

THE BUSINESS SITUATION.

Winnipeg, Saturday Afternoon, Dec. 11

The weather has remained very mild all this week and all the boats chartered have had no difficulty in clearing from Fort William with wheat. All the boats chartered have now cleared, and it is doubtful if shippers will be able to make any more charters. So far as the weather is concerned, there would be no difficulty in the way as there is less appearance of navigation being closed now by ice than there was two weeks ago. There are very few if any boats available, however, on the upper lakes now, and it would only be a snap chance to secure any charters hereafter. The boats have mostly laid up or are on down trips and it would hardly be possible to induce them to return. It is understood there are a number of boats to clear from Duluth yet. There is a great rush to get wheat out of Duluth and one of the remarkable features is, that the wheat is going to Chicago instead of going to Buffalo, owing to the abnormal condition of December wheat at Chicago, the December option at Chicago being away above other markets.

WINNIPEG MARKETS.

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COAL.

A large demand for Souris coal is reported from country points as well as for the city trade, and the mining companies have found it difficult to supply the demand. In the city orders could not be filled promptly and the car lot demand from country points has been urgent. Prices are unchanged. See quotations on another page.

DRESSES.

This branch is steady and without change in prices. No immediate change in any class of goods is looked for, and prices will not likely be materially revised until after the end of the year. See quotations on another page.

FISH.

There is no change in the price of fish. A large consignment of fresh Lake Superior herrings are in transit here. No winter caught whitefish in yet. See prices on another page.

GREEN FRUITS.

Mexican oranges are offering freely and are of good quality. New California naval oranges are in transit for this market. This is unusually early for the now season in California oranges and it is expected the stock will be very green. California lemons are offering, and are getting into better condition than first arrivals. Bananas are costing very high, as they now come in by express, and there is hardly enough in them to pay importers for the risk taken. Apples are steady. New arrivals, the first of the season, have come to land this week in Tarragona almonds and Grenoble walnuts. Further arrivals of new figs are in making a larger variety of this fruit now in the market. Ontario

butternuts are out of stock. No new dates yet reported. Lemons are 30c lower. Prices are as follows: Mexican oranges, \$5.00 to \$5.50, bananas, per bunch, \$3 to \$4; California lemons, \$4.50 to \$5.00 a box, Washington and Oregon pears, \$2 to \$2.25 per box; apples, Ontario stock, \$4 to \$4.75 per barrel; southern apples, \$4 to \$4.25 per bbl.; Cape Cod cranberries, \$3.00 to \$3.00 per bbl.; sweet potatoes, \$5.25 to \$5.50 per barrel; Malaga grapes, \$8 per keg for medium, and \$8.50 for heavy weights, Ontario black walnuts, 8c lb; coconuts, \$1 per dozen; Sicily filberts, large 11c to 12c per lb; Grenoble walnuts, 13c; figs, fancy element, \$1.40 to \$1.50 per 10 lb box, 30 lb boxes, 16c. 50 lb boxes, 17c lb.; imported celery, 60c dozen.

HARDWARE, PAINTS, ETC.

There are no further changes in this branch. Business is quieter. Jobbers are placing their heavy importations of goods for the spring trade and some houses will engage in stock-taking during the dull season. The general tendency of prices is one of great firmness on nearly every staple line.

LEATHER.

The market is very firm. There is talk of an advance of 1c on harness leather, owing to the advancing tendency in other markets. See prices on another page.

WOOD.

The supply of this article of fuel, unlike the Souris coal, has greatly increased as the season has advanced. Offerings are very liberal in all kinds and as a consequence dealers are now obtaining their stocks at prices much less than those ruling at the beginning of the season. See quotations on another page.

GRAIN AND PROD. CE.

WHEAT—Wheat markets have been firm this week, with an upward tendency on most days. The most remarkable feature of the week was the big bulge in Chicago wheat on Thursday, when the market for December option touched about \$1.09, being an advance of about 9c from the close of the previous day. The natural inference from such a remarkable movement was that there was a corner in the December option. The top price was not held, the market closing Thursday at \$1.07. Yesterday there was a further decline to \$1.03 for the December option at Chicago. The big premium at Chicago is leading to large shipments of wheat to that market. Duluth has been sending wheat to Chicago for some time, and lately there has been a great demand for boats to load wheat at Duluth for Chicago. It was even reported yesterday that charters had been made to ship wheat from Toledo and Buffalo back to Chicago. This shows the unnatural position which the Chicago market occupies. Turning from the speculative to the legitimate position of wheat, the most remarkable feature is the continued large exports. The Commercial report last week showed weekly exports aggregating nearly 6,700,000 bushels from Atlantic ports, and the report to-day will likely show an even heavier week. The exports this season are the heaviest on record.

In the local market there has been very little doing. A few sales were made to fill space at Fort William at 89s for No. 1 hard float, and it is said 89 1-4c was made on one transaction.

However, very little wheat was required. All the boats chartered are believed to have cleared, and it is doubtful if any more boats will be secured, though the weather has been very mild all week, and navigation is still open, if there were any boats to be had. Prices were lower in Manitoba country markets on Monday, owing to the fact that wheat cannot now be bought in the country to ship by water, and prices have been too high to buy to hold on a basis of quotations for May wheat in other markets. From 72 to 76c was the quotation to farmers in country markets, according to freights and local conditions.

FLOUR—No change in the flour market here. A fair demand is reported here and east, and some business is being done at Montreal in Manitoba brands for export. We quote patents \$2.55 per sack of 98 lbs.; Strong Bakers, \$2.35; second bakers, \$1.90 and XXXX \$1.15. Prices to local dealers here less 5c per sack for net cash.

MILLFEED—The demand is good and prices are firm. Top lots are held at \$10 for bran and \$12 for shorts, and \$9 per ton less in large lots, and the market is very firm.

GROUND FEED.—Pure grain feed is quoted at 20 to 22c for oats and barley, the outside price for rolled oat feed. Anything under \$20 per ton is inferior mixed mill feed. Corn feed is quoted at \$16 to \$17 per ton. Oil cake \$20 per ton.

CEREALS—The local mills are doing very little and the market is mainly supplied with meal imported from the south. We quote rolled oatmeal at \$1.80 per sack.

OATS—Have been offering rather more freely, and if anything the tendency is easier. Imported corn is cutting off the demand for oats for feed, and imported oatmeal has shut off the local mills to such an extent that they are taking very few oats, consequently the demand all around has been greatly curtailed and prices are easier. A car lot sold this week at 35c and 36c per bushel of 34 pounds is usually the top bid for choice car lots here. The street price to farmers here is 34 to 36c as to quality. In Manitoba country markets 25c to 30c per bushel has been paid to farmers.

CORN—Corn is coming in freely from the south. It can be laid down here at 39 to 41c per bushel of 56 pounds in cars lots on track as to grade.

BARLEY—Feed barley is quoted at 30 to 35c per bushel of 48 pounds. No 32 to 35c per bushel of 48 pounds. No cars are offering, but these prices are paid to farmers for loads. Up to 40c is being paid for making barley here.

WHEAT—Local farmers' market—From 80 to 81c has been paid by millers to farmers, for wheat, delivered here, as to quality, fancy samples bringing the outside price.

FLAX SEED—There is scarcely anything marketing, and 60c is quoted to farmers in country markets.

BUTTER—Creamery, quiet and easy. We quote dealers selling price at 21c to 22c as to quality and quantity.

BUTTER—dairy—The market is quiet and rather easy. Dealers quote 14 to 15c for round lots of country dairy. The outside quotation could only be realized for choice lots; and held goods are quoted at 13 to 14c, the latter being the very outside for well kept lots. Choice fresh dairy tubs or rolls will bring 15c net, and in a small way choice fresh has sold at 16c and up to 16 1-2c has been obtained for a