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THE HARDWARE AND OIL TRADES.

The comparatively long-continued period of low temperatures has resulted in a rush of business for seasonable metal goods. The demand for such articles as skates and sleigh-bells was hardly ever more active than it is now, and this date is usually but the beginning of the season. Wholesale dealers are beginning to arrive at an opinion upon the whole volume of trade during the past year, and they appear to think that while perhaps it is scarcely larger than that of last year, yet it is certainly fully equal to it, and it should be remembered that last year was a wonderfully good one. Prices remain firm, with hardly any appreciable changes. This is the season of the year when the various hardware associations meet to compare notes and to fix prices; but so far as known, they have no particularly important subject for discussion on hand. They may, of course, decide to alter prices in some instances, but it is the general belief that these alterations, if there be any, will be of an unimportant character. There is a very

firm feeling in cordage, and any change is likely to be in an upward direction. As remarked above, the most noticeable feature of the shelf hardware trade for the moment is the unusually large demand for seasonable goods. Very large quantities of skates are going out. Some rumors of a shortage of these are heard, but it is believed in the best-informed quarters that this has been exaggerated. Orders for sleigh bells are reported as coming in in highly satisfactory numbers both from Ontario points, many of which are now enjoying good sleighing, and from the Northwest. Montreal reports speak similarly as to Quebec province. Other articles of a winter kind, which seem to be in extra good request, are snow-shovels, hockey-sticks, and such domestic and sporting implements; as well as goods of a holiday nature, such as cutlery, silverware, etc. It may be added that horse nails, rivets, burrs, staples, screws, nuts, etc., continue in fair demand, but the call for wire nails has declined considerably during the last month, though before the close of navigation, trade in them was exceptionally good.

The building trades must be pretty busy, judging from the keen demand for goods required in plumbing; and a point worth mentioning is that people now-a-days seem to call for those of a somewhat higher grade than was the usual case until latterly. Prices in these lines keep steady, though for large orders a little shading is occasionally indulged in. In cement not very much business is being done just at present, though prices keep firm, and some slight advances are not improbable during the winter. Canadian cement now fetches \$2 or a little more at the mills. An active trade is going on in firebricks.

At the oil warehouses, much discussion has been created by the almost unprecedented strength in coal oil. A brisk trade has been carried on in Toronto at the recent advance of 1c. per gallon. It is said that the highest prices in over twenty years for crude oil were paid last week on the Pennsylvania Exchange. The output is being restricted both in this country and the United States owing to the cold weather, as a consequence of which the price went up two weeks ago by 5c. per gallon. Apart from this comparative scarcity, it appears that the consumption has increased during the last year or two owing to the greater number of oil stoves and oil engines in use. Lubricating oils are also very firm, while fish oils are very high-priced—cod liver oil, we believe, was never quoted higher, owing to the very light catch. Seal oil, too, which is used to a certain extent as a substitute for cod, is going up. Linseed oil has declined a couple of cents. Turpentine continues steady. The paint trade has naturally been a little dull since navigation closed.

As to metals, the demand has fallen off, especially for pig iron, but probably not more so than is usual when the water channels are frost-bound. It may be said, especially when the dullness of the market in the United States is taken into consideration, that the trade in pig and bar iron in Canada has kept up wonderfully well. The latter has dropped 5c. in price, however. Iron pipes have been active. Some American tin plates have recently been sold in Canada in competition with the Welsh, at some little