

# The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, especially devoted to the interests of Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

**Eleventh Year of Publication**  
**ISSUED EVERY MONDAY**

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WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY 6, 1893.

## The Situation in Prunes.

All the indications point to a high market for prunes during the remainder of the crop year, the stock of all varieties being small, with primary sources advising very limited quantities available for market purposes. The year 1892 goes upon record with very poor crop results in all producing countries. Bosnia and Serbia, the heavy producing districts of previous years, comes to the front with a very small surplus, and packers there have elevated their ideas to such a point that the former common article that was sent out from that section of Europe is now looked upon in the light of a comparative luxury. Up to about three years ago, the bulk of this, the Turkish crop, was sent to the markets of the world in the unwieldy casks, but since that time the packers of that country, stimulated by competition from France and California, have used their best endeavors to raise the quality of their goods in the estimation of consumers, and in this they have proved very successful. In previous years there was little or no attention given to the size of fruit, the crop being collected and packed into casks regardless of quality. But ascertoring the various sizes has now been adopted, and in marketing the crop purchases and sales are made wholly upon this basis. Boxes are found to meet with most favor in the trade, and under the name of Sultana a very considerable portion of the crop is now packed, assorted in sizes running from 60 to 100 to the pound. Bags are also a popular package with many in the trade; but in putting the goods up in this way the importance of sizes is kept well in mind, as upon such depends the value of the fruit in the eye of importers. The old method of casks is, in fact, rapidly giving place to the smaller and more convenient packages, and in time the former will drop out entirely as a means of conveying the crop to this or any other market of the world. Going back to the visible supply of

this class of fruit we would say that the quantity upon spot and afloat, so far as the cables have advised, includes 14,000 boxes, 10,000 bags, and 500 casks, the latter including a line of 300 carried over from the previous season. - N. Y. Commercial Bulletin.

## Winter Wheat.

Reports have been received from the correspondents in twelve states on the condition of winter wheat, and on the condition and movement of cattle. In Illinois winter wheat is in from fair to good condition generally. About 18 per cent of the correspondents, however, report that in their counties the stand was rather weak when winter set in, and in one or two instances it was feared the wheat had been injured by the severe cold weather before the blanket of snow came. Condition of cattle is everywhere good.

In Indiana about 70 per cent of the correspondents report the condition of wheat as good, 12 per cent report fair, and the rest poor.

In Michigan the winter wheat is in good condition in most of the counties reporting.

In Kentucky the wheat crop is not up in the condition reported in the preceding states.

In Missouri wheat is not in a desirable condition. In a number of counties the wheat is reported injured by the hard freezing and the lack of snow.

In Kansas the winter wheat is generally reported good, but some report only fair. The whole state has been under a good blanket of snow nearly all winter.

In Nebraska half of the counties report condition good, nearly half fair, and two report poor. The state is mostly covered with snow.

In Iowa the crop of winter wheat is in good condition. Cattle are also good. The same is true of the wheat in Wisconsin, and what little is grown in Minnesota and South Dakota. The cattle in all five states, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and two Dakotas, are in generally good condition, but few are being sent to market. - *Farmers' Review.*

## The Tea Situation.

The London *Grocer's Gazette* of January 14 says:

China Tea—The improved tone noticed in our last week's report has scarcely been maintained, and the week closes with a dull feeling all round. In black leaf, teas are offering at 43d, and large transactions have taken place at this price, showing slightly easier rates. Reds at the same price, and up to 7d, have been in large supply, and numerous sales were effected in the early part of the week by private contract. Souchongs at a less figure have been acquired for, but this class at present appears rather scarce. Fair kinds up to 7d and 7½d have exchanged hands, showing good value to the buyer. A large quantity of scented teas have been offering, and have mostly sold, few common kinds showing a slight rise on early purchases, but medium are in less demand, whilst finest, being scarce, realize full rates. There has been a better feeling in the green makes during the past week, and the prices are well maintained for all grades excepting low young Hysons and Hyson, which are easier.

Indian tea—At the large auctions for the week the bulk of the enquiry has again been for the commoner grades of tea. There was nothing selling under 81 per lb except one or two very inferior parcels, and of these nothing went below 7½d per lb. Broken Pekoes there is very little enquiry for, therefore they are very cheap. The weakest point seems to be for teas about 1s 1d per lb. Quality on the whole was very fair, but only one or two noted marks made anything like high prices. They are rather large sales advertised for next week.

Ceylon tea—The greater portion of the tea offered this week was sold on Tuesday, of which low-priced Pekoe; Souchongs and Pekoes were

the only class in demand; consequently, like last week, these teas realized high prices. There was very little enquiry for broken Pekoes, especially for teas about 1s per lb., therefore they went very much in favor of the buyers. On Thursday, although a large proportion of the broken Pekoes were withdrawn, there seemed to be a little more demand for them at slightly firmer rates than on Tuesday.

## Butter Packages.

Speaking of the preferences of the British markets in the matter of butter and butter packages, and of cheese and cheese boxes, Mr. Robertson said: "The demand in different centres of large population calls for different qualities in color, body and flavor. All the markets want a butter with the bloom of fresh made flavor still on it. We need refrigerator accommodation on the steamship lines from Canada. The Manchester and Glasgow markets want a rather pale colored butter. The London and Glasgow markets are running on square packages, after the New Zealand and Australian style. We will have some of our winter-made creamy butter from the government experimental dairy stations packed in square packages this year. I found Canadian cheese still growing in favor with wholesale dealers and retailers. In Manchester district the fat cheese from Quebec has not met with particular favor, and the poor quality of the boxes in which the French cheese is shipped has caused many complaints. The unworkmanlike finish or want of finish, and the wretchedly bad boxes were the worst features of some cheese from that province. These defects could all be remedied in one season by a little more care about taste. The French race have the reputation of putting up goods of all sorts in the daintiest and most attractive form. The French dairymen of Quebec should try to maintain the good name of their people in that regard. The fact that it would pay them handsomely to do so should not be a deterrent."

## Homestead Entries for 1892.

Reports to the department of the interior for last year show that a satisfactory increase in settlement has taken place in the West compared with the previous year. A preliminary estimate prepared by the department shows that during 1892 the homestead entries numbered 4,948 compared with 2,955 during 1891, an increase of 1,425 or 40 per cent., and showing compared with the entries during 1890 an increase of 2,013 or 68 per cent. Of the total number who took up homesteads in Manitoba and the Northwest and British Columbia last year, 2,781 entries were made by settlers from the older provinces of Canada as follows: Ontario, 1,621; Quebec, 214; Nova Scotia, 27; New Brunswick, 12; Prince Edward Island, 14; British Columbia, 38; Manitoba, 522; Northwest Territories, 65; provinces not given, 247; total, 2,781. Five hundred and thirteen entries were made by emigrants from the United States, 92 of whom were returned Canadians. The nationalities of other homesteaders were English 603, Irish 51, Scotch 175, French 107, Belgians 54, Italians 5, Germans 95, Austro-Hungarians 136, Russians 242, Mennonites 13, Swedes 70, Danes other than Icelanders 13, Icelanders 76, Poles 5, Roumanians 3, unknown 3, making the total number of homestead entries 4,948, representing in all 14,972 persons. From the Canadian Pacific railway 1,632 settlers purchased land during 1892. Of the purchasers 803 were from Ontario, 450 from the United States and 154 from England.

A homestead is 160 acres of land which is the amount of government land which each settler is entitled to take up free. Quite a number of new settlers, however, prefer to buy land in the older settled districts, rather than take up free land in more remote sections.