

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Winnipeg, Saturday, Nov. 5.

Weather conditions have been decidedly better this week. In fact the weather for the past two weeks has been such as to enable farmers to go on with their work with very little interruption. Any rain or snow which did come was in the form of very light local sprinkles, and hardly sufficient to interfere with threshing. The brisk winds this week have greatly improved the condition of the stacked grain, and threshing from the stack has turned out a much better sample than some threshed earlier. Unfortunately some farmers threshed too soon, and as a result their grain is damp. Inspection returns recently have shown an increasing quantity of damp wheat, there having been 27 cars out of a total of 229 cars inspected at Winnipeg last week, which is more than twice as many as for any previous week. No doubt some of this damp grain represents threshing from stack before it had properly dried, as well as a result of bad stacking. Still reports from the country on the whole are more favorable than could have been expected, after such a prolonged spell of wet weather, quite unprecedented in the harvest history of this country since wheat became an export commodity. Threshing in some places has been kept up almost day and night, so anxious are the farmers to get ahead with their work, after the long delays on account of the wet weather. A short period longer of good weather and the great bulk of the crop will have been threshed. The amount of grain moving to market has not been large. The reasons for this are: Bad roads; the desire of the farmers to finish fall plowing before it freezes up; and the scarcity of labor. Many of the eastern farm laborers have returned and the farmers are turning in to help each other with the threshing. Though a lot of grain has now been threshed, the movement to market is therefore not heavy. Prices for wheat in Manitoba markets have been on the down grade, which has been a further incentive to hold wheat so long as there is plenty of other work to be done on the farms. Manitoba wheat markets have been comparatively the highest in America all the season, since new wheat began to move. Bids received from British importers this week show our markets to be about 5 cents above export values, notwithstanding the lower prices here. This, together with the fact that the close of navigation is drawing near, when higher freights will come into effect, has a tendency to depress values. Live stock exports have kept up well and the season will probably show an increase in totals over last year. Business is improving

in the general mercantile trade at country points, but the mild weather has restricted business somewhat. Bank clearings at Winnipeg for October show a decrease, compared with October of last year of nearly three million dollars, but a gain of over one and three-quarter millions compared with October of 1896.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

Winnipeg, Saturday, Nov. 5

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

FUEL.

There is no change in coal, which continues to sell at the lowest prices on record here. A report from Duluth this week says that an advance is expected in wholesale prices there. The low price of coal has not affected the demand for wood so far, but it doubtless will decrease the consumption of wood fuel later on when colder weather sets in. In cordwood pine is very scarce, and there is not much tamarac offering either. What is coming in now is mostly poplar and mixed wood. Prices are unchanged. See quotations on another page.

GROCERIES.

The price changes this week show a further advance of 25c per case on coho salmon, from the lowest quotation of last week. A big advance is also noted in cooking figs, which have advanced 21-2c to 9 to 91-2c. Figs are going to be a very scarce and dear article all the season through, without doubt, owing to the very small Smyrna crop. The crop has now passed out of first hands and has been bought up at high prices, which indicates that there will be no likelihood of lower prices until another crop comes to market. California figs will be in this market next week, for the first time in the history of the trade here. Cleaned raisins are 1-2c lower. This is a line which is meeting with an increased sale, which will no doubt be further augmented by lower prices. California raisins have received a black eye in the Canadian market this year, through the action of the association, which controls the sale of the goods, in holding out of the market until large supplies of Spanish raisins were brought in at lower prices than the California article could be bought for. Only two or three cars of California raisins have reached this market so far this season. Cured meats have an easier tendency. See quotations on another page.

GREEN FRUITS.

California oranges are about out of the market. Only a few odds and ends are left. Mexican oranges will be the next variety in receipts of which are expected in ten days or two weeks. California lemons are firm and the quality of the stock is good. Peaches are out of the market. Apples are very firm. The crop in the United States is one of the smallest on record, and this influences the Canadian market very sharply. Good winter varieties are about 25c per barrel higher, and a further advance is looked for next week. Concord grapes are out of the market. Cran-

berries are easier. The supply of chestnuts is already about used up. California figs are expected here shortly. They come in boxes of ten packages or bricks, and will sell at \$2 per box. These will be the first California figs ever offered in this market. Crabs are out. Prices are: Oranges, late Valencia \$4.50 to \$5.50 a box as to size, bananas a bunch, \$2.50 to \$3.00 as to size; California lemons \$7 to \$7.50 per box. Malaga lemons \$5.50 a box; Oregon winter Nellis pears, \$2.50 to \$2.75 per box; Ontario apples fall, \$2.50 to 2.75 per bbl.; winter stock, \$3.25 to \$3.50 as to variety, shows \$3.50; fancy fameuse \$4 to \$1.25; Washington box apples, \$1.25 per 5-lb. box; California grapes \$2.50 to 2.75 for four basket crates; Ontario grapes, 10-lb. baskets, white Niagara 35c; Rogers 40c per basket; Almeria grapes \$8 a keg; cranberries, Cape Cod, \$8 to \$8.50 bbl.; sweet potatoes \$5 per bbl.; coconuts \$1 a doz.; Ontario chestnuts, 15c per pound; Sicily filberts, large, 11 to 12c per pound; Grenoble walnuts, 14c; Tarragona almonds, 12 1-2 to 13c; peanuts, green, 10c; roasted, 12c; pecans, 14 to 15c; strained honey, 7 1-2 to 10c per pound; maple sugar, 11 to 12; apple cider, 35c per gallon in barrels and half barrels.

HARDWARE, PAINTS, ETC.

We noted quite a long list of price changes in hardware last week. This week no changes are reported, except in glass, which has scored another advance of 10c per fifty feet, making an advance of 30c in all within a few weeks. Nor is the price likely to remain at this last advance, as the market is still very firm and may go even higher. The trade certainly cannot gain anything by holding off, as there is scarcely a possibility of lower prices before spring stocks arrive next June, while there is a probability of further advances. Turpentine is very firm. Linseed oil is firm and

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