

—A curious example of the survival of red tape in a department of the government of Canada was brought to our notice, says the *Ottawa Journal*. A leading Ottawa firm had plans prepared for changes in a building. The architect mailed the plans from Montreal on the 6th instant, but made a mistake in affixing the postage stamps, and the parcel was detained here for insufficient postage, and sent to the dead letter office in order that the usual form of notification might be gone through with the orthodox solemnity and delay. In the meantime the firm began telegraphing to find out what had become of the parcel, but without success. Yesterday, the 10th instant, four days after the parcel was posted at Montreal, the parties were enabled to get their parcel. The firm is one of the most prominent in Ottawa, and the amount of public revenue involved was two cents.

Commercial.

MONTREAL MARKETS.

MONTREAL, DEC. 24th, 1890.

ASKES.—Receipts are showing a slight increase and figures for the month will be a little ahead of last December. The demand has slackened for pots, and values show some easing off. Quotations for first quality are \$5.55 to \$5.65; for seconds there is very little enquiry, and pearls are very dull with nominal values. Stock in store about 75 barrels.

CEMENTS, FIREBRICKS, &c.—General dullness prevails in these lines. There has been some dickering with a view to the concentration of stocks of cement, but holders would make no concessions on prices and the possible corner fell through.

DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.—A quiet seasonable trade prevails in these departments of trade, and there is no very notable disturbance of values. Bicarb. soda rules very firm and our last quotations may be advanced ten cents; tartaric and citric acids are very firm; quinine dull as ditch water; opium rather weaker owing to the desire of New York holders with large stocks to realize; oil of lemon has made a considerable start upwards and is quoted twenty-five cents dearer.

DRY GOODS.—A prominent dry goods man just returned from a brief trip west of Toronto reports retail trade fairly good, but no particular "snap" to it. They want snow to make trade better. A traveller's letter from British Columbia reports business there as very good, so much so that he can get little of the merchants' time to look at samples. In eastern sections the arrival of snow has helped trade somewhat, and we are glad to be able to note some improvement in remittances from country sections. City holiday trade is good and collections from this quarter are favorably spoken of. Values in all lines of textile manufactures rule firm.

FURS.—A good many fair lots of raw furs have been bought in during the last ten days, and trappers and dealers have realized satisfactory prices. Bear, skunk, muskrat and mink continue in demand for local consumption. We hear of country dealers offering some pretty high figures for beaver, but if they expect to realize more than our quotations from city wholesale dealers we fear they will be disappointed. We quote:—Beaver, per lb. \$4.00 to 4.50; bear, per skin, \$10 to 15; bear cub, \$5 to 8; fisher, \$3.50 to 5; fox, red, \$1 to 1.25; fox, cross, \$2.50 to 5; lynx, \$1.50 to 2.50; marten, 75 to 90c; mink, \$1.50 to 1.75; muskrat, fall, 12 and 15c; otter, \$8 to 10; raccoon, 50 to 60c; skunk, 50, 75c. and \$1.00, according to quality and stripe.

GROCERIES.—Trade in wholesale circles is rather quiet at the moment, as might be expected. The only noteworthy change since this day week is the decline of ½c. in sugars. Granulated at the refinery is now 6½c. yellows range from 4½c. for very dark samples to 5½c. The future of the sugar market is being much discussed; by the provisions of the McKinley bill raw sugars will be free on the first of April, and how the change may affect the Canadian trade will be anxiously looked for. Japan teas continue very steady. There are no blocks of goods lying around and the few consigned lots here are firmly held. We see some quotations of Valencia raisins at 5½ to

6c., but we are assured by different authorities that no desirable fruit can be had at these figures. From 6½ to 6½c. is a fair figure for sound fruit; layers, 7½ to 8c. It is said first hands are now asking 6½c. for good Valencias in quantity. Currants and other lines as before. In canned goods salmon is rather firming up.

LEATHER.—No sales of any consequence are reported during the past week, and very little business is looked for during the next fortnight. Stocks are in healthy compass and prices as last quoted. There have been no recent shipments to England from this market, but we hear of some moderate lots going from Quebec. We quote:—Spanish sole, B. A., No. 1, 21 to 23c.; do., No. 2, B. A., 18 to 19c.; No. 1, ordinary Spanish, 20 to 21c.; No. 2; ditto, 17 to 18c.; No. 1, China, 19 to 20c.; No. 1 slaughter, 22 to 25c.; No. 2 do., 21 to 22c.; American oak sole, 39 to 43c.; British oak sole, 38 to 45c.; waxed upper, light and medium, 33 to 36c.; ditto, heavy, 31 to 35c.; grained, 32 to 34c.; Scotch grained, 32 to 37c.; splits, large, 16 to 24c.; do., small, 15 to 16c.; calf-splits, 32 to 35c.; calfskins (35 to 40 lbs.), 50 to 60c.; imitation French calfskins, 65 to 80c.; russet sheepskin linings, 30 to 40c.; harness, 23 to 29c.; buffed cow, 12 to 14c.; pebbled cow, 12 to 15c.; rough, 20 to 25c.; russet and bridle, 45 to 55c.

METALS AND HARDWARE.—Continued dullness prevails in these lines; as a leading broker puts it, "there is not a blessed thing doing" and we cannot note a single change on the list of local quotations. In Glasgow warrants have ruled steady for the last several days at 46s. 6d. being some slight gain on last week's figures. In maker's prices, Eglinton and Dalmellington are cabled 6d. higher.

OILS, PAINTS AND GLASS.—Show no movement just now and stock taking is the present occupation of most houses. Linseed oil and turpentine are at figures quoted last week, also fish oils. Castor oil is rather easier at 11c. in a jobbing way. Leads, colors, glass as before. We quote:—Leads (chemically pure and first-class brands only) \$6; No. 1, \$5 to 5.50; No. 2, \$4.75; No. 3, \$4 to 4.50; dry white lead, 5½ to 5½c.; red do., 4½c.; London washed whiting, 50c.; Paris white, 90c. to \$1; Cookson's Venetian red, \$1.60 to 1.75; other brands of Venetian red, \$1.40 to 1.60; yellow ochre, \$1.50 to 1.75; spruce ochre, \$2.25 to 2.50. Window glass, \$1.50 per 50 feet for first break, \$1.60 for second break; 5c. off for 100 box lots.

TORONTO MARKETS.

TORONTO, DEC. 24th, 1890.

BOOTS AND SHOES.—The business being done continues satisfactory. Seasonable goods, such as overshoes, rubbers, and all kinds of felt goods, are in brisk demand. Numerous sorting orders are being received, but they are generally of small size. Stocktaking and factory repairs occupy the attention of manufacturers considerably at present.

DRUGS.—Business in the warehouses is neither active nor quiet. There is not much movement in drugs, though there is a bit of a stir in druggists' sundries and fancy goods. There is very little change in values, but heavy goods are firmer because of their being stored for the winter.

FLOUR AND MEAL.—The dullness in flour is very marked, only a local business doing, and people will hardly buy oatmeal when it is higher than flour. So about the only thing in this line moving is bran. We quote patent winter wheat flour \$4.70 to 5.00, while patent spring is down to \$5 to 5.10 nominal; Manitoba patent \$5.30; strong bakers \$5 to \$5.10. These prices are for the most part nominal, for no shipments are being made eastward. Bran is scarce and wanted at \$18 per ton.

FURS.—The present season for furs has been exceptionally gratifying to wholesale houses, being the best that Toronto has seen for some years. All kinds of furs are in small compass, the following particularly so—beaver, grey lamb, and Alaska sable. The favorable weather has stimulated orders from country and city, and in addition, higher prices in every other market, with certain increased values next season; buyers have not at all been timid. Skins of all kinds have been asked for in this market, to supply Montreal, Boston and New York. Recent advances from all European centres confirm the impression that furs will be dearer next season.

GRAIN.—We can report very little activity in grain; Old Country markets are steady, having settled down. Chicago has dropped 2c. since Saturday. There is no No. 1 winter wheat in this market, but in No. 2 there are transactions outside at equal to 93 to 94c.; there are sales of No. 1 spring at 86 to 87c. We note one transaction where 20,000 bushels sold this week for export, an unprecedented thing for some years, for of late, and for a long while, we have been above an export basis; No. 2 is moving in fair parcels at 83 to 84c.

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