

From the closing bids given below, a general advance in nearly all the leading banks will be noticed to have taken place.

	Dec. 31.	Dec. 7.
Montreal	186 $\frac{1}{2}$	187 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ontario	103 $\frac{1}{2}$	104 $\frac{1}{2}$
Molson's	109	108 $\frac{1}{2}$
Toronto	174 $\frac{1}{2}$	176 $\frac{1}{2}$
Merchants	108 $\frac{1}{2}$	108 $\frac{1}{2}$
Commerce	116 $\frac{1}{2}$	117 $\frac{1}{2}$
Imperial	125	125
Federal	48	48 $\frac{1}{2}$
Dominion	185	185 $\frac{1}{2}$
Standard	110 $\frac{1}{2}$	110 $\frac{1}{2}$
Hamilton	116	116 $\frac{1}{2}$
Northwest Land	42	41

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

A visible improvement has taken place in the grain and produce market since our last report, the market being firmer with an advance in price, and the previous dullness has to a large extent disappeared, but it is evident that with small receipts and small stocks trade must remain quiet for some time.

WHEAT.

The demand has improved and a general advance in price has taken place. Sales have chiefly been in outside lots with very few sales on shipping account. As high as 80c was paid for No. 1 Spring, and No. 2 Spring and No. 3 Fall were selling at 78c.

OATS.

Quiet; demand fair with small receipts; No. 1 sold at 31 to 33c.

BARLEY.

The supply in this market is not nearly equal to the demand with firm prices for all grades No. 1 brought 70c, and had there been more would have gone higher; No. 2, 63c.

RYE.

Still dull with little or no demand; prices still unchanged at 55 to 56c.

PEAS.

In fair demand with but little to be had. Prices paid on the street were 56 to 57c.

POTATOES.

The demand is still very slow with receipts equal to the demand. Prices per bag 40 to 45c.

EGGS.

Receipts in this line have been on the increase and now seem to be fully sufficient to supply the demand. Prices are as follows: limed, 18 to 19c; fresh, 20 to 21c for round lots.

BUTTER.

In this line the market is still glutted, with no immediate prospect of an improvement. Rolls are from 14 to 16c, with inferior going as low as 12c, with tubs and crocks from 16 to 18c.

CHEESE.

Unchanged, good demand and prices steady at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ c for good and choice, and 11c for medium.

PORK.

This market still remains unchanged, with a few small lots selling at \$15.50.

BACON.

In fair demand, with a few sales in round lots. Rolls sold at 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ c; bellies steady at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ c.

HAMS.

In good demand, with fair prices, as follows: smoked 11c, with small lots as high as 12c.

LARD.

The demand in the market is still good, large lots of tins selling at 10c, and small ones at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 11c.

POULTRY.

Box lots in fairly good supply, but in only fair demand. Prices are as follows: turkeys 10 to 11c; geese, 6 to 7c; ducks and fowl still at 40 to 60c per pair.

APPLES.

Receipts large, with slow sales. Choice at \$1.75; \$1 to \$1.50 for poor.

The Hardware Trade of 1884.

The quiet prevailing in other branches of business and especially in staple metals has exerted some influence upon the hardware trade of the past year, and there has not been the briskness that was hoped. On the other hand, this department of commerce, as coming more directly in contact with the individual consumer, and supplying in a measure private wants, which have been less curtailed than those of corporations and great enterprises, has suffered less than many of its kindred lines. The activity in the various branches of hardware has been of very different degree, but as a rule it is safe to say that the lighter classes of goods have moved more freely. If the aggregate of trade foots up less than was anticipated, it will nevertheless be found to be large. Careful estimates made from the best sources develop the fact that the total quantity of goods handled in 1884 is in excess of that handled in 1883, though it is possible that the money value of sales may be fractionally less. It is true that the condition of this trade has not been satisfactory and that there have been small margins of profit. But even this unsatisfactory state has been exaggerated, and an examination of the figures shows less cause for complaint than the surface impressions would seem to warrant. The trade for the year has been largely made up of petty orders, and buyers have been conservative, close and disposed to haggle over prices. To these causes, coupled with the croakings of chronic grumblers, are due in a large measure the exaggerated ideas of depression sometimes expressed and industriously circulated by sensational journals. The tendency of prices during the year has been downward with very few exceptions, and the general average is 10 to 15 per cent. lower than on the 1st of January last. The declines have, however, been less hurtful to the trade than those of the preceding year, because they have been more slow and gradual and have caught very few merchants with any very considerable stocks on hand. The declines have also been less severe upon the manufacturer, because they have been offset to some extent by cheaper labor. Moreover, valuable advances have been made in the direction of economical administration by both merchants and manufacturers, which has assisted materially during the dull times and which will be a source of profit in the future. The low price of grain has prevented farmers from selling or has returned so little for their crops that their funds have been diverted to more pressing claims, and the country merchants have not been able to collect as fully as could be desired. Nevertheless, though a little slow, they have managed to make payments with a very fair degree of promptness under the circumstances, and in this respect

there has been a little improvement towards the last days of the year. The failure of hardware houses is neither large nor gloomy. Contrary to the usual impressions, that is afforded to invent and put upon the market new patterns and designs, the past year has witnessed the introduction of comparatively few new articles.

The demand for carriage and wagon hardware, malleable castings, etc., has been slightly under that of 1883, and the market has run its entire course of the year without offering any especial feature or exciting any peculiar interest. The average of values in this department is said to have ruled not more than 5 to 7 per cent. lower than at the beginning of the year.

In general hardware the tonnage has shown a slight increase over that of 1883, while the money value of transactions exhibits a marked decrease. Cutlery, farming tools, and all classes of light goods in general have been popular, and have more than held their own, while staples used in manufacture have been somewhat depressed. The relative range of prices in this line is very complicated and hard to get at, but they are lower and at the same time steadier than they were a year ago. The year opened up well in heavy hardware and railroad supplies, but trade dropped off early in the spring, and the summer and fall trade has been light, and the volume of business is hardly up to that of last year. This is due largely to short buying of railroad companies caused by the financial troubles and the disposition to cut down expenditures—a condition which is speedily remedying itself since there is a limit to the extent to which old things can be put up and made to do.

The quantity of builders' hardware and supplies sold has exceeded considerably that of last year, with the value of the transactions for the two years standing about equal. Prices in general lines are fully 15 per cent. lower than in such articles as tacks, brads, tools, etc., there has been little or no decline. The quantity of the goods called for has improved in the face of the quiet time, and the demand has been very largely for medium quality. Lately, owing to the finishing up of structures, there has been a very good sale of fine goods. In this connection it may be noted that nails have suffered severely during the year, falling from a relatively high to a very low price. The total decline during the year has been 40 cents per keg. The market has suffered from a lack of confidence gotten by the known excessive capacities of mills, coupled with the vacillating course of the manufacturers regarding reduction of production. During the year steel nails made their appearance in the market, and have been established as a regular article of trade and approximated their price to that of iron nails. Wire nails have come into greater use and have fallen 10 per cent. in price. A new kind of steel with surfaces of zinc also been introduced to a limited extent in the industrial world.

It is the intention of the Ogilvie Mill to resume buying grain at Minnedosa.