

HINTS TO CON IGNORS

TO THE MONTREAL MARKET

(Contributed by Messrs. Wm. Nivin & Co., Produce Merchants.)

THE Canal being now opened, this may be considered the opening week of our Spring trade, in breadstuffs and general produce, and on that account we would draw the attention of consignors to this market to a few facts, statistical and general, which it may be well to know. A comprehensive and exhaustive treatise on the trade and commerce of Montreal has been published in the form of an annual report to the Board of Trade and Corn Exchange Association, by its secretary, Mr. Patterson, and to this document we would point the attention of shippers, capitalists, and others at a distance, who would learn as a community what we possess, what we want, and what we can offer to those with whom we may enter into business relations. From this epitome of our trade and other sources, we have selected a few figures.

This year, stocks are considerably lighter than at the opening of navigation last year, and Super-fine Flour is worth \$4.00. There has this year been considerably less speculative investment in flour than for some years past, and those who purchased for forward delivery, have realised a handsome profit, whilst operators in previous years lost heavily. Up to the present time, the demand has been mainly for flour ground from Upper Canada Spring Wheat, but as the warm weather approaches, with its consequent risks of souring, fall and winter wheat flour, as better adapted for transatlantic and other export trades, being drier and cooler, and therefore safer to ship, will no doubt creep up in price, although quotations in Europe show no margin at present time to shippers.

The stock of Wheat last year was heavy, and the Spring brought 89c per bushel. This year, the stock is so inconsiderable as to be hardly worth naming, and the price ex store, \$1.02 per bus. As the quantity known to be waiting shipment here from points west is less than usual, it is generally supposed that prices cannot recede from the present point, and that our surplus for exportation will be very small, even if foreign markets afford any inducement to operation, which at the present time they certainly do not.

Coarse grains have been in brisk demand, for the United States at high rates, excepting oats, which have hardly realised last year's figures, but barley has had a lengthened run at high prices, and now appears to be receding; whilst peas, owing mainly to a scanty crop, are firm at an extreme value.

The comparative prices of Oats, Barley, Peas, per bushel.

1864.	22	51	64
1865.	38	63	100

Oats and Barley are ruled mainly by the United States Market, whilst considerable quantities of peas and an outlet in Europe.

SEEDS begin to assume more respectable proportions in our category of products, and at average prices. Clover is usually a safe article to export. This year prices are so excessively high from short production, that although extravagant rates have been obtained in the English market, our best buyers have been the home consumers.

PRICES OF SEEDS.

	Timothy	Clover	Flax.
1864	\$2.25	\$ 5.00	\$1.50
1865	3.00	15.00	1.40

Our trade in Flax in all its forms is yet in embryo, needing patience and capital for its cultivation, with an abatement of spasmodic excitement as to the case of its production and profits.

Cheese has made unsatisfactory returns to exporters mainly owing to the faults exhibited by butter, namely, carelessness in making and curing, and irregularity in quality. All our dairy products are capable of extensive improvements.

Pork is a staple deserving of greater attention than it receives. If we cannot compete with the Western States in the extent of our production, we might do so in point of quality. Canadian fed pork, well cured either as bacon, hams, or shoulders, or packed as primo mess, (English style), will realise better prices in Liverpool and London, but particularly in the latter market, than any Western pork, and were there less amateur salting, pickling and curing, and more encouragement given to professed packers and curers, a large and steady export trade might be done out of native raising. During the last winter, we had a brisk demand for dressed hogs for the Boston Market so that very little packing was done here. There is this advantage

to the consignor of dressed hogs to Montreal, that he has the centralisation here, of the local and Eastern buyers, with the option of selling to packers or packing on his own account. If purchasers do not meet his views in price for carcass. To send here in carcass and pack, if satisfactory prices are not obtained, will result more favorably usually to the owner, than if he pack himself. Our inspectors may be relied upon for careful cutting up and branding, and as it must pass under their hands, when shipped in barrel, if the best market price is to be obtained, better it were done at first, than perhaps to be rejected as sour, musty or rusty, from improper packing and curing, when sent down in Spring.

Prices of Pork Mess. P. Mess. Prime

1864.	\$17.00	\$16.00	\$15.50
1865	20.00	16.50	15.50

Ashes form a very important branch of our trade, and to Montreal, the British Market looks, as a vital source of supply, although recent experiments in chemistry appear to demonstrate that a substitute which will drive our inferior grades out of competition, has been discovered in the residuum, and refuse of the beet-root after its saccharine virtues have been extracted in the production of sugar. The price of this article, is controlled entirely by the foreign demand, and no product of the province has to rely so completely on its own merits for its value or selling price. There may have been oversights and even negligences in isolated cases, but the character of the Montreal Inspection stands deservedly high in foreign markets, and its brands command the highest prices.

Prices of Ashes	Pots	Pearls.
1864.	\$5.72	\$6.20
1865.	6.20	6.45

COAL OIL seems now likely to be handled by legitimate dealers, with capital and character to lose, which is a relief, for the consignees and purchasers of this article in this market, up to the present time appear to agree that their shipping friends at point of production and elsewhere displayed very conspicuously in their dealings, the absence of both these essentials to a satisfactory business. Canadian Oil has, figuratively and literally stunk in the nostrils of foreign buyers irregularity of quality and very great deficiency of quantity being generally complained of.

BUTTER is becoming a considerable item in our export returns, and the outlet for it being practically unlimited, it is deserving of particular attention in any observations on our products, and with greater force that there is so much scope for improvement in the manipulation of it in the dairy and out of it.

Well-made, well-cured, well-packed butter is always sure of a remunerative market, and although the unscrupulous seller, trading upon the ignorance or confidence of the buyer, may occasionally palm off an inferior article at the price of the best, in the long run the painstaking, careful butter maker and packer will have the best of it, and their representatives in the market will out-clin the shallow dealer of the opposite character. Let a district or a particular brand of butter become known to buyers here, and the character being maintained it will always command the very highest figure, for morality and business being more closely allied than many people think, the union will be found a very good connection and an excellent salesman, for at least this commodity. Having no accepted "inspection" of butter buyers have to rely upon their own judgment, and the result is complaints and reclamations from principals to a discouraging extent. We say, no "accepted" inspection advisedly; as although there is a duly appointed authorized Inspector, the trade seem to unite in ignoring his existence. The present year will probably terminate this anomalous position, for between careless producers and packers, the patience of buyers for shipment may be exhausted, and a radical reform ensue.

Our exports of Butter for four years, as drawn out by the Secretary of the Board, are:

	1861.	1862.	1863	1864
K-gs	49722	64550	68409	76362

The increase in value in 1864, owing to higher prices, is about 40 per cent,—the total value exceeding a million of dollars.

There are a few points to be observed which Shippers might not, to advantage relative to drawbacks to the advantageous sale of their consignments.

In all grains cleanliness and freedom from foreign substances are very desirable. Shrunken or musty Grain, Oats and other extraneous substances, prejudice the sale of wheat, and to a greater extent than the increased price obtained for the inferior article will cover.

The same with Peas and Barley, whilst Buckwheat is a very undesirable addition to any grains. In Flour, regularity of production is an essential thing, as any deterioration of the grade destroys confidence; and the mill-brand of any Flour ought to denote its relative value as precisely as an Inspector's certificate with peas, Ashes or Pork. Its own merits will sell it, if the quality is strictly adhered to; as foreign and local buyers will willingly pay an extra price to secure a known brand. The tare of barrels ought to be strictly true, and each barrel correctly marked, and filled with the net weight of Flour required. Sound, well-coopered barrels are always a recommendation, as likewise full tared.

Butter, to be rendered fit for market, should be packed in hardwood packages, well sealed and seasoned, with slip covers, containing 60 to 65 lbs. or 70 to 100 lbs Butter. Correct dry tare should be branded on by the cooper, packages well filled, with a whit cloth on the top tucked down, and a handful of pure, fine salt sprinkled over it, the lid secured by a band of iron or thin sheet iron fastened over the top and side, with nails of white or anti-corrosive metal. Many store packers omit the cloth, superseding it by an inch layer of salt. This is a great mistake: as a conscientious seller will throw it off, or allow the buyer an extra tare to cover it, besides, it depreciates the value a good cent per lb. One colour of Butter only to be put in one package. The careless use of a packing machine makes sad havoc with Butter, as its free and unguarded use reduces the butter to the consistency of lard, with all its greasiness and want of fibre. Butter is formed of crystals, the same as sugar, and excessive pounding and mashing deprives it of all crispness and sharpness and makes it sticky and dull.

Freedom from dirt is a requisite for inspection in Ashes, and to secure this a heavy barrel is an advantage. We sell here with actual tare allowed, but in Great Britain one-eighth of the gross weight, or 14 lbs per 112 lbs., is deducted for tare, which often amounts to from 1½d. to 4½d. per cwt. difference in price, and a good tare will bring from 2½c. to 5c. per cwt. more than a light tare here. As wood should be cheaper than Ashes, coopers ought to be instructed to make heavy barrels.

For general guidance we append the statutory weights of grams, seeds, &c. per bushel, by which Montreal quotations are governed, unless otherwise specified.

	lbs.		lbs.
Wheat	60	Beans	60
Maize	56	Buckwheat	48
Peas	60	Timothy seed.	48
Barley	48	Clover	60
Oats	54	Flax	60
Rye	36		

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