

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Saturday, March 23.

This week has been marked by mild weather and increasing activity in all departments of trade. Sleighing is practically done in the city and reports from the country say that the roads are becoming bad in places so that it may be expected vehicular traffic will be retarded until the roads are fit for wheeling with a corresponding decline in country trade. Seeding operations may be expected to commence soon. Meantime the country merchants are stocking up with spring and summer goods. Implement men are hurrying their stocks of spring machinery to delivery points and there is a steady increase in volume of trade of all kinds and in industrial activity. Settlers' excursions are beginning to arrive from the east and there is a fairly large volume of railway passenger traffic to and from the west. The grain movement from country points has become very light and many of the buyers have been taken off the market. Labor is well employed for the season of year. Bank clearings at Winnipeg show a moderate increase as compared with last year. Money is in good demand at from 6 to 8 per cent. for mercantile loans.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

Saturday, March 23.

BOOTS AND SHOES.

There is a steady demand for all kinds of seasonal footwear at local jobbing houses and the situation is without special feature. Values hold steady.

CURED MEATS.

Lard has advanced 10 per cent. for pure steam rendered making the price now \$2.55. Cases are now worth \$7.50 as against \$7.25 last week. Tierces are 1/2c per pound higher, and 50 pound tubs 1/2c per pound higher. Breakfast bacon backs are 1/2c per pound higher and dry salt backs have advanced a like amount. These are the only changes this week. The demand for cured meats and lard is good. For full list of prices see page 694.

DRY GOODS.

The jobbing demand is still characterized by great activity and shipments to country points are large. Ready-made garments are in good demand. Country remittances are slow.

FISH.

Demand is good and prices remain unchanged. It is not expected that there will be any new varieties in regard to prices for domestic fish until the next fishing season opens. We quote prices as follows: Whitefish, 4 to 6c per pound; pickerel, 3 1/2c; pike, 2 1/2c; trout, 10c; salmon, 12 1/2c; halibut, 12 1/2c; Superior herring, 20c per dozen; cod, 10c; Labrador herring, per barrel, \$1.15; salt mackerel, \$2.25 per klt; shad, 14bbils \$7.50; Dugby chicks, 18c box; boneless cod, 7 1/2c lb; boneless fish, 5 1/2c lb; flinnan, 7 1/2c lb; per pound; fresh sea cod, 10c lb; tommy cod, 5 1/2c; flounders, 5 1/2c; smelts, 7 1/2c; mackerel, 13c; shad, 10c; bass, 13c; eels, 10c; oysters, select, \$2.15 per gallon; standard, \$2.00.

GREEN FRUITS.

There is a much better trade being done in this line than at this time last year, and we note considerable activity around local jobbing warehouses. Bananas are now commencing to arrive in carlots, the first car being expected to-day. This is earlier than usual. There is no change in the price of these. Pineapples are now in and selling at \$6.00 per dozen. Cucumbers are offering at \$2.75, and Florida tomatoes at \$4.00 per crate of 6 baskets. New strawberries are arriving from Texas by express and wholesale at \$50c per box. The crop is said to be lighter than usual owing to heavy storms in Florida, which destroyed the growing berries in many places. We quote: Apples, Ben Davis, \$5.50 per barrel; Northern States, \$6.00; Baldwin, \$5.00; Russets, \$4.00. California Valencia oranges, box, \$3.00 to \$3.75; Valencia oranges, \$5.00 per case; lemons, per box, \$4.50; as to size: bananas, per bunch, \$3.00; Wisconsin cranberries, per barrel, \$10.

Jerseys, frozen, \$8.50; figs, \$1.25 per 10 lb box; onions, per lb., 2 1/2c; mince meat, 12 1/2c per pound; 10c per pound; carton dates, per package of 1-pound, 10c; new dates, 6c; cider in kegs or barrels, 35c per gallon; honey, 1-pound jars, \$2.50 a dozen; maple sugar, 12c; maple syrup, 2-pound tins, per dozen, \$2.25; half gallon tin, \$0.50 per dozen; gallons, \$12.00.

GROCERIES.

So far as quotations are concerned there has been no change in this market this week. Green Rio coffee is firmer on the strength of advices from Rio and the advance of last week has been fully maintained. Prunes are looking up and the very low priced small stock which has been offering in this market has apparently been pretty well exhausted. Packers at this coast have advanced prices 1/4 to 3/8c per pound, so that the feeling here is firmer. Other fruits have firmed up in sympathy with prunes, but remain unchanged in price. Packers are looking up and country orders are increasing, but remittances are still very slow.

HARDWARE.

Demand is active and shipments to country points are the principal feature. Prices remain unchanged since a week ago.

PAINTS, OILS AND GLASS.

Linseed oil has again declined, the amount of the drop being 3c per gallon. Raw oil is now quoted at 77c per gallon, and boiled at 80c per gallon. The decline is due to the continued weakness in American and British markets brought about by the competition of Argentina seed and will probably be followed by others when the season of navigation in the St. Lawrence river opens thus admitting British oil direct to Canadian ports. Glass is firm at old prices and likely to continue so as latest advices from Belgium indicate that the strike among operators there is still on and likely to continue indefinitely. In the United States the glass market is very firm at present and prices relatively much higher than in Canada. For selling in St. Paul in a wholesale way at an advance of \$2.25 per box over the Winnipeg wholesale figure, quotations here will be found in another part of this issue.

FUEL.

The mild weather has lessened the demand for fuel and we note a smaller volume of business here. Prices remain unchanged as given elsewhere in this issue.

IMPLEMENTS.

Business is more active in this market. Spring lines are wanted in a hurry and attention is being centred on the new delivery of tools. Values seem to be holding steady and there are no special features to note.

SCRAP.

There is a fairly good demand for scrap iron and pig iron and other old materials rule steady as follows: No. 1 cast iron, free from wrought and malleable, \$12 to \$13 per ton; No. 2, \$4.00 to \$5 per ton; ton: heavy copper, \$7.00 per pound; red brass, 10c per pound; light brass, 8c per pound; light brass, 5c to 6c per pound; lead pipe or tea lead, 2 to 2 1/2c per pound; rags, country mixed, 50c per 100 pounds; rubbers, free from rivets, buckles and articles, 5c per pound; zinc scrap 1c per pound; bones clean dry and bleached, \$5 to \$6 ton; bottles, quarts, 20c per dozen; pints, 12 1/2c per dozen.

STONE AND LIME.

Prices are as follows: Rubble stone, \$4.00 per cord; footings, \$5.50 per cord; broken stone, \$1.25 per cubic yard; white lime 20c per bushel; grey lime 15c per bushel. These are practically the same prices as prevailed last year.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

WHEAT—There has been more activity in the speculative wheat markets during the past seven days than for some time previously, but the advance made at the end of last week has not been well sustained and after a gain of about 5c from the low point of the previous week, closing prices yesterday had receded to within one cent of the low point of the previous week, and 1 1/2c under the highest point reached in the interval. Several things happened to cause the activity and work in favor of an advance. There was war rum-

ors between Russia and England over a little matter in China. Also rumors that England was about to put some duty on breadstuffs. Then there was wheat arriving at Liverpool not up to contract grade, and shorts in the option market, and all these things had the consequence was that the European and continental markets all showed good advances. Then there were some crop damage reports in the States and a bullish feeling arose in Chicago, and taken altogether the news caused the shorts there and the other American option markets to cover their short sales, and that along with investment buying pushed the prices up. Since then it turns out that there was not anything substantial to the various rumors, and an easier feeling has prevailed with consequent decline in prices. The trade in actual wheat has not been stirred by the advance in speculative markets. There seems to be a fair volume of business in it the world over, judging by the movement of wheat both inland and on the oceans, and it would seem that in parts where wheat was abundant, on the last crops that farmers continue to sell at current prices in fair volume. The flour trade continues to move slowly and is of a hand to foot character. This prevents anything but ordinary demand from millers for wheat and the large amount of visible reserves, together with favorable crop reports and prospects for this year's crop prevent any substantial purchases, and hence it is difficult to get any good advance in prices started at the present time. The situation is being closely watched by the trade both in America and Europe, and any change in the market, whether it should later turn out to be good or not would cause a sharp advance in prices. Reports on all winter wheat crops in America and Europe are at the present dates very favorable. The American visible supply decreased last week 753,000 bushels, compared to a decrease of 1,343,000 bushels the previous week and an increase of 213,000 bushels for the same week last year. The world's shipments were 7,538,000 bushels, against 7,742,000 bushels for the previous week and 7,429,000 bushels last year. The world's visible supply according to Bradstreet's decreased 773,000 bushels against a decrease of 500,000 bushels for the previous week and a decrease of 1,325,000 bushels for the same week last year.

There was practically no change in the local market since a week ago. At the beginning of the week, with the advance in outside markets, there arose a stronger feeling, and prices were nominally 1/2c higher without much change in the amount of business. This has been since. Holders are firm but there is no demand and buyers are scarce. There is increasing caution as regards tough wheat. Prices at the close yesterday were exactly the same as a week ago: No. 1 hard, 84c; 2 hard, 83c; 3 hard, 82c; 3 northern, 63 1/2c; tough 3 hard, 63c; tough 3 northern, 59c, all in store, Fort William, spot or en route.

FLOUR—Prices hold steady as follows: Lake of the Woods, Five Roses, \$2.10; Red Patent, \$1.95; Medora, \$1.90; XXXX, \$1.85 per sack of 56 pounds. Ogilvie Milling Co., Hungarian, \$2.10; Glenora Patent, \$1.95; Alberta, \$1.75; Manitoba, \$1.80 and Imperial XXXX, \$1.25 per sack of 56 pounds.

MILLFEED—Demand is large and the supply decidedly inadequate. Bran has advanced at 1 1/2c per ton and shorts at \$17.00 per ton delivered.

GROUND FEED—Ground feed is scarce owing to the small supplies of coarse grains. Pure oat chop is worth \$27 per ton delivered, mixed barley and oats \$25 per ton and corn is \$1.50 higher at \$21.50 per ton.

COUNTRY WHEAT—The country wheat market is dull. Deliveries have fallen off to a very small point, and many of the buyers have been taken off the market. The top price quoted to farmers is 65c per bushel for best grades of wheat, and from that price down to 50c according to quality of grain and rate of freight.

OATS—There is no change to note in the oat market. Prices are steady at last week's figures and the situation is without special feature. Seed oats are in demand and in most cases Al-Ber seeds are being taken for that purpose. Manitoba oats are scarce in track there are worth 38 to 40c per bushel. Northern Alberta oats are quoted at 41 to 44c per bushel on the

track. Most of the business being done in this at 43c per bushel.

BARLEY—None offering. CORN—Carlots of No. 3 corn on track here are worth from 48 to 49 1/2c per bushel, an advance of 1 1/2 to 2c per bushel for the week.

HAZARBED—None offering. POINTS AND MOST OF THE OFFERINGS ARE poor quality. We quote choice fresh baled hay \$8 to \$9 per ton in carlots on track here. Loose hay on the street is also worth \$8 to \$9 per ton.

POULTRY—Turkeys are higher at 11 to 14c per pound. Chickens, 7 1/2 to 10c; ducks, 10c; geese, 9c.

GAME—Wild pigeons are in good demand and dealers will pay 15c per pair for these in the country or 20c here. Common rabbits are worth 6c each and jack rabbits 12 1/2c each.

DRESSED BEEF—Frozen beef is about out of the market. We quote dressed, city dressed, 5 1/2 to 6 1/2c per pound; country dressed, 5 to 6 1/2c; veal, 7 to 8c per pound; mutton, 8 1/2 to 9c per pound; hogs, 6 1/2 to 7c per pound.

BUTTER—Creamery—The market is in a nominal condition as there is no creamery trade offering from first hands. Dealers are selling from stock at about 22c per pound.

BUTTER—Dairy—There is a good demand for choice dairy butter at as high as 14c per pound, but the supply is limited. Second grade stuff is plentiful and not much wanted. We quote Choice dairy, in tubs, 12 to 15c per pound, commission basis; second grade, 10 to 11c per pound. Country shippers still cling to the custom of holding back their consignments until the freshness has been lost, with the result that a large proportion of receipts are second grade.

CHEESE—Manitoba cheese is being sold to the retail trade here at 10c per pound and is not meeting with much demand at that figure.

EGGS—The market weakened early in the week to about 13c per dozen but is now back to 14c again for case lots delivered here. Receipts are large and demand only moderate.

VEGETABLES—Ontario potatoes are still offering here, having been brought in in carlots since the mild weather set in. This week jobbers have been asking 10c per bushel for these to the retail trade. Further shipments have been received from the neighborhood of Hamilton, Ont. Carrots are dearer this week, having advanced to 50 to 60c per bushel. Native celery is practically out of the market. We quote: Potatoes, 4 to 4 1/2c per bushel; carrots, 50 to 60c per bushel; beets, 4 1/2c per bushel; turnips, 20 to 25c per bushel; parsnips, 10c per pound; onions, \$1.50 per bushel; cabbage, 2 to 2 1/2c per pound; celery, native, 40 to 50c imported, 75 to 90c per dozen bunches; parsley, 30c per dozen bunches; lettuce, 40c per dozen bunches.

HIDES—The market continues weak. Advice from Chicago and other big markets this week has not encouraged the trade here to take a very hopeful view of the situation as the poor quality of local offerings is cause it is not to be expected that the hides will be as good as at this time of the year as they are in the fall when the animals are in their prime and conditions so favorable. Just at this season the mild weather is apt to spoil frozen hides. Some local dealers will not pay more than 4c per pound for country frozen hides now, but others are quoting 4 1/2c still, although they are not sure buyers at this price. We quote No. 1 steer hides, 5 to 5 1/2c per pound delivered here; country hides, frozen, 4 to 4 1/2c; bulks, 3 to 3 1/2c; kips, same as hides; sheep, 2 to 2 1/2c; skins, 40 to 70c each; slunks, 25 to 35c.

WOOL—None offering. Value about 8 to 8 1/2c per pound for unwashed fleece.

TALLOW—Dealers are paying for No. 1 tallow at 4c per pound. No. 2 is worth 3c per pound. A good deal of tallow is being sold by country shippers in the rough, in which case it is worth 2c per pound.

SENeca ROOT—None offering. The best price that would be paid here now for clean, dry root is 30c per pound.

LIVE STOCK.

CATTLE—Prime beef cattle are scarce and in active demand, and there is no chance that very few farmers have any fat cattle for sale. There is no shipping being done. We quote: Best grade beef cattle, 4 1/2c per pound here; good, 4 to 4 1/2c; inferior