

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Saturday, March 9.

The weather has been more moderate and springlike this week and there is an increased amount of business doing in all lines. Jobbing houses are mostly busy with spring business. There is also a fairly large retail business being done. Money is scarce. Labor is well employed as usual at this time of the year and work in the building line has already opened up. The grain movement is very light and there is practically nothing being marketed. Produce is coming in more freely. Cattle trade is improving as the demand for fresh killed meat increases. The indications are that there will be a larger movement of stockers out of the province than usual when the shipping season commences. Bank clearings at Winnipeg show an increase of \$372,000 as compared with last year.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

Saturday March 9

(All quotations, unless otherwise specified, are wholesale for such quantities as are usually taken by retail dealers, and are subject to the usual reductions on large quantities, and to cash discounts.)

DRY GOODS.

Wholesale houses are busy shipping spring goods. Demand for these is large and will continue so. Sorting trade is now commencing and as the winter shows signs of breaking up this week consuming demand may be expected to assume large proportions very shortly which will greatly help the sorting business. Notwithstanding the scarcity of money everybody seems to be in a position to buy all they need in the way of fashionable garments and there is an increasing tendency here to have nothing but the best regardless of cost. There has probably never been such a large proportion of the demand devoted to the finest lines of goods as is the case this season. The wholesale millinery openings next week are expected to bring a larger number of buyers than ever into the city and the dry goods houses will pick up quite a lot of trade from these. Values here remain steady and there is nothing new to note with regard to prices.

FISH.

There is an active trade being done in both fresh and salt fish, the demand having increased greatly since the opening of Lent. Domestic varieties of fresh fish are plentiful and prices easy. In many cases street peddlars are selling at less than the prices given by The Commercial, but regular dealers adhere pretty closely to the list we give. Atlantic and Pacific coast fresh and salt fish are in good supply. Haddies are more plentiful now than they were a few weeks ago and so also are Digby chicks and Labrador herring. We quote.—Whitefish, 4 to 6c per pound; pickerel 3½c, pike, 2½c, trout, 10c; salmon, 12½c, halibut, 12½c; Lake Superior herring, 20c per dozen; salt cod, 6½c; Labrador herring, per barrel, \$1.15; salt mackerel, \$2.25 per kit, shad, \$3.50; Digby chicks, 15c box; boneless cod, 7½c lb; boneless fish, 5½c lb; finnan haddies, 7½c per pound; fresh sea cod, big, 7c per lb; tommy cod, 5½c, flounders, 5½c, smelts, 7½c; mackerel, 13c, shad, 10c; bass, 13c; eels, 10c; oysters, select, \$2.15 per gallon, standard, \$2.00.

GREEN FRUITS

Demand for green fruits continues to increase as the season advances and we note a moderately large business doing at local wholesale houses. California naval oranges are in plentiful supply and continue to show good quality. The large sizes still predominate. Bitter oranges for marmalade are in the market at \$6.50 per case, a decline of 50c from last week. Lemons remain unchanged. Apples continue scarce, the market being supplied with an occasional car from the south, but receipts from this source are not sufficient for requirements. Northern Spies are now quoted at \$5.50 per barrel, an advance of 50c over figure of a week ago. We quote, Apples, Ben Davis, \$5.50 per barrel, Northern Spies, \$5.50, Baldwin, \$4.50, Russets, \$4.00, California naval oranges, per

box, \$3.00 to \$4.25; bitter oranges, \$6.50 per case; lemons, per box, \$4.50, as to size, bananas, per bunch, \$3.00 to \$3.35, Wisconsin cranberries, per barrel, \$10.50; Jersey, frozen, \$8; 40 pound boxes, \$4.50, figs, \$1.40 to \$1.50 per box; onions, per lb., 2½c, mince meat in 25-pound pails, 10c per pound; carton dates, per package of 1-pound, 100¢ new dates, 7c; elder 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 tins, \$6 per dozen.

GROCERIES.

Trade is steadily improving, as the spring season approaches and we note an active business now doing in both staple and fancy lines. Collections continue slow as money is scarce throughout the country and this seems to be the only discouraging feature of the situation. Prices hold steady for the most part. Sugars are practically unchanged from last week although we have reduced our quotation on bright yellow sugar 5c, to \$4.75, as this seems to be the correct price. There was a misunderstanding among jobbers when the last reduction was made by refiners by which they only reduced yellow sugars 10c instead of 15c, which error has since been discovered and rectified. Glucose syrup shows an easier feeling and we quote barrel lots now ½c lower at 3c per pound. Other lines of syrup are unchanged. Barbadoes molasses is somewhat higher, the outside price being now 57½c as against 55c heretofore. Canned goods of all kinds remain steady at last week's figures. Green Rio coffee is easier and ¼ to ½c lower at 9½ to 10c per pound. In cereals the only changes to note are, an advance of 3 to 10c per sack in the price of rolled oatmeal, a decline of 5c per sack in cornmeal and a decline of 3c in the price of cornmeal in half sacks. Cured fish are unchanged in price but there has been an increase in demand owing to the requirements of the Lenten season. Dried fruits are for the most part steady and unchanged. The most notable exception is in the case of raisins which are now being quoted lower. Fine off stalk Valencias are down to \$2.10 to \$2.25 per case, layer Valencias to \$2.40 to \$2.50. Loose Muscatels are ½c per pound lower. The only change in California fruits is in prunes, 100 to 12½c, which are ½c lower. Small size California prunes are being quoted at 4c per pound. Teas, tobaccos, spices and all other lines of groceries remain unchanged. For Winnipeg prices current see page 636.

HARDWARE.

Business is improving as the season advances. The promise of a large building year in the west and of general industrial activity makes it certain that hardware of all kinds will be in good demand and to provide for this retail merchants are placing liberal orders for spring delivery. The volume of these orders is larger than was expected and there is an improved feeling in the trade in consequence. Since the formation of the new United States steel trust there has been a firmer feeling in iron and steel prices and the deal has improved the market to that extent. What the final effect will be remains to be seen.

PAINTS, OILS AND GLASS.

Business is good and prices for the most part steady. The only actual change is in linseed oil which has dropped three cents per gallon, making the price here now 80c for boiled and 85c for raw. This is due to the weak state of the market in the east and the probability of large American importations of oil made from flaxseed grown in Argentina in the early future. Glass holds steady and unchanged here, but there is no slackening in the firmness of the market and we hear of a 15 per cent. advance in the United States. Turpentine is steady and unchanged. White lead is weaker and unsteady.

LEATHER, ETC.

Demand for harness and sole leather, findings and sundries has improved since the first of the month and there is now a much larger amount of goods moving. Travellers on the road are picking up good sized orders and house trade is also good. Wholesale dealers here anticipate a much better demand during the coming summer than was thought possible when the year opened. Trade will be especially good in the far west. We have to note a reduction in the prices for harness and collar leather this week amounting to 1c per pound. No. 1 union oak is now worth 32c per pound in wholesale quantities here and other grades in proportion. Shoe leathers remain unchanged. Our quotations will be found in detail on page 640.

LUMBER.

The retail lumber dealers of Winnipeg have, after a series of meetings, succeeded in arranging a price list, which is satisfactory to them and are now practically all on the same basis again as regards quotations, after a long period of price-cutting. The new list has just been given out to the trade and shows a good many changes in prices as compared with the list which was supposed to be in force heretofore, although, as a matter of fact, the new prices are not any lower than those at which the lumber has been selling for practically a year and in some cases are not as low. White and red pine and spruce are the lines which show the greatest number of changes. Some of the most important of these are as follows: No. 1 pine, dimension, 2x4 to 2x12, 12, 14 and 16 feet long, has been listed at \$19.50 per thousand feet, as against \$22 in the old list, other lengths of the same sizes are proportionately lower; cull plank, all widths, is listed at \$14, as against \$16 old list; No. 1 pine timber, 3x6 to 6x8, up to 16 feet long, has been listed at \$21.00, as against \$23.50 old list, other lengths and sizes proportionately lower. 3rd common boards of red and white pine are listed at \$19.50, as against \$20.50 old list; spruce boards are now \$18.50, as against \$20.50 old list; No. 1 cull pine or spruce boards are now \$17.00, as against \$20.50 old list. No. 1 box boards, 14 inches and upwards, are now \$16.00, as against \$18.00 old list. 2nd white pine siding, flooring and ceiling, 4, 5 and 6 inch, is now \$11.00, as against \$12.00 old list, 8 and 10 inch pine shiplap is now \$22.00, as against \$24.00 old list, 1 inch pine shiplap now \$21.00 as against \$22.50 old list; 8 and 10 inch spruce shiplap now \$21.00 as against \$23.00 old list; 8 and 10 inch cull pine or spruce now \$18.00 as against \$20.00 old list; white pine finishing now \$65.00 as against \$60.00 old list; white pine shops finishing now \$10.50 as against \$10.00 old list, clear red pine finishing now \$12.00 as against \$16.00 old list; 1 inch white pine finishing 1st and 2nd clear \$14.00 as against \$12.00 old list. These appear to be the principal changes in the list. B. C. lumber is practically on the same basis as a year ago. Quarter sawn oak 1 inch is now \$25.00 per M as against \$100 in the old list.

RAW FURS.

Receipts of raw furs in this market have been large during the past week and buyers have been kept pretty busy looking after consignments. This is a gratifying report in view of the fact that a larger number of buyers are now operating along the railway lines east and west and at northern points than ever before, which cuts off some business that used to come to Winnipeg. The quality of the furs is fully up to other years. Prices have been holding up well notwithstanding the weaker feeling which followed the January sales, which is due to keen competition among buyers. The March sales are being looked forward to with a good deal of interest as the future course of prices will be largely decided by those sales. They will also determine whether the business done during the earlier months of the winter has been profitable or not.

SCRAP.

There is a fairly good demand for scrap iron and prices for this 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; wrought iron scrap, \$5 to \$6 per ton; heavy copper 10 to 12c per pound, red brass, 10c per pound; yellow brass, heavy, 7 to 8c per pound; light brass, 5c to 6c per pound; lead pipe or tea lead, 2 to 2½c per pound; rags, country mixed, 50c per 100 pounds, rubbers, free from rivets, buckles and articles, 6c per pound; zinc scrap 1c per pound; bones, clean, dry and bleached, \$5 to \$6 ton; bottles, quartz, 20c per dozen; plots, 12½c per dozen.

STONE AND LIME.

Prices for the opening of the season have been fixed as follows: Rubble stone, \$1.60 per cord; footings, \$7.50 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 no improvement in the wheat markets this week. In the American markets the day has been the same as another, and inactive with only a little trading and fractional changes in price. At the close of markets yesterday prices were exactly what they were a week ago. The primary movement of wheat in the States which last week showed some falling off as compared with a year ago, has this week more nearly approached last year's figures. The Northwestern receipts show a large falling off, but are counterbalanced by the large increase in the south and southwest. While export business is invariably reported dull the shipments abroad of wheat and flour are on a normal scale. European markets are quiet and lower, especially on the continent where prices have declined sharply. Visible stocks in Europe and America therefore continue to increase. The stock of wheat and flour in Europe and America in store Argentine as compared with the Liverpool Corn Trade News amounted on March 1st to \$6,100,000 bushels compared to \$5,520,000 bushels on February 1st and \$5,840,000 bushels on March 1st last year. Crop reports continue favorable on the whole. The Cincinnati Price Current in its weekly summary says that weather during the past week has been adverse on winter wheat but it is doubtful if material harm has been done as yet. On the Pacific coast conditions continue excellent and prospects for large crops were never better. European crop reports show no change and the outlook there is considered good. Latest reports from India give a less promising prospect for that crop and the surplus for export may not come up to previous expectations. Argentine shipments are not heavy when compared with last year and it is stated that the movement is slow owing to the better condition of the farmers in that country, and that the bulk of the crop will be shipped later than usual. The American visible supply decreased 302,000 bushels compared to a decrease of 146,000 bushels the previous week and an increase of 65,000 bushels same week last year. The world's shipments were 7,275,000 bushels against 7,335,000 bushels previous week and 7,623,000 bushels last year. The world's visible supply according to Bradstreet's decreased 300,000 bushels compared to a decrease of 350,000 bushels the week previous and an increase of 2,977,000 bushels for same week last year.

There is no change in the local situation. Supply of wheat is small, demand is poor and there is no disposition on part of traders to try to push business. Increasing caution is being shown in regard to dealing in north wheat. Prices at the close of yesterday's market were as follows: 1 hard \$3½c, 2 hard 78½c, 3 hard 67½c, 3 northern 63½c, tough 3 hard 63½c, tough 3 northern 59½c, all in store for William spot or en route.

FLOUR—Prices hold steady as follows: Lake of the Woods, Fire Roses, \$2.10, Red Patent, \$1.95, Madora, \$1.60, XXXX, \$1.35 per sack of 48 pounds. Ogilvie Milling Co., Hungarian, \$2.10, Glenora Patent, \$1.60, Alberta, \$1.75, Manitoba, \$1.60 and Imperial XXXX, \$1.25 per sack of 48 pounds.

MILLFEED—There is a large demand for feed which mills are not able to fully supply, consequently prices hold firm. Bran is worth in wholesale quantities here \$14 per ton and shorts \$16 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 \$20 per ton.

COUNTRY WHEAT—Farmers deliver at country points are very light, and at many points no business is doing at all. Most of the wheat which has offered is of poor quality. Buyers are paying the farmer from \$5 to 45c per bushel, according to quality of grain and rate of freight.

OATS—Receipts are largely from Northern Alberta, Manitoba and are being very scarce and of poor quality. Farmers are taking a good many for seed purposes. The demand for feed oats is also fairly large. Manitoba oats are worth 36 to 38c in bulk on track here, and Alberta 40 to 42c, according to quality. A lot of these latter are changing hands.

BARLEY—The market is practically nominal.

CORN—Carlots of No. 3 on track here are worth from 40 to 48c per bushel.