

THE BUSINESS SITUATION.

WINNIPEG, Saturday, March. 16.

Though the weather has been cold for the season lately, there are signs of spring business. Implement dealers are displaying their wares, and a few plows, harrows and seeders are being enquired for. In the dry goods and clothing trade spring orders have now been mostly filled. The fur trade is waiting for the report of the London sales, which open next week. There is an increasing movement in hardware, paints, etc.

WINNIPEG MARKETS.

WINNIPEG, SATURDAY AFTERNOON, Mar. 16.

[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.]

GROCERIES.—Sugars were a little higher in New York this week, but latest advices did not report any advance at refineries in this country, granulated sugar being quoted at 3½c, and some large lots sold at 1-16c lower at the refineries, with second grade of granulated held at 3½c. An advance later was thought probable. Willot & Gray's revised estimates of the cane crops are now 3,417,043 tons, against 3,507,634 tons last season. Taking Mr. Licht's latest reduced estimates of the beet crops, the total of cane and beet is 8,328,053 tons, against 7,402,913 tons last year, an excess of 925,141 tons. A moderate amount of this excess has already gone into increased consumption in Europe and into increased exports of refined sugars from the continent to the East Indies, but the total stocks in all countries still show a visible surplus of 593,110 tons to be disposed of before the next beet crop matures in October. Although the decline of prices is great, still the large oversupply must continue as a check to much if any advance, until it is definitely known what the sowings for the next beet crop are to be.

GREEN FRUITS.—California oranges are having a wider sale than usual this year owing to the destruction from frost in Florida and the damage to the Italian and Spanish orange crops from storms. At the Montreal Fruit Auction Co's rooms Montreal on Monday, the following prices were realized: Apples, \$2 to \$5 a barrel; lemons, \$1.50 to \$2; Valencia oranges, \$2.50 a box; Messina oranges, \$1.30 a box. The local market is about the same. Choice apples are scarce. Prices are as follows: California oranges seedlings, \$1 per box; California Navel oranges, \$1.50 per box; Messina lemons, \$5 to \$5.50 per box; apples \$1 to \$6 per barrel as to quality and condition; California Easter Beurre pears \$1.50 per box; bananas, when obtainable, \$3 to 4.50 per bunch; Malaga grapes, \$11.50 per large leg, Spanish onions, \$1 to \$1.25 per crate of 50 lbs. Layer figs, 10 lb boxes, 15c per pound. Sweet potatoes, \$5.50 per barrel. White comb honey, 22c a lb, new dates, 7 to 7½c a lb.

FISH.—Manitoba round (not gutted) frozen fish are offering lower, as the season for handling this class of fish is getting advanced. Finnan haddies have been sold as low as \$1.50 per box, owing, it is said, to the consignment of lots to juries here who have sold at low prices. Oysters are back at the old prices again. The season of Lent makes a better demand for fish. We quote: British Columbia salmon, 14c lb; British Columbia halibut, 14c. Fresh mackerel, 12½c lb.; cod, 7c; haddock, 8c, smelts, 12½c; sea herring, 8½c dozen; Lake Superior herring, 25c doz; Lake Superior trout, 9c, whitefish, round (not gutted) 3½ to 4c; whitefish slit, 5c; pickerel, 2½ to 3c; pike 1 to 2c. perch, 2c; smoked whitefish, 8c lb;

smoked goldeyes, 30 to 35c dozen; red herring 20c box; finnan haddies, 6 to 6½ lb; Oysters, \$2 for standards and \$2.25 for selects, per gallon. Shell oysters, \$7.50 per barrel; cans, selects, 18c; cans, standards, 15c each; dry cod, 7c lb; boneless cod, 7 to 7½c; boneless fish 6c.

LUMBER.—The new list of lumber prices from the Winnipeg yards has been issued by the dealers. As stated a couple of weeks ago, the discount has been increased to 10 per cent instead of 5 per cent as formerly. This amounts to quite a reduction, averaging about \$1 per thousand feet on ordinary lumber and over \$2 reduction on high grades. The only changes in quotations, as compared with the list last fall are, \$1 advance on 6 inch spruce shiplap to \$19 and B.C. clear fir is quoted at \$10 per M instead of \$9 as in the old list.

WOOD FUEL. Cordwood is perhaps a trifle firmer, and as soon as the roads break up an advance in prices is expected. Some shippers are holding out for \$1 for tamarac wood on track here and they say they will not sell any lower. They are not selling any at this price. Tamarac is to be had at \$3.25 to \$3.60 per cord on track here as to quality, good quality is held about \$3.50 to \$3.60, pine about \$3.00 to \$3.25 per cord. Oak brings about the same as tamarac, and extra good oak goes a little better sometimes. Poplar ranges about \$2 to \$2.25 per cord on track here.

HARDWARE, PAINTS, OILS &c.—Eastern advices report weakness in prices of metals, cut prices being reported in several lines. British pig iron appears to have been driven almost completely out of Eastern Canada markets by Nova Scotia and United States pig iron. Bar iron, tin plates, Canada plates, tin, spelter, galvanized iron are all reported easier at Montreal, and lower prices being accepted there. It is also reported from Montreal that the recent agreement to sell cut nails at \$2.10 has already been broken, orders having been taken at \$2 net, it is alleged. The tack agreement is also reported to have been upset, one firm having withdrawn, and prices are now said to be lower. Manilla and sisal rope are ½c lower east. Turpentine holds firm at the recent advance. In oils petroleum is strong, another ½c advance being reported in Canadian refined petroleum. Quite an increase in activity at the Ontario oil centres is reported, in consequence of the recent advance in crude petroleum. Glass has taken a firmer turn.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

WHEAT.—This has been quite a strong week in wheat and prices have pulled up considerably in United States markets. On Monday the visible supply statement showed a decrease of 1,041,000 bushels in wheat stocks at principal points in the United States and Canada east of the Rocky Mountains, making the total supply at such points amount to 76,721,000 bushels, as compared with 75,569,000 bushels a year ago, 79,088,000 bushels two years ago and 41,556,000 bushels three years ago. Breadstuffs on ocean passage increased 1,440,000 bushels, due to larger exports from the United States. The United States government crop report issued on Monday afternoon makes the amount of wheat in farmer's hands only 75,000,000 bushels, or 39,000,000 bushels less than a year ago. These estimates of wheat in farmers' hands we must say are mere guesses, and very little confidence can be placed in them. At the same time the belief seems general that farmers in the United States are sold out more closely than usual. The report helped to "boom" the markets at any rate, and as a consequence prices made a big spurt on Tuesday. Free selling broke prices on Wednesday, but the bulls were on top again on Thursday and prices were nearly maintained on Friday,

though the market was irregular, with weak spots and liberal selling. Firm cables sustained the market.

Exports of wheat, flour included as wheat, from both countries of the United States, this week amount to 2,791,000 bushels, compared with 3,272,000 bushels last week, 3,253,000 bushels in the week a year ago, 2,886,000 two years ago and 3,318,000 in the week three years ago.

WHEAT LOCALLY.—The local market is very flat. In fact there is nothing doing. Those who control the limited available stocks are not offering and there are no buyers looking for stuff. We quote about 65c for No 1 hard, May delivery, Fort William, but this figure is nominal. The little wheat being marketed by farmers in Manitoba country markets, is taken by millers, at an average price of about 50c per bushel. Country millers have very little wheat on hand, the bulk of the stuff being held by the two large milling concerns. As a consequence the mills will not do much grinding the coming summer. As farmers will soon be starting their spring work, country markets will soon be closed up, and the few remaining buyers will be taken off about the first of April. According to a grain circular one load of Manitoba wheat sold in New York on the basis of 9½c over May option, f.o.b. afloat. Mail advices from London reports sales of parcels No. 1 hard Manitoba wheat at 23s 9d per quarter afloat. Freight engagements of wheat from Duluth to Kingston are reported at 3½c, which is a low rate, 4½c being the rate last spring. Stocks of wheat in store at Fort William on March 11 were 910,836 bushels and a year ago were 2,115,023. Receipts last week were 25,218 and shipments 3,859 bushels. Stocks at Fort William the corresponding week a year ago increased 41,259 bushels.

FLOUR.—A better demand is reported from the East for Manitoba flour. Prices here are steady and unchanged. Sales by millers are made at \$1.85 for patents and \$1.55 for strong bakers per sack of 98 lbs., delivered to city retail dealers, with a discount of 5c per sack for cash in 30 days. Sales of country mills are made at about 10c under quotations on track here. A sale of 1,000 sacks of Manitoba patent from stocks in store at Montreal was reported on Tuesday at an advance of 6d, for export to Copenhagen by way of New York.

MILLSTUFFS.—Prices are steady. The quotation is \$12 for bran and \$13 for shorts, per ton with small quantities held at \$1 per ton more. Manitoba bran is selling in Montreal at \$18 per ton, a further advance of \$1 there.

GROUND FEED.—Prices are firm. Prices range from \$18 to \$20 per ton, as to quantity and quality, for ground oats and barley feed.

OATMEAL.—Rolled oatmeal is unchanged at \$1.90 to \$2 per sack of 50 pounds, in broken lots to retail dealers, as to quality. Standard and granulated meal, \$2.15 in small lots, per sack of 100 lbs. for best grades. Oatmeal has been advancing in Ontario lately, in sympathy with the higher price for oats there. Rolled oats have sold there at \$1.90 to \$2 per bag.

OATS.—Are much the same, though the holders are talking firmer. The bulk of farmers loads are taken at 29c per bushel of 54 pounds, though 30c is paid for a few. There is some demand for choice clean samples for seed, and one car was reported sold at 32c. Car lots are held at 29c on track here for feed grade and up to 30 to 31c for milling o.a.s. A few cars have been going east, as the recent advances there will permit of all-rail shipments of Manitoba oats on a small margin. About 41 to 42c per bushel was quoted at Montreal this week, which shows a further advance there.