

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Winnipeg, Saturday, Feb. 4.

The very severe weather which has prevailed this week has tended to make business quieter. In the country, though higher prices were being offered for wheat than previous to last week, yet there was very little grain being marketed by farmers, as few who were not compelled to, would go out any distance during such severe weather. However, we cannot expect very cold weather to last much longer, and between now and spring there should be larger marketings of wheat than has been made since the close of navigation. The "boom" in wheat prices which took place last week in United States markets, seems to have flattened out considerably already. Prices being offered for wheat to farmers in Manitoba country markets are high, when measured by prices which can be paid for export.

Bank clearings at Winnipeg for the month of January show a gain of \$1,336,874 over January a year ago, \$2,673,233 over January of 1897, and \$2,705,852 over January, 1896. Business for the month past, makes a good showing compared with the similar period of previous years. Collections, however, are reported slow in the country, farmers being backward in meeting their obligations to merchants. In the city there is more work going on than usual for the time of year, and labor is well employed. Savings bank deposits for January in Winnipeg show an increase over withdrawals, which is a good record for a winter month, which is about the most costly of the year for ordinary living expenses, besides following immediately the expensive holiday season.

To-day—Feb. 4—is the heavy payday of the year in the dry goods and some other branches of trade. Of course, we cannot report results until returns are in.

Next week a large number of merchants from outside points will be in the city, owing to the bonspiel attractions and special railway rates, and more or less buying will be done by the visitors.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

Winnipeg, Saturday, Feb. 4.

(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.)

COAL AND WOOD.

Fuel dealers have had another big week's trade, as a result of the very severe weather. Wood fuel is offering very freely in car lots here at prices quoted on another page. There was talk of a further advance of 25c in

anthracite coal at western points in the United States, which would make the wholesale price \$5 per ton at Duluth, if it goes into effect. Imported anthracite continues to sell in Winnipeg at less than cost laid down here, on the basis of wholesale quotations at Duluth. As dealers here, however, could not go on indefinitely selling coal at cost or loss, it is evident that prices of Pennsylvania anthracite at supply points in the United States must be cut to considerably under quoted prices.

Later advice report the \$5 rate now in effect at Duluth, which is equal to \$3 per ton for car lots on track Winnipeg, the freight rate being \$3 per ton.

DRUGS.

Mercurials, borax, boracic acid, soda bromide, annum brom., pot. bromide, blue vitrol and turpentine are all higher in price in first hands. Paris green has been advanced 2c by the manufacturers.

DRY GOODS.

Cotton goods continue to show a firm market. The advance in wool at the recent London sales has caused a firmer tone in the market for woolsens, but this would not affect the market before next fall. It is said that some Canadian manufacturers are very short of raw material, and most imported wools will cost them higher since the London sales.

GREEN FRUITS.

The severe weather put a damper on business in this branch. Bananas were beginning to have a considerable sale, but they were shut off this week by the cold weather. In apples, spies have again been advanced, but other varieties are unchanged. Oranges are steady. California lemons have not been offered freely yet and they are held firm. Almeria grapes are about out of stock. It is likely a few more small lots will be brought in, but they will cost higher. Oranges are advancing. Prices are: California naval orange, \$4.75 to \$1.25 as to size; Mexican oranges, \$3 to \$1.25 per box; California seedling oranges \$3 a box; bananas, per bunch, large \$3 to \$3.50; medium, \$2.25 to \$2.50; Messina lemons, \$4 to \$4.25 per box; California lemons, \$4 to \$4.25 per box; Ontario apples, good ordinary stock \$4; fancy spies, \$5.50 per bbl; Almeria grapes \$8 to \$10 per keg; rose canberries, \$6.75 to \$7 per bbl; cranberries, unfrozen, \$6 barrel; coconuts, \$1 a dozen; Sicily filberts, large 11 to 12c per pound; Grenoble walnuts, 15c; Tarragona almonds, 14c; peanuts, green, 10c; roasted, 12c; pecan nuts, 12c lb.; shell-ed walnuts, 24-1-2 to 26c per pound; comb. honey, \$2.15 per dozen sections; strained honey, 8-1-2 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, 7-1-2c per pound; celery, 40c per dozen bunches.

GROCERIES.

The sugar market is unsettled, owing to the offering here of United States sugars of all qualities. At first only granulated sugar from the States was offered in this market and Canadian refineries reduced their prices to meet the quotations on United States sugar. Since this, however, United States sugars have been offering laid down here at less than prices of Canadian sugars, for all qualities, including yellows, except

granulated, the price for the later, as just stated, having been met by Canadian refiners. An advance in freight rates of about 10c per 100 pounds, however, has gone into effect in the United States on sugar, and the market is unsettled. Teas are in fair demand at steady and firm prices. Coffees are steady. Oatmeal is still offering sparingly, the Manitoba mills being able so far only to keep a hand to mouth supply, though they are gradually gaining orders. The quality of the meal this year is affected by the poor quality of the oat crop, which is not up to the average. The price of brooms has been advanced here 25 to 50c per dozen, owing to the very high price of broom corn, as noted last week. Canned goods are quiet on spot. Canneries are holding the balance of their stocks firm, owing to large sales having been made for the Yukon and northern British Columbia trade, which has reduced available supplies.

Price changes this week include a reduction of 10c on granulated sugar and 5c reduction per 100 lbs. on yellow. The jobbing price on matches has been reduced 10c per case, to meet reduction noted last week in manufacturers' price. T. & B. tobacco and Prince of Wales chewing tobaccos have been reduced 2c per lb. Oatmeal is quoted 10c lower, and Patna and B. rice are a point lower.

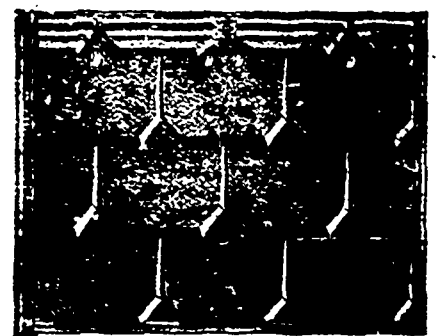
HARDWARE AND PAINTS.

Dealers report orders now coming in freely for later shipment, and some good sized orders for immediate shipment have been received from the Kootenay and other British Columbia points. Prices are firm, in sympathy with the general advance in heavy hardware and metals in outside markets. Tin has been advanced sharply to 26 to 27c for ingots. Tin plates, 20x28 size, have been advanced 50c per box. Tern plates are 50c higher. Canada plates are firm at 10c advance. Galvanized iron is 25c per

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