

Farming Depression.

The New York society for improving the condition of the poor recently instituted an exhaustive enquiry at a large cost into the causes of the depression of the farming interests in New York State. Mr. Kjoigaard, an intelligent Pennsylvania farmer, was employed to travel through such agricultural districts as he could reach during the summer months, in order to gather accurate information by personal enquiry. At the same time George T. Powell, of Ghent, Columbia County undertook to pursue the same lines of investigation by correspondence. The result is summed up in the statements that farming land had depreciated at an average of some 48 per cent.; that 30 per cent of the farmers are anxious to leave their farms, and would drift into the cities if they only know how to get work there; and that 86 per cent of the farmers report that their children, as they grow up, cannot be induced to remain on the farm; that tenant farming is on the increase; that 85 per cent of the New York farmers are losing money; 50 per cent dangerously near it; 14 per cent are making a profit, and 20 per cent don't know whether they are or not. It was found that in the vicinity of Cornell university, and wherever else Government agricultural experiment stations or agricultural schools exist, the condition of the farmers was much better. Ignorance of scientific methods and carelessness are the greatest drawbacks.

Reduced Cost of Food Products.

Investigations of the changes in the price of food products and other necessities of life, whether made by government officials of private students of economic and social questions, have been so largely confined to the records of the wholesale markets that it may be both interesting and valuable to show what the average cheapening of a variety of food staples has been in the last five years in a typical interior manufacturing city, and as such things affect consumers, instead of producers or boards of trade and chambers of commerce. It is notorious that great differences in the wholesale price of important products sometimes have very little effect upon the poorer classes of consumers. Bread is often sold by the loaf throughout large cities, at about the same price when wheat is 60c a bushel in Chicago that it brings when the wheat market is 20c or 30c higher, and the prices charged for beef in retail shops may have only a remote connection with the value of cattle on the hoof in Kansas City or New York.

The manager of the retail department of a prominent grocery store in a large western city has recorded changes of prices for a number of years. This concern, it is reported by a correspondent, does a business of nearly \$1,000,000 a year (retail) its trade being out of all proportion to the size of the city, as such things go in other and larger centers of commerce and industry. For a generation it has been conducted on a cash basis, and its methods of management have remained substantially unchanged. For that reason its prices constitute a fair record of the scale of values for food products as paid by retail cash buyers. The old price lists are said to show the cost of such groceries as might be bought for a boarding house or a large family say as a Saturday order, and make a striking presentation, when compared with like totals five years ago.

In preparing this table great care has been exercised to preserve quotations for like grades or quantities. The flour was of the same brand in both years, and the butter came from the same creameries. The raisins were loose muscatels from California in both instances, and there was no change in any

instance, which could affect the intrinsic values of the articles of food. The soap came from the same works, and was of exactly the same kind. The figures are as follows.

| | (March, 1891.) | 1896. |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| 1 barrel flour..... | \$5.00 | \$3 85 |
| 25 pounds granulated sugar... | 1 78 | 1 26 |
| 5 pounds creamery butter.... | 1 75 | 1 25 |
| 5 dozen eggs..... | 1 50 | .60 |
| 5 pounds prunes..... | .80 | .50 |
| 1 bushel potatoes..... | 1 25 | .25 |
| 8 cans tomatoes..... | .30 | .21 |
| 8 cans peaches..... | .78 | .51 |
| 10 pounds rolled oats..... | .45 | .25 |
| 5 pounds lard..... | .50 | .45 |
| 1 gallon vinegar..... | .25 | .18 |
| 10 pounds buckwheat flour.... | .85 | .20 |
| 2 pounds evaporated apricots.. | .50 | .28 |
| 1 ham (11 pound*)..... | 1 82 | 1 21 |
| 1 pound black pepper..... | .18 | .12 |
| 8 lbs. Java and Mocha coffee.. | 1 01 | 1 00 |
| 1 gallon maple syrup..... | 1 10 | .80 |
| 1 box soap..... | 3 15 | 2 50 |
| 5 pounds raisins (1 crown).... | .80 | .30 |
| 5 pounds currants..... | .40 | .35 |
| 1 peck navy beans..... | .65 | .25 |
| 7 pounds starch..... | .42 | .25 |
| 2 pounds soda crackers..... | .16 | .14 |

Totals..... \$21.43 \$16.71

"The difference of \$7.72 is a decrease of 31.6 per cent in the cost of the articles enumerated. Reckoned on the present cost, it is evident that a given sum will go almost one-half farther in providing a city family with groceries than it would five years ago. Where wages have not fallen and employment is as plentiful as it was five years ago, there has evidently been a marked social improvement, through the lessened cost of food, and, therefore, in a sense a higher plane of living.

"On the other hand the cheapening of food products has told against farmers, especially those who had old debts to pay. The changes which were a boon to millions of city people increased the difficulties of a multitude of agriculturists." Bradstreet's.

Montreal Grocery Market.

There has been no change in the situation of the sugar market during the past week. Raw sugar abroad has been fairly active and steady, cables to day quoted beet at 12s 9d April and May. In New York the market is strong and prices firm, with buyers and sellers somewhat apart. The world's visible supply of raws is steadily running down, stocks now being estimated at 348,000 tons less than this time last year. Business on spot in the refined article has been rather quiet, but refiners state that reports to hand from the west indicate that stocks in second hands are rapidly decreasing, consequently a more active trade is looked for by the opening of navigation. We quote: Granulated at 4 1/2c in 25-lb barrel lots and over; 4 11-16c in 100-barrel lots, and 4 1/2c in smaller quantities. Yellows range from 3 1/2c to 4 1/2c as to quality, at the factory.

In syrups, business has continued very quiet, which is generally the case at this season of the year. Stocks in first hands are light and prices rule firm at 1 1/2 to 2 1/2c per lb. as to quality, at the factory.

A fairly active trade has been done in molasses, the demand having improved for Barbadoes, and sales of 1,000 puncheons are reported to arrive at 29 1/2c. A small cargo of new crop Porto Rico has arrived here from Boston, which is selling at 3c. There is also a small cargo of Antigua on spot offering at 27c. Barbadoes at the island is still quoted at 12c first cost.

Business in spices has continued quiet and sales are now principally in small lots to fill actual wants, at steady prices. The following

quotations are what jobbers can buy at only. Penang black pepper, 6 to 7 1/2c. white pepper, 10 to 12 1/2c, cloves 7 1/2 to 9c, cassia 8 1/2 to 9 1/2c, nutmegs 60 to 90c, and Jamaica ginger 15 1/2 to 18 1/2c.

The demand for coffee has continued slow, and outside of a small jobbing trade there is nothing doing. We quote: Maracaibo 19 to 20c; Rio 18 to 18 1/2c; Java 21 to 27c, Jamaica, 17 1/2 to 18 1/2c; and Mocha 27 1/2 to 30c.

The demand for rice is improving, and the market is more active at steady prices. We quote: Japan standard \$1.25 to \$1.40; crystal Japan, \$1.75 to \$5.00; standard B. \$3.45, Patna \$1.25 to \$3.00; and Carolina at \$6.50 to \$7.50.—Gazette,—April 24.

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