

THE PROVISION TRADE.

It is not too early in the season to say that a considerable amount of money has been lost by dealers who make a prominent feature of eggs. For this the remarkably mild weather is responsible, so opposite in its character has it been compared with that of the last two years. Dealers placed in stock last fall large quantities of eggs for cold storage, paying on the whole high prices for the same, in readiness for the demand which usually springs up a little later on. This season, however, the usual demand never arose in force, the hens practically never stopped laying, with the consequence that the call for held stock has been but a poor one. The cold snap of last week did something to remedy this state of things, but hardly enough to mend matters appreciably for the dealers. It is worth remarking in this connection that Danish eggs are commanding prices within British and other markets higher than ever before, and that this is due almost entirely to their increasing good quality. The exporters in Denmark, aided by the farmers, are continually moving in the direction of improvement of their product. They do not content themselves with "well," but aim towards a "better" without ceasing. We read that, notwithstanding the high values already reached for this class of farm product, the Copenhagen Exchange is working for the production of "brown eggs with thicker shells," which will be distributed all over the country, thus, no doubt, contributing to a still further development in this industry. Quality is what the Danish farmers are constantly seeking, thus presenting a highly useful example for the Canadian egg trade.

Prices of both butter and cheese are firm, especially the latter. The British market for cheese has been a shade lower, but as stocks in this country are so light this is scarcely likely to have any appreciable effect. Indeed, a general impression seems to prevail that, so soon as the above slight reaction shall have passed, prices will again show a rising tendency. Mr. J. A. Ruddick, the Canadian Dairy Commissioner, who has lately returned from a trip of investigation to the United Kingdom and the Continent, expressed an interesting opinion at Cowansville, Que., the other day, that Canada should not take too much credit to herself for the building up of a great cheese trade in Britain, the truth being that we had had very little real competition in cheddars.

Canadian butter has shown up better in the British markets this season than usual, owing very likely to the strenuous efforts of the Government, the Dairy Association and the Guelph College of Agriculture, to improve the quality. There have been some rumors in London and Liverpool of a kind of butter famine, but later reports indicate an easing down, and now prices are about normal with a fairly firm tendency. In the local markets, the quality has not been all that could be desired, though during the last week or so it would appear to have improved a little. The demand is about average.

The decline in prices in the English bacon market has been followed here to some extent and packers have been giving lower quotations on hogs. They claim that a large proportion of the animals offered have graded low, and they have been forced to show a good deal of discrimination. The factories have been making rather slow time.

IMPORTANCE TO ONTARIO OF HUDSON'S BAY.

A conference was recently held at one of the clubs in Toronto, when the pros and cons of promoting railway access to Hudson's Bay via Ontario was discussed, and one of the number requested to prepare a paper on the subject. This was done, and the same sent to the editorial rooms of "The Monetary Times" for an opinion as to the advisability of the publication. This being thought desirable, Mr. Wills gave consent to the use of his name as a guarantee of the reliability of the facts presented, and of the deductions drawn from them.

His long experience as a student of the commercial interests of Toronto, when secretary of its Board of Trade, and at the same time extending his observations to those of the Province of Ontario at large, gives his opinions special weight.

He divided the subject in hand into answers to three queries—of which the caption and first query and answer appear in another page. The remainder will appear in later issues, and will also be printed in documentary form.

That the facts thus set forth will be of inspiring interest to every business man in Ontario can be reasonably assumed; and that public attention being drawn to them should lead to active measures to promote and protect Provincial interests of such overshadowing importance, all thoughtful readers must admit.

Further notice of this subject will be continued from week to week in "The Monetary Times." Here are the queries affecting fundamental interests of the Province of Ontario, serially considered:

FIRST—Why Ontario lacks commercial access to Hudson's Bay.

SECOND—How such success can best be obtained.

THIRD—What Provincial advantages will result from up-to-date transit facilities extending to the great Canadian sea via Ontario.

In answering the first query—**Why Ontario Lacks Commercial Access to Hudson's Bay**, various causes can be mentioned as retarding such access, the most prominent being:—

1.—Absence of General Information Respecting the Contiguity and Conditions of the Great Canadian Sea.

It has been remarked that if an enquirer should go on any principal business street in Toronto and ask the first ten tradesmen he met, whether Ontario has any tide water sea coast, nine out of the ten would say "no—the nearest to it is down on the St. Lawrence River; or Gulf, in the Province of Quebec," and look askance at him as an ignoramus for asking such a question!

They would be amazed and incredulous when informed of the fact that near the centre of Ontario its northern boundary is for two hundred miles along a salt sea coast, where the tides change in level nearly ten feet twice a day, and that it can be reached from the C.P.R. in an air line distance of 250 miles, but as yet there is not a public road, or even a "blazed" trail, through Ontario to that coast, the only access, except by snow-shoes, being by canoe in the summer season along the water courses of lakes and rivers, with several portages, the best route being via C.P.R. station at Missanabie Lake and the west branch of the Moose River to Moose Fort at its mouth; the average time of transit being twelve days going north with the river current, and fourteen days returning against the same. The Anglican Church Bishop Newnham, residing at Moose Fort, started