has strengthened the market considerably, and prices over there are higher on many leading lines, as will be noted from our news reports elsewhere in this issue. The colossal nature of the new trust and its possible effect upon prices has hardened values all along the line although there are no changes to note in this market as yet.

PAINTS, OILS AND GLASS.

There is a steady demand for these lines for spring delivery and an active trade is anticipated. Values here have not changed since a week ago, but it is expected that linseed oil will go lower in sympathy with last week's drop in eastern markets. This decline may be expected to take place any day. Other lines are steady.

LUMBER.

Business has not opened up yet to any extent in this line. There is some speculation as to what the changes in prices, if any, are to be this spring and until the new list is out trading will be limited. It is generally believed that some revision of the list will be made and that the changes are likely to be in a lower direction.

SCRAP.

There is a fairly good demand for scrap iron and prices for this and other old materials rule steady as follows. No. 1 cast iron, free from wrought and malleable, $12 to $13 per ton, No. 2, $4.00 to $5 per ton, wrought iron scrap, $5 to $6 per ton, heavy copper 10 to 12c per pound, red brass, 10c per pound, yellow brass, heavy, 7 to 8c pound, light brass, 5c to 6c per pound, lead pipe or tea lead, 2 to 2½c per pound, rags, country mixed, 50c per 100 pounds, rubbers, free from rivets, buckles and arctics, 6c per pound, zinc scrap 1c per pound, bones, clean, dry and bleached, $5 to $6 ton, bottles, quarts, 20c per dozen, pints, 12½c per dozen.

STONE AND LIME.

Prices for the opening of the season have been fixed as follows Rubble stone, $4.00 per cord, footings, $5.50 per cord, broken stone, $1.25 per cubic yard, white lime 20c per bushel, grey lime 15c per bushel. These are practically the same prices as prevailed last year.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

WHEAT—A slow dragging situation still characterizes the wheat markets. During the past week price changes have been unimportant and trading has been inactive, but the tendency has been rather towards lower values and on the week the markets close easy at a decline in price of ¼ to ½c per bushel. Primary receipts in the States show some falling off as compared with last year, and the exports of wheat and flour are large, but the visible supply is not being reduced materially as yet. Last week's world's shipments were moderate consequent on small Argentine shipments, and lesser American shipments, but the quantity on ocean passage to Europe is exceedingly large for the time of year, and European merchants feel no anxiety in regard to supplies for some time to come. The trade in Europe is characterized by a poor demand and difficulty in maintaining prices, buyers being so scarce. Up to the present date there are no reports from any winter wheat growing country of material damage to winter wheat. On the contrary almost everywhere the crop is in good to extra good condition. In the United States the Kansas crop is reported 7 per cent. increase in acreage and 100 in condition, and Secretary Coburn, of that state, says it is doubtful if in a single state or season such a vast area of growing wheat has ever passed the winter more vigorously or better rooted. In other sections of the winter wheat belt the plant appears to be making seasonable and satisfactory growth. In some of the states east of the Mississippi there are complaints of Hessian fly and it is doubtful how much damage the fly may do before it is through with. In California the acreage is greatly increased, the crop is in excellent condition and promises to be large. In Europe all countries report favorable outlook for their growing winter wheat. The American visible supply decreased 146,000 bushels compared to a decrease of $12,000 bushels previous week and an increase of 225,000 bushels last year. The world's shipments were 5,936,000 bushels compared to 8,464,000 bushels last week, and 7,700,000 bushels same week last year. The world's visible supply according to Bradstreet's decreased 3,592,000 bushels against an increase of 243,000 bushels same week last year.

Manitoba wheat is extremely dull. There is absolutely no demand, and buyers in the east are understood to be very much afraid of the keeping quality of even 3 hard and it is stated are resolved to have little to do with 3 hard or lower grades as milder weather comes along. This is depressing to values. The present value of 3 hard for export is not over 65c in store Fort William spot. 1 and 2 hard command good prices, but the price is too high to make fair demand for these grades. At present 1 and 2 hard fetch more at Ontario points than can be got for them delivered at English ports. Values to-day of Manitoba wheat are as follows 1 hard, 81c, 2 hard, 78½c, 3 hard, 67½c, 3 northern, 64c, tough 3 hard, 65c; tough 3 northern, 60c, all in store Fort William spot or enroute, but buyers are very scarce and only a few cars could be sold without lowering prices.

FLOUR—Demand is fairly good and prices held steady as follows. Lake of the Woods, Five Roses, $2.10, Red Patent, $1.95, Medora, $1.60; XXXX, $1.35 per sack of 98 pounds. Ogilvie Milling Co., Hungarian, $2.10; Glenora Patent, $1.95, Manitoba, $1.60, and Imperial XXXX, $1.20 per sack of 98 pounds.

MILLFEED—There is a large demand for feed which mills are not able to fully supply, consequently prices hold firm. Bran is worth in wholesale quantities here $14 per ton and shorts $16 per ton delivered.

GROUND FEED—Ground feed is scarce owing to the small supplies of coarse grains. Pure oat chop is worth $27 per ton delivered, mixed barley and oats $25 per ton and corn $20 per ton.

COUNTRY WHEAT—Farmers' deliveries at country points are very light, and at many points no business is doing at all. Most of the wheat which has offered is of poor quality. Buyers are paying the farmers from 50 to 65c per bushel, according to quality of grain and rate of freight.

OATS—Supplies on hand and in sight are ample for current requirements, and there is a steady trade being done. Most of the business being done is in Northern Alberta oats. These are being taken for seed as well as feeding purposes. The demand for seed oats is good. It has been stated in some reports of this market that Ontario oats are arriving, but this is incorrect as there are plenty of Alberta oats obtainable in the meantime, and these are of superior quality. Ontario oats could not be laid down here to compete with them. Manitoba oats are worth 36 to 38c in carlots on track here, and Alberta oats 40 to 43, according to quality. Most of these latter are changing hands at 40c.

BARLEY—The market is practically dead.

CORN—Carlots of No. 3 corn on track here are worth from 40 to 45c per bushel.

FLAXSEED—None offering.

HAY—Carlots of pressed hay of best quality are worth $8 per ton and the range of prices for pressed is from $7 to $8. Farmers loads of loose hay on the street are worth $6 to $8 per ton.

POULTRY—There is a good demand for fresh killed chickens, for which good prices are being paid. Turkeys are also wanted. Held stock is plentiful. We quote: Turkeys, 11 to 12c per pound net price here: chickens 8 to 10c; ducks, 9c; geese, 9c.

GAME—Wild pigeons are in good demand and dealers will pay 15c per pair for these in the country or 20c here. Common rabbits are worth 6c each and jack rabbits 12½c each.

DRESSED MEATS—Beef is getting scarcer and dealers are now asking ½c per pound more for both city and country stock. It is generally believed that beef will be scarce from now until summer as farmers have sold most of their cattle already owing to scarcity of feed. Hogs are becoming scarcer and dearer. As high as 7c is being paid for extra choice lots. We quote. Beef, city dressed, 5½ to 6½c per pound, country dressed, 5 to 6c, veal, 7 to 8c per pound, mutton, 8½ to 9c per pound, hogs, 6½ to 7c per pound.

BUTTER—Creamery—The market is in a nominal condition as there is no creamery butter offering from first hands. Dealers are selling from stock at about 22c per pound.

BUTTER—Dairy—Choice fresh butter not more than ten days from the churn is in good demand. Held and inferior stock is not wanted as the market is already overloaded with these grades. Strictly new made butter, of best quality, will bring as high as 16c per pound commission basis in this market to-day and the range for this grade is from 15 to 16c. Held stock and second grade is worth 10 to 14c per pound commission basis.

CHEESE—Commission men are selling best Manitoba cheese at 10c per pound to the city retail trade.

EGGS—The market is weaker owing to increased receipts. Commencing Monday commission houses will pay 20c per dozen for fresh case eggs, which is a decline of 2c from the quotation which has prevailed throughout this week.

VEGETABLES — The market is steady and without special feature. We quote. Potatoes, 40 to 45c per bushel, parsley, 30c, lettuce, 40c per dozen carrots and beets, 45c per bushel, turnips, 20 to 25c per bushel parsnips, $1.25 per bushel, onions $1.50 per bushel; cabbage, 1½ to 2c per pound; celery, native, 40 to 50c, imported, 75 to 90c per dozen bunches.

HIDES—Receipts are very light and the quality of offerings poor. There is a weaker feeling in the market owing to reported declines in the east. Dealers are now buying on a basis of 6c per pound for No. 1 hides. Frozen hides are realizing 5c per pound less 5 pounds tare. Bulls 4c. Kips same price as hides. Sheep and lambskins, 40 to 70c each. Slunks 25 to 35c each.

WOOL—None offering. Dealers quote 8 to 8½c per pound for unwashed fleece and 12½c per pound for washed.

TALLOW—Dealers are paying for No. 1 tallow at 4c per pound. No. 2 is worth 3c per pound. A good deal of tallow is being sold by country shippers in the rough, in which state it is worth 2c per pound.

SENECA ROOT—The best price that would be paid here now for clean dry root is 30c per pound.

LIVE STOCK.

CATTLE — Stockers are being bought in large numbers throughout the country for future shipment. These are worth $14 to $18 per head for yearlings and $18 to $22 for two year-olds. Beef cattle are scarce and firmer at from 3½ to 4c per pound here.

SHEEP—Market nominal.

HOGS—The market for dressed hogs is steady at last week's prices. Best