

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Winnipeg, Saturday, Dec. 17.

Business is about over with the wholesale houses for this year, except in a few lines. Orders for spring delivery of clothing, hats and caps and boots and shoes are now about all in and travellers who have completed their trips report very fair success. Altogether the orders booked for spring delivery are reported to be satisfactory to jobbers in these lines.

The wheat movement to the loss of navigation shows a reduction of more than one-third as compared with last year, though the quantity of grain to be moved is much greater than last year. This indicates that there will be a heavy traffic in moving grain when navigation opens next spring, as no doubt the bulk of the crop will be held until then, though a considerable all rail movement is expected to set in after the holiday season is over. A little all rail business is now doing. Much, however, will depend on prices, and continued low prices will tend to keep the wheat at home until navigation opens. Of the new crop over 6,000,000 bushels of wheat have been shipped out via Port William and Port Arthur and 1,500,000 bushels have gone out via Duluth. About 4,000,000 bushels are held in store at points west of Winnipeg and 1,500,000 bushels more are held at Port William, Port Arthur, Keewatin and Winnipeg, including wheat turned into flour by the mills, making a total of 13,000,000 bushels of the new crop which has come to market to date. Considerable of the wheat held in store, however, is still owned by the growers, who are carrying it for a higher market.

Rain clearings at Winnipeg this week continue to show a gain over the corresponding week of last and previous years, as will be seen by the statement on another page.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

Winnipeg, Saturday, Dec. 17

(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.)

DRY GOODS.

Wholesale houses are experiencing an unusually good business in letter and sorting orders and the volume of December business promises to exceed most previous years. Business generally is of a highly pleasing nature and the outlook bright. Last year trade dropped flat in December, and nothing like the volume of business was done that has developed so far this month. Men's goods as usual have met with large demand this year and some special lines have met with unexpected favor. For instance flocc-lined underwear have had extraordinary sale and the demand has far

exceeded the supply. One house alone states that fully one thousand dozen more could have been sold had the stock been equal to it. Special lines of corsets have also had a very large run this season.

FUEL.

The consumption of fuel has not been heavy so far this season, owing to mild weather. The temperature this week has been very moderate. The new Manitoba Southeastern railway has opened a new source of wood fuel supply for this market, and a large quantity of wood will be cut in the timber country tributary to the new railway this winter. The railway company expects to haul about 1,000 cars of wood to Winnipeg this winter. There is no change in coal prices, which hold at quotations given on another page. The tendency of prices on wood fuel is easier and the supply is more liberal.

GROCERIES.

The market has been steady this week, the only change in prices locally is a fractional advance on sugars in sympathy with the late advance at the refineries east. New dates are in the market, and also a limited supply of new walnuts and almonds, which are selling at high prices. The general tendency remains firm on dried fruits, but the local market does not respond quickly to changes in outside markets. Our telegrams this morning report a drop of 10c per 100 pounds in sugars, so that the advance noted here will not likely be held.

GREEN FRUITS.

As usual at this season of the year, there is not much change in the situation. New dates have been received in limited quantities, and the price is lower than it was expected new fruit would sell at this season. New almonds and walnuts have been received, and as previously reported, the cost of these is very high. California lemons are out and ditto winter pears. Apples are very firm and are quoted about 25c higher this week. Prices are: California navel oranges, \$5 to \$5.50, as to size; Mexican oranges, \$4 to \$4.50 box; bananas, per bunch, \$3 to \$3.50, as to size; Messina lemons, \$4.50 to \$5 box; Ontario apples, ordinary winter stock, \$3.50 to \$4, as to quality; fancy stock, \$4 to \$4.50 per barrel; Almeria grapes, \$8 a keg; cranberries, Cape Cod, \$8 per barrel; sweet potatoes, \$5 per barrel; coconuts, \$1 a dozen; Sicily filberts, large 11 to 12c per pound; Grenoble walnuts, 16c; Tarragona almonds, 16c; peanuts, green, 10c; roasted, 12c; shell-ed walnuts, 24-2 to 26c per pound; strained honey, \$1-2 to 9c per pound; maple sugar, 11 to 12c; apple cider, 35c per gallon in barrels and half barrels. California figs, in boxes of ten bricks, \$2 per box; dates, 7-12 to 5c per pound; celery, 40c per dozen bunches.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

WHEAT—The last three days of the week have witnessed a sharp advance in the wheat market. The prime cause for this is the unfavorable weather being experienced in Argentina, where more or less large surplus from current crop, was expected to almost flood the European market in the early months of 1899. Continuous rains are interfering with the harvest there—already about three weeks late—and very considerable damage is apprehended as well as further delay. In some districts hail storms

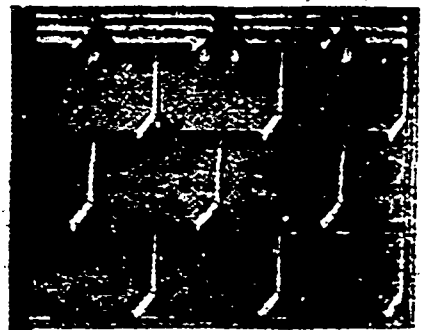
have also prevailed recently, destroying some crop. This state of matters has caused the short interest in the speculative markets, to make a rush to cover their short lines and in doing so the prices have been freely advanced in the markets. The European markets have been very slow to respond to the advances on this side of the water. On one or two days recently, Liverpool even declined slightly in face of the advance on this side. Yesterday, however, Liverpool, made an advance of 1-81 to 2-1-8d per cental, equal to about 11-2c per bushels. The receipts at primary ports in the United States have shown some signs of slackening, though still very large. The demand for consumption and export continues large, though not so urgent as previously. Some very large sales of flour have been made at Minneapolis this week. The American visible supply increased last week 2,623,000 bushels. The world's visible increased 3,500,000 bushels. Growing winter wheat crop in Europe and America continue to be favorably reported of. The winter wheat acreage in the United States is stated to be increased 15 per cent over last year, and the condition of the crop at this time is much in advance of same time last year.

The local market has for the most part been dull during the week, with very little business doing. At the beginning of the week the value of 1 hard was nominally 63c per bushel in store Fort William, December delivery and remained so till Wednesday, when the price went up to 64c, and our buyer took on a large lot at that figure, for immediate shipment to St. John for export. On Thursday with continued firmness, an advance in American markets, holders of Manitoba wheat were higher in their views and held firmly at about 65c for 1 hard. Fort William, December delivery. There were some small sales at 64-1-2c in the early part of the day, and 1 hard May sold at 69c.

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