

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Winnipeg, Saturday, Nov. 19.

The weather has been milder this week than could have been desired for business purposes, as a cold snap is always relished at this time of year, particularly in the clothing, fur, dry goods and kindred branches. Sorting trade in these lines has not been very active yet. In the lumber manufacturing line the mills are closing for the season, and the energies of the companies is now directed toward getting out logs for next season's cut, which promises to be a heavy one. There is still a lot of building work going on in the city, but unfinished buildings are being pushed forward as rapidly as possible. The grain trade has been greatly hampered for the past two weeks by the scarcity of cars, which have not been supplied in quantities nearly equal to the demand. Deliveries of grain by farmers at country points have been fairly liberal, and some elevators were filled up. Prices have continued downward in country markets, and recently prices to farmers in country markets have ruled considerably below a parity with prices obtainable at lake ports. This of course is owing to the difference in position as to freights and storage charges. Grain at lake ports or in transit is available for shipment at once, but there is no certainty at all that grain now being purchased from farmers can be got out before the close of navigation. Consequently winter freight rates or winter storage charges must be taken into consideration in purchasing from farmers now. This is the main cause of the decline in prices at country markets, as compared with values at lake ports. This is one of the disadvantages of the backward movement of grain this year, which will make the bulk of the crop subject to winter freight or winter storage charges. As to the quality of the crop, reports received from the country continue to say that the grain is turning out better quality than could be hoped for. Reports have been received from a number of country merchants to this effect. The approaching close of navigation is having its usual effect in commercial circles, in tending toward a strong market for heavy commodities, such as hardware, paints, etc. The last regular line steamer is billed to leave Fort William on Nov. 26, but should the weather keep mild, further trips will no doubt be made. Tramp grain steamers will, of course, run as much later as they can.

In commercial circles payments are slow for the time of year, but this is easily attributable to the backward grain movement. Since the decline in prices in country markets, many farmers have decided to hold their grain in the hope of an advance, which further retards the circulation of cash. Bank clearings at Winnipeg were again about 3-4 of a million under the like week of last year, but 1-2 a million in excess of the corresponding week of 1896. Customs returns, however, for the Winnipeg district, show a large gain in goods entered for consumption and duty collected, compared with last year.

The opening of the Crow's Nest railway is a matter which is of vast importance to the trade of the city, and which is bound to materially augment the business of the city with southeastern British Columbia. It is understood a regular train service will be put into effect on the new road next week.

WINNIFEG MARKETS

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(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.

Cream tartar and tartaric acid are lower here. Quinine is higher in the States, at factories. Camphor is firm. See prices on another page.

FISH.

Bulk oysters are being sold at very close prices since the decline reported last week. As one dealer put it, "they were simply doing business for fun now." Haddies received in car lots sell at 2c, but some are still coming by express, which cost higher.

GROCERIES.

In the line of price changes this week in the local market, canned corn is again a little higher, and raspberries have also again been moved up another notch, being quoted 15 to 25c per box higher for raspberries and 5 to 10c higher for corn. In canned meats corn beef is quoted 10c lower per case. In the cereal market, split peas, pot and pearl barley and buckwheat flour are all 10 to 15c higher per sack, owing to increased cost of laying down new goods here. Japan rice has eased off some from the high price quoted of late for this commodity. The quotation here has been reduced 1-4c to 6 1-4 to 6 1-2c. Oatmeal is easier. Car lots are now costing less money and a reduction will probably follow soon in the jobber's price. Sugars were advanced 1-8c at the refineries on Thursday, and this advance has also gone into effect here. The Vancouver refinery, as well as the eastern manufacturers, advanced at the same time. In dried fruits the changes include a sharp advance of 2c on Sultan raisins and another advance of 1-2c on dried apples. In canned goods advices from the east this week are still very firm on corn. This line, it is said is nearly all out of first hands, and sales have been made by eastern packers at \$1 per dozen, which shows that Winnipeg prices are away below the cost at which the commodity could now be laid down here. Tomatoes are also selling here at less than they could now be laid down for, and with winter freights soon to go into effect, the cost will be increased. Tomatoes

have sold as high as 90c at the factories east. The advance on corn has been about 50 per cent since the season opened. Dried fruits are firm everywhere on almost every line. Apricots are higher again in primary markets, being held at 11c in California, and stocks there are said to be very small. Some small lots of new California prunes have been received, but stocks are slow in coming forward, and prices are held very firm. Dried and evaporated apples are also very strong and the high prices of the past year on this class of fruit will be maintained. The very light apple crop in the United States this year is a strong factor in the advance of dried and evaporated apples, and it is also not without its effect on other dried fruits. Mediterranean fruits in currants, raisins and figs are coming forward, but receipts have been slow in reaching here, and jobbers are complaining somewhat on this account, as stocks, particularly of currants, were very low. Some new California loose muscatel raisins are offering. Prices on these are very firm, and in primary markets quotations have advanced 1-2 to 1c since the season opened. The California raisins are preferred by the trade here, as they are supposed to have better keeping qualities than the Spanish fruit, so that they are having a good sale notwithstanding the comparatively high cost of these goods.

GREEN FRUITS.

Mexican oranges are now coming forward more freely, and they are proving good stock. A car of new crop California navel oranges is expected the first of next week. This is remarkably early for new California fruit, and fully a month earlier than usual. Apples hold firm at last quotations. A few fall and fancy varieties are still obtainable, but the market is narrowing down to the regular winter varieties. Ontario grapes are about out of the mar-

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