

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Saturday, Dec. 29.

This has been a very quiet week in business circles owing to the fact of its being Christmas week and also on account of the festivities connected with the return of the men who went to South Africa with the first Canadian contingent. In wholesale circles there has been practically nothing doing. In some lines stock-taking has been in progress. Retail stores had a very large day's business on Monday but the rest of the week has been quiet. Gift goods were still being bought on Wednesday to a limited extent, but practically speaking the trade was over on Monday. With regard to the Christmas trade generally it may be said that it was very much better than the situation would seem to warrant. Of course when it is considered that the wage earning classes of the city have hardly felt as yet the stress of the crop shortage the activity of city stores is largely accounted for. Labor has been well employed in the city throughout the entire year, wages have been good and there have been no serious strikes. Grain deliveries at country markets during the week have been light and there has been very little sale in the country towns. Deliveries of country produce have also been light. Bank clearings at Winnipeg show a falling off of \$353,764 as compared with last week and of \$351,020 as compared with a year ago. As compared with two years ago they show an increase of \$170,071.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

Saturday, Dec. 29.

(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.)

DRUGS.

Trade is now down to the regular demand for medicinal purposes again, and it is expected that business will be quiet for a while. As regards prices there is nothing new to note. Our list of quotations for leading staples at Winnipeg will be found on another page. There have been no changes at all here during the week. The Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter notes a quiet market at New York in its issue of Monday and gives the following list of minor changes there. Advanced—Russian camphor, 2c, Japan wax, 1c, Bergamot oil, 20c, camellia seed, 1c, cochinilla seed, 3c, sunflower seed, 1c, Zanzibar cloves, 1c, Singapore black pepper, 1c. Declined—Cocoa butter, bulk, 1c, cubebs, 1c, Cassia oil, 5c; Sassafras oil, 1c; thyme, 1c, Senega 1c. Rio Ipecac, 1c, Verona orris root, 1c; Cassia buds 1c.

DRY GOODS.

Business during the week has been confined to a decidedly light and desultory house trade. There was some demand early in the week for bunting, flags, etc., for decorative purposes, in connection with the return of the western South African contingent. Travelers are out after spring orders on some country routes but so far the degree of success they will meet with can hardly be estimated. Country merchants are inclined to be very cautious in their buying owing to the scarcity of money and poor outcome of the 1900 crops, and would rather have to wait freely than order too large a stock in the first place. This policy on their part seems to meet with general approval among local wholesale dealers as they have no desire to sell a merchant more goods than he can dispose of and are pretty sure of getting the bulk of any sorting trade that may be going later on. Spring goods are now arriving here and are being sorted and placed in stock. This work will keep the house staffs busy until shipping time comes around. The fact that money is scarce, and the consequent demand reduced does not seem to have deterred jobbers from laying in full stocks of everything that is fashionable and good in the way of spring goods. It is safe to say that nowhere in Canada can a finer or better

selection of these lines be found than is now going into stock in the jobbing warehouses of Winnipeg.

FISH.

There is a steady demand for all varieties of domestic frozen fish and prices for these are unchanged. There is a great scarcity of flannel haddock and orders are being cut down as much as one-half in some cases in consequence of which the jobbing price is firmly held at 10c per lb. Digby chicks and salt herring are also scarce and very firmly held. A carload of salt water fresh fish from the Atlantic seaboard has been a feature of the market, arriving about the end of the week. Prices for this were not fixed at time of writing. We quote: Whitefish, 4 to 6c per lb, pickerel, 4c, pike, 3c; trout, 10c; salmon, 12½c; halibut, 12½c, Lake Superior herring, 20c per dozen, salt cod, 6½c, Labrador herring, per barrel, \$1.25, salt mackerel, \$2.25 per kit, shad, ½ bbls \$7.50, Digby chicks, 15c, box, boneless cod, 7½c lb, boneless fish, 5½c lb; flannel haddock 10c per pound; oysters, select, \$2.25 per gallon; standards, \$2.00.

FUEL.

The city wood market is becoming demoralized under liberal receipts and extreme competition. While the wholesale or carlot rates as quoted on our "prices current" page are not quotably changed retail prices throughout the city have been reduced in some cases as much as 50 and 75c a cord below the quotations at which the winter season opened. Tamarac, for instance, is now selling as low as \$5.00 per cord, whereas the price early in November was \$5.75. Some of the wood being sold at these cut rates is not first class in quality. This decline in retail prices has been helped by the reduction in C. P. R. freight rates, which went into effect on Monday amounting to 15c per cord. Coal is moving into consumers' hands freely and is unchanged in price. In spite of the reports of shortage at lake ports it is not thought that there will be any change in Pennsylvania anthracite prices this winter.

GREEN FRUITS.

Trade has been much quieter since Christmas day. Monday was marked by a very large demand from city retailers, which pretty well cleaned up the wholesale stocks of everything but staple lines. Wednesday was also a fairly good day, while the balance of the week's business has been small. Values remain unchanged as follows: Apples, Spies, \$4.00, Baldwins, Rich Daisies and Pippins, \$3.50 to \$3.75, Greenings, \$3.25, Russets, \$3.50, California navel oranges, 176 to 200 count, per box, \$5. 150 count, \$4.50, 126 count, \$4. Florida oranges, \$1.75 to \$3.50 per box, Japanese oranges, per box, \$1. California lemons, per box, \$4.75 to \$5.25, as to size, bananas per bunch, \$2.25, cranberries per barrel, \$12, California pears, per case, \$4.00, Malaga grapes, per keg, \$8.50, Catawba grapes per pony basket, 35c, onions, per lb, 3½c, or in 5-sack lots 3c, sweet potatoes, \$11, mince meat in 25 lb pails, 10c per pound, cartoon dates, per package of 1 lb, 10c, new dates, 6 to 6½c, new figs, \$1.40 to \$1.60, elder in kegs or barrels, 35c per gal., honey, 1-lb. jars, \$2.50 a dozen, maple sugar, 12c, citrons, 2c per pound.

GROCERIES.

Now that the holiday demand is practically over there is not much stir in the grocery market and jobbers are having a breathing spell. On the whole their Christmas trade was very satisfactory, although money was scarce and collections slow. This week has marked the commencement of a virtual famine in Green Rio coffee. The delayed consignments mentioned in these columns last week are not due to arrive here until about the 20th of the month or about ten days later than the date named last week. In the meantime stocks in the city are very low and some houses have completely sold out. There has been no change as yet in the quotations for imported oatmeal but if the recent customs ruling with regard to valuation is sustained it will mean an advance of 5c in the price of the 50 pound sacks. White beans are holding firm at the advance of some weeks ago and if they had to be brought in at present prices at producing points would cost in a jobbing way here \$2.00 per bushel. Fortunately local houses have still some beans bought at the old figures and these are being jobbed at \$1.80 to \$1.85 per bushel. Dried and

evaporated apples are much firmer owing to the damage by the autumn windstorm having proven to be much more serious than was at first estimated and although quotations here have not been increased as yet the opinion is general that they will have to be in the near future.

HARDWARE.

Trade is quiet and there is very little demand for any kind of hardware. Coll chain and building paper have been advanced in the east, but are unchanged here. Rope prices, which have been a little weak, have stiffened up again and are firm at quotations given in our price list.

OLD MATERIAL.

We quote buyers' prices here as follows: No. cast iron, free from wrought and malleable, \$12 to \$13 per ton. No. 2, \$1.00 to \$1.50 per ton, wrought iron scrap, \$5 to \$6 per ton, heavy copper 10 to 12c per pound; red brass, 10c per pound, yellow brass, heavy, 7 to 8c per pound, light brass, 5c to 6c per pound; lead pipe or tea lead, 2 to 2½c per pound; rags, country mixed, 50c per 100 pounds; rubbers, free from rivets, buckles and articles, 6c per pound; zinc scrap 1c per pound; bones, clean, dry and bleached, \$5 to \$6 per ton; bottles, quart, 20c per dozen, pints, 12½c per dozen.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

WHEAT—The holiday season closed on wheat markets from two to three days this week and until yesterday there was no change in the quiet even tenor that has marked the trade during the last few weeks. On Thursday the agricultural department at Washington issued the final government report of the yield of winter and spring wheat in the States for the year 1900. The last government estimate issued in October gave it as 450,000,000 bushels. Since then the threshers' reports have been received and the final estimate makes the crop 522,000,000 bushels, against 557,000,000 bushels last year. This quantity is about what was generally expected by the trade, and is not likely to have much influence on the markets either way, but yesterday in the speculative markets more activity was shown than previously, and the slight decline that had been going on the last few days was arrested and prices brought back to where they stood a week ago. Receipts at primary points in the States continue larger than last year and the visible supply also holds up. World's shipments continue to be liberal with consequent increase of the quantity on ocean passage. Winter wheat crop in the States is progressing favorably for the season of the year. European crops are also doing well, although in western Europe there has been too much mild weather, and dry cold weather is wanted. Argentina is now in the midst of harvest and very little news has come from there recently, except that threshing results are expected to be disappointing owing to shrunken grain. The American visible supply increased last week 331,000 bushels, compared to a decrease the previous week of 412,000 bushels, and an increase last year of 1,725,000 bushels. The world's shipments were 7,230,000 bushels against 8,418,000 bushels the previous week, and 4,716,000 bushels last year. The world's visible supply according to Bradstreet's decreased 13,000 bushels, compared to an increase the previous week of 2,532,000 bushels and a decrease last year of 733,000 bushels.

There is little doing on the local market. The movement of wheat from country points is now small, and the demand is also light. No effort is made to push business, as dealers recognize the small quantity of wheat there is to be handled this season. Prices have been practically stationary, although the advance yesterday in outside markets caused a firmer feeling among local holders. We quote prices as follows: 1 hard 7½c, 2 hard 7½c, 3 hard 6½c, 3 northern 6½c, in store. Fort William, dried 3 hard 6½c, dried 3 northern 6½c in store. Port Arthur. Several cars are selling on sample and some shipments being made on sample to the eastern market, but such business is very unsatisfactory in the working.

FLOUR—It being the end of the month there is not the usual demand for flour and business is moving along quietly. Prices remain unchanged. We quote: Lake of the Woods, Five Roses, \$2.10; Red Patent, \$1.95; Medora, \$1.60; X-

XXX, \$1.35 per sack of 48 pounds. Ogilvie Milling Co., Hungry Man, \$2.10; Glenora Patent, \$1.50; Manitoba, \$1.00; and Imperial XXX, \$1.20 per sack of 48 pounds.

MILLEFEED—Stocks are light and prices hold firm. We quote: Bran in bags, \$13 per ton; shorts, in bags, 15 per ton.

GROUND FEED—Quoted at 25 per ton for pure oat, 23.00 for mixed barley, 21.00 for oats, and \$20 for corn. These prices are for pure ground feed of good quality in broken lots, delivered in the city.

WHEAT—The country market has been very quiet and deliveries by farmers light. Prices to farmers are a pretty wide range varying according to freight rate and quality of grain. As high as 65c per bushel is being paid for No. 1 hard wheat and the range is from about 55 to 65c.

OATS—There is a quiet but steady demand for oats for feed purposes and the market is in about the same position as a week ago. Farmers are not feeding oats quite so much as usual this year owing to the fact that most of them have low grade wheat which they are feeding instead. This affects the demand. Northern Alberta oats are still coming into this market in fairly liberal quantities and there is a good demand for these for delivery later on when seedtime arrives. As a rule their quality is excellent but some lots are showing signs of damage. This, of course, affects their keeping quality. Carlots of Alberta oats are worth as high as 38c per bushel in carlots on track here and the range is from 36½ to 37c. Offerings of Manitoba oats continue light in weight and are generally of poor quality. They are worth 34½ to 35c for best grades, and from 30 to 31c for inferior qualities. At country points buyers are paying 25 to 38c to farmers according to quality.

BARLEY—The market has remained almost a nominal condition. Offerings are quoted at 34 to 36c for 6-4 grades and malting at 38 to 40c in carlots on track.

CORN—The market has ruled steady throughout the week and carlots are being quoted to-day at 43½c per bushel on track here.

FLAX—There is nothing doing in flax and the price rules nominal at about \$1.45 per bushel to the farmer.

HAY—Offerings of hay are ample for all requirements and the market is steady. A good deal of the hay is of inferior quality. As high as \$8 per ton would be paid for choice hay, but the general run of prices is from \$7 to \$7.50 per ton, in carlots on track here. Farmers' loads on the street are worth \$7 to \$8 per ton.

POULTRY—Stocks of poultry now in the market are quite large and receipts continue liberal, consequently prices are easy, but they are not quickly changed. Dealers are paying 11c net for turkeys, 1c for ducks, 8½c for geese, and about 5c for chickens.

GAME—About 25 to 30c per pair is being paid for frozen fall ducks, about 10c per pair for common rabbits and 25c each for jack rabbits.

DRESSED MEATS—In a retail way there has been a good demand for all kinds of dressed meats and Monday's business was particularly large. Wholesale trade has not been so large. Dressed hogs are coming forward freely. Prices throughout the week have held steady as follows: Beef, country dressed, 4 to 4½c, city dressed, 5c to 6c, steaks and rough beef, 4 to 4½c, veal, 5 to 7c, mutton, 5 to 10c, lamb, 9 to 10c, hogs, 6 to 6½c.

BUTTER—Creamery—Nominal. BUTTER—Dairy—Receipts are largely large, but the most of the offerings are not of choicest quality. From 14 to 17c per pound, commission 1c is being paid for offerings, according to quality, but very little of the latter brings the top price.

CHEESE—Dealers will pay 4c for choice factory cheese and 6c for dairy, net, delivered here.

EGGS—Supplies are very light and prices are now quoting 20c per dozen net, delivered in Winnipeg.

VEGETABLES—We quote: Potatoes, farmers' loads, 40c bushel, 30c; carrots and beets, 35c per bushel, turnips, 20c per bushel; onions, 2c lb, 2½ to 3c lb; cabbage, 30 to 40c per dozen, celeriac 20c per dozen, lettuce, 40c.

HIDES—The hide market is quiet.