

THE GROCERY TRADE.

THE CURRENT SITUATION.

It commenced with currants. Hancock & Wood write from Patras, under late date, as follows: "In our report dated October 2 we anticipated that the comparatively small stock of currants remaining on this side, and awaiting then to ship, 1,200 tons would have all been shipped or before the end of November. The course of events has falsified our predictions, for we find ourselves, after a lapse of six months, with 5,000 tons of currants still in Greece. The crop of 1900 has not proved greater than our estimate of 40,000 tons, plus about 7,000 tons which had remained over from the preceding season; but the very high level to which prices were rushed by the speculators in the United Kingdom has interfered with consumption, in all parts of the world to an unexpected extent, and with direful results to the trade in general. By the end of September last prices, stimulated by a constant speculative demand from abroad, had reached the unprecedented figures of 30s f. o. b. for average quality up to 70s f. o. b. for the finer descriptions of currants, and growers and dealers in this country who, notwithstanding the extreme shortness of the crop, never dreamt that such rates would have been obtainable, sold away as fast as they could; by the middle of October it became apparent that consumers were not prepared to follow the speculative lead, and since then the market has gradually relapsed from dullness into a state of regular stagnation, and prices have declined fully 50 per cent. The United Kingdom holds the widest and best stocks of high-coating currants, and it is quite unwilling to operate, and in the United States and other countries, even at present rates, the consumption seems reduced to a minimum. Only Holland and Germany, which had been holding back all along have taken some 4,000 tons during the last six months, at prices ranging from 20s to 34s f. o. b.

"The stock of currants in Greece at present consists of about 5,000 tons of which some 1,500 tons are fine Gulf and Vozitsa, 2,000 tons good average Provincial, and 1,500 tons are low fruit not fit for export. Prices range from 25s for good average Provincial to 30s to 32s f. o. b. for the finest growths. It is yet too early to say anything respecting the prospects of the growing crop, as the currant vines are only just coming into bud; but notwithstanding the enormous loss caused to some extent by the 'open season' cultivation has been extensively carried on, and with the assistance of the currant bank even the neediest growers will be able to spray their vineyards with solution of sulphate of copper, thus at least averting the malady even under adverse weather conditions, may be arrested to a great extent; but this, of course, remains to be seen, as we are going through a new experience. Shipments ascertained to date, compared with last year's, are as follows:

	1900.	1899.
Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
London	10,120	25,010
Liverpool	16,080	26,750
Outports	2,530	10,545
United States	3,780	13,020
Canada	410	1,780
France	30	3,264
Germany, Belgium, Holland and Austria	3,226	20,145
Australia	3,000	4,410
Total	43,240	100,700

Grocery Trade Notes.

The Macpherson Fruit Company, of Winnipeg, has a carload of coconuts now on the way direct from Jamaica. In sympathy with the strength in raw sugar in the New York market refiners there advanced prices for refined 10c per 100, on all grades last week.

Fruit growers throughout North Pacific states and Idaho are feeling confident of a good fruit crop this season. Indications are that apples and prunes will be especially plentiful.

One independent canner has announced opening prices on Columbia river salmon for June and July delivery at about 10 cents lower than the opening figures named a year ago by independents, and it is expected this will influence the opening price named by the association.

It is said that the Southern California Prune Association spent \$20,000 in educating the buying public to an

increased use of prunes, but the effect of this education was not extensive enough to clean up the overstock of prunes at good prices. Prunes, apples, pears and apricots were too plentiful in California last season to permit of good prices.

Imports of canned salmon into the United Kingdom during the three months ending March 31 were 355,453 cases, compared with 350,887 cases last year and 500,075 cases in 1899. Imports during the month of March were 342,751 cases, against 191,820 cases in March of last year.

In Alberta late advices from Stelly state: "The spot market is without interest. Quotations are nominally 50s, but with no business passing. For future delivery the article is just beginning to awaken some interest, but nothing of importance has been done yet. For October shipment 40s 1d is quoted per bag of 100 kilos f. o. b."

Referring to Sultana raisins Liverpool mail advices state: "There is little or no change to report. The apathy from which these raisins have so long suffered still continues, but in spite of this the bulk of the stock is held for prices which may be said to be altogether above the market. Some sales have transpired in fair to good quality at 42s to 45s, with fine up to 50s, the comparatively small proportion offering at these prices being quite sufficient to meet the demand as it arises.

It is expected that the first car lot of strawberries will be received in Minneapolis about May 1st and prices will be much lower thereafter. The car lots in some of the more southern districts was a partial failure and shipments had, therefore, to be made in small lots by express, which added greatly to the cost, but Arkansas, Tennessee and Missouri will soon be in a position to ship by freight in car lots, which will reduce transportation charges so that strawberries should soon be selling at moderate prices.

THE HARDWARE TRADE.

CONDITIONS IN THE GERMAN IRON TRADE.

Berlin correspondence of the Journal of Commerce shows that in the last half of 1900 the price of wrought iron bars in Germany fell 40 per cent., and quotations for open-hearth bars receded 35 per cent., while steel rails dropped 25 per cent. A year or so ago, under the influence of the 'boom,' German furnace men entered into long contracts for pig iron at high prices. Fifty marks a ton is what some of them are estimated to be losing in selling their products at the present prices. They have appealed to the blast-furnace and the coal and coke syndicates for relief. The latter have refused, and rather than drop their prices they are reducing production. The furnace men say they cannot grant concessions as the fuel men will not. The ore syndicates also reduce production rather than prices. The rolling mills and factories are working the foreign markets as hard as they can, and, like our own, are selling abroad much cheaper than at home; the wire nail syndicate has been selling abroad at 213 marks and at home for 326 marks. The material men have, in some cases, granted rebates on exports. Concerns that control the whole process from coke to finished product are making some profit, and rolling mills that had not bought far ahead can buy English iron on the decline, but a larger part

of the German iron trade is in a critical condition on account of the sub-

Hardware Trade Notes.

Iron pipe continues to advance in price.

Lined oil has declined 3c at Montreal.

Sleighshoe steel is quoted 10c higher in the east, and bar iron 5c per 100 pounds higher.

Railway construction materials have been in big demand at all American manufacturing centers during the past few weeks.

Advices from Pittsburg say that orders are now on file in the various foundries of that city for upwards of 2,000,000 tons of steel rails. An advance in prices is expected.

Scrap iron and metals are in big demand at Pittsburg and other United States centers. Old steel rails are now quoted at \$17 to \$17.50 per ton there and cast iron scrap at \$14.25 to \$15.50 per ton.

The Canada Horse Nail Co. announce that they have removed the restrictions imposed by them as to the selling price of their goods, until the situation is different to that which exists at present.

At the last session of the Minnesota legislature a law was passed defining the ingredients to be used in the manufacture of mixed paints and prohibiting the sale of any other paints unless the can or package be labelled "adulterated."

United States window glass manufacturers have decided that their present enormous profits on glass are not enough to satisfy them, and accordingly another advance of 20 per cent. in prices is to be made, 10 per cent. on the first of May and 10 per cent. on the first of June.

The Montreal hardware market is reported to be in an active condition at present. Wholesale houses are very busy. Manufacturing concerns have orders booked for months ahead. Prices hold firm as a rule, although butts and hinges are slightly lower than iron and unseed oil are stronger.

The American Window Glass Co. and others in the United States Association are endeavoring to get all the factories to close on May 11th. It is expected that most of the independents outside of the association will close about that date and there will be no production during the summer. This will have a strong effect on prices in mid-summer.

The International Steel Iron and Pipe Co., has been formed to locate im-

mense steel mills at Sault Ste. Marie, both on the Canadian and American sides, with a capacity of 400,000 tons annually and employing about 10,000 men. The Consolidated Lake Superior Power Company, of which Mr. Clergue is vice-president, it is understood will take a large block of the \$30,000,000 stock of the new company. As an outcome of the establishing of a steel works at the Soo it is said that a blast furnace will be established in Detroit with a capacity of 1,000 tons of pig iron per day, employing 1,000 men. It was intimated by those interested that the new company would be an active competitor of the recent steel combine in the United States.

The city of Montreal paid out over \$92,000 last year for damages of various kinds, mostly resulting from failure to enforce its own by-laws.

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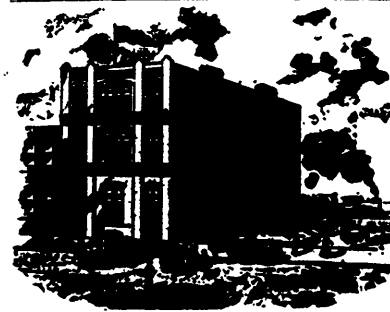
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