

especially active. Land and loan shares were steady. As compared with the previous week's quotations, closing bids on Wednesday were:

	Dec. 5.	Dec. 12.
Montreal .....	170	174
Ontario .....	100	104
Toronto .....	161	164
Merchants .....	104	108
Commerce .....	118	122
Imperial .....	133	135
Federal .....	119	125
Dominion .....	157	158
Standard .....	112	114
North-west Land .....	64	68

#### GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

There has been no improvement in the market since last week. Inactivity and dullness have been the chief characteristics. The receipts have been very light, and there has also been a very limited demand. Prices generally have been well maintained, and steady. Holders are not pressing sales. There does not seem to be as yet any proper understanding as to the amount of grain still in the country, which causes a feeling of anxiety on all hands.

#### WHEAT.

There has been but little offering during the week, and consequent inactivity has prevailed. The demand is only from millers, no enquiry for export being heard. Prices are steady at the following quotations: Fall wheat No. 2 \$1.11; No. 3, \$1.07; Spring do., No. 1, \$1.16; No. 2, \$1.14.

#### OATS.

The market is quiet and prices rather weak. Cars have sold at from 34c to 35c on track. On the street 36c to 37c is the ruling figure.

#### BARLEY.

There have been but few sales, and at easier prices. The demand is slack. Quotations: No. 1, 71c; No. 2, 66c; extra No. 3, 64c; No. 3, 52c to 55c.

#### RYE

is quiet and easier at 62c either for car lots or on the streets.

#### PEAS.

There is a good demand but not much activity in movement. No. 1 are quoted at 76c and No. 2 at 74c on track. Street prices are 74c to 75c.

#### FLOUR.

The market continues stagnant. There is scarcely any enquiry, and the following quotations are almost nominal: superior extra \$5.05 to \$5.15; extra \$4.85.

#### POTATOES.

There are sufficient to supply the demand. Car lots are steady at 75c. Street prices, 55c to 90c.

#### BUTTER.

There is quite a good demand for choice for local consumption, and all offered is readily taken at 15c to 19c. Medium and inferior are neglected, and nominal at 13c. Box lots of rolls have sold at 15c to 17c. On the street pound rolls have sold as a rule from 20c to 23c; large rolls 20 to 21c; tubs and crocks of fine dairy 19c to 20c.

#### EGGS

are rising, and all offered wanted. Round lots of fresh are worth 24c to 25c; lined 22c to 24c. Really fresh on the street bring 26c to 28c.

#### CHEESE

is quiet with small lots of fine selling at 12c to 12½c.

#### PORK

is moving slowly at \$15.

#### BACON.

There has been a more liberal offering, if new. Long clear is quoted at \$1c to 9c; Cumberland rolls, 10½c to 11; bellies, 12½c to 13c.

#### HAMS

are in active demand but easy at 12c to 12½c for smoked.

#### LARD

is easy at 10½c to 11c for tinnets and pails.

#### APPLES.

Car lots are quiet and nominal at \$3 to \$3.25; On the street prices are firm at \$2.50 for inferior to \$3 to \$3.50 for good to choice.

#### POULTRY.

Receipts are liberal. Turkeys and ducks in box lots are worth 5c to 9c per lb; fowl and geese 6c to 7c.

#### SUNDRIES.

Dried apples 9c to 9½c; oatmeal per 136 lbs, \$4.10 to \$4.20; cornmeal \$3.54 to \$3.62.

### Magneso Calcite Fire-Proof Boxes.

Considerable attention is now being attracted to the manufactures of the Magneso Calcite Fire-Proof Company of Boston. The Company manufactures all kinds of fire-proof caskets, chests, etc., for the preservation from fire of valuables of any kind. Mr A. A. Andrews has been appointed agent here, and already quite a business has been done. Last week a test was made before a number of citizens. A bond and note case containing books and paper money was placed in the furnace at McMillan's mill and subjected to the influences of the fire for an hour. A strong fire was kept up all the time sufficient to drive the 100 horse-power engine. When the box was taken out and opened it was found that only three layers of calcite had been carbonized, leaving six other layers, each possessing an equal amount of resistance unharmed, and which would have to be penetrated before the contents would be reached. The books and papers were entirely unharmed. The invention is certainly a valuable one, and be a great benefit to those having valuables which they wish to preserve from fire.

### Panama Canal.

Recent advices from Panama say: The progress of the work on the Panama Canal is shown by the following statement: The total length of the canal is 74 kilometres from the Atlantic to its mouth in the Pacific, at the islands Naos and Flamenco. It is divided into 12 sections, the most important of which are those of Colon, Gorgona, Obispo, Emperador, Culebra and Paraiso. These united sections employ daily 30 steam excavators, 40 locomotives and 800 tip wagons. There are 90,000,000 cubic metres to be excavated. The grand cutting, about two-thirds of which has already been excavated, is the cutting between Obispo and Paraiso. The force employed upon the work is upward of 19,000 men, and the excavation up to the 15th of October amounted to more than 2,500,000 cubic metres. During these latter months of the bad seasons the excavations have amounted to about 550,000 metres per month. This figure will be quintupled during the fine season, which begins in December, and next year mostly all the necessary machinery will be at work, and the excavations will amount to 4,000,000 metres. The working force will be augmented, and will form a total of 15,000 men.

At Colon the ports works are nearly complete. The Terra Plein, with the breakwater, destined to lessen the effect of the heavy

seas at the entrance of the canal, is finished. An entire town has appeared there, with a collection of workshops, warehouses and connecting railways for the reception and distribution of the material. The earth from Terra Plein was taken from Monkey Hill, where a great cutting has been specially opened with the object of filling up the lagoons at the bottom of the bay of Colon to improve its sanitary condition. This cutting at Monkey Hill will itself be enlarged into Terra Plein, and will become an annex for stores, workshops, warehouses, etc. The port of Colon is dredged continually by three machines, producing together daily from 6,000 to 7,000 metres. One of these dredges can work during the worst weather, and can perform 3,000 metres in a day.

From Colon to Gatun the contractors are Messrs. Huere & Slavin of San Francisco. These engineers must, with three machines of 120-horse power each, open the first section in six months between Colon and Gatun, a distance of nine kilometres. The first of these machines is in full blast, and is able to excavate the enormous quantity of 6,000 metres per diem, to be paid at the rate of one franc per fifty cubic metre. The Pacific opening, between the mouth of the Rio Grande and Paraiso is contracted by the Franco-American Trading Company. The first machine of the American system will begin work in a few days, and be supplemented by others which will be necessary to finish this part of the canal in two years, as a maximum, from Gatun to Bahia Soldado. On the Atlantic side the company are working two machines furnishing a minimum of 4,000 cubic metres per diem.

The Hercules, an American dredge, is at length at work on the Panama Canal, and is giving satisfaction. The average day's work at present may be set down as about 6,000 cubic metres.

### Merchandise by Mail.

The U.S. Post-Office Department has issued an order which will hereafter require prepayment at merchandise rates on various articles which have heretofore been allowed to pass through the mails as "printed matter" at the rate of one cent for two ounces. The Postmaster-General recently decided that articles of merchandise sent by manufacturers or dealers are subject to merchandise rates although they bear printing, holding that it was never the intention of Congress to classify matter having no other value than that of merchandise, as printed matter, because of any printing it may contain. He took the view that in fixing a low rate of postage on printed matter, Congress could hardly have designed to discriminate in favor of dealers in such articles of merchandise as might happen to contain or bear printing. It was rather its intention, in accordance with the long established policy of the government, to favor the dissemination of information among the people by admitting reading matter in the form of newspapers, periodicals, books and pamphlets to the mails, at the lowest possible charge, and at the same time to encourage trade and manufacturers by allowing unsealed printed circulars, catalogues, etc., soliciting custom, and giving prices and descriptions of goods, to pass in the mails at equally low rates.