

THE BUSINESS SITUATION

Winnipeg, Saturday Afternoon, Jan. 8.

Business with the wholesale houses is very dull, as usual at this time of year, and there is some talk of collections being slow. The sorting trade this season has not been up to expectations. It now appears that the consuming power of the country was somewhat over-rated. The large increase in business during the fall season led many to suppose that a large trade would be done throughout the season. It would appear, however, that a good deal of extra buying was done by retailers in expectation of a big trade. While the business done has been large, the goods purchased early in the season proved ample for requirements, hence the light sorting trade. In fact in some cases country retailers appear to have rather over-bought. The outlook for spring trade is favorable, though it will, of course, be a mistake to over-judge the consumptive requirements of the country and push in more goods than are needed.

WINNIPEG MARKETS

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BOOTS AND SHOES.

Reports from eastern manufacturers say that they have heavy orders in for the spring trade, the number of orders now in being considerably in excess of last year. Western travelers report that their spring orders are showing up well. Prices are firm, owing to the firmness in the leather market.

FUEL.

Souris coal is now in more plentiful supply and dealers are able to fill orders promptly. Some cordwood is coming in from the Dauphin road, which makes a new source of supply. Tamarac wood from this line sold as high as \$4.60 and \$4.65 for car lots, choice tamarac being scarcer than other kinds of wood fuel. The Winnipeg Water Works are asking for tenders to be in by January 15, for 1,400 cords of jack pine or other suitable cordwood fuel. See quotations on another page.

GROCERIES.

The only change in the local market is the advance on granulated and yellow sugars, as will be seen by reference to quotations on another page. Local prices have not followed the sharp advances in eastern markets. Our special telegraphic reports from Montreal and Toronto the past few weeks show that grocery staples are very strong, and sharp advances have been made on molasses, canned goods and some other lines. Winnipeg prices on these goods are therefore much below eastern markets, making this the cheapest grocery market in the country, freight considered.

GREEN FRUITS.

Business is very quiet. Dealers expect to begin landing heated cars for country points about January 15th to 20th. There is nothing new in the market and no change in price. Prices as follows. Mexican oranges, \$4.50 to

\$5; navel oranges \$4.50 to \$5; bananas, per bunch, \$3 to \$3.50; California lemons, \$4.50 to \$5.00 a box; Washington and Oregon pears, \$2 to \$2.25 per box; apples, Ontario stock, \$4 to \$4.75 per barrel; southern apples, \$4 to \$4.25 per bbl.; Cape Cod cranberries \$7.50 to \$8 per barrel; sweet potatoes \$5.25 per barrel; Malaga grapes, \$7.50 per keg for medium, and \$8 for heavy weights; Ontario black walnuts, 8c lb; coconuts, \$1 per dozen.; Sicily filberts, large 11c to 12c per lb; Grenoble walnuts, 13c; figs, fancy elemes, \$1.40 to \$1.50 per 10 lb box, 30 lb boxes 16c; 50 lb. boxes, 17c per lb.; dates 7 1-2c per pound; imported celery 50 to 60c per doz.

HARDWARE, PAINTS, ETC.

The only change in the market this week is the sharp drop in refined petroleum. Quoted brands of imported oil have declined 3c per gallon and the higher grades of Canadian oil have been reduced 2 1-2c to 3c. Silver star remains unchanged. The reduction is said to be owing to local competition.

LUMBER.

There is still some speculation as to the possibilities of an advance on pine lumber. The market is very firm and the indications point to an advance in prices for the spring trade. At any rate, the advance in the States and in British Columbia lumber renders the market very strong. While British Columbia cedar shingles are quoted 25c higher on the new lists, it is known that a good many shingles were sold last fall, for delivery after January 1, at the old price of \$2.

GRAIN AND PRODUCE.

WHEAT—Wheat was easier the the first or two days of the week in leading United States markets, though there was no very great change in values. Yesterday prices took a turn upward, just about recovering the loss of the previous few days. The easier feeling in European markets was attributed to liberal offerings of Argentine wheat. To offset this severe drought was reported from the wheat districts of California. Exports from Atlantic ports last week were 5,495,000 bushels compared with 2,708,000 bushels for the corresponding period of last year.

Locally the wheat market is very quiet. A good many buyers have been withdrawn from Manitoba country markets, only one buyer for the combination being left at a number of markets, besides of course independent buyers and millers. The millers have been taking most of the wheat which has changed hands in car or round lots; and they have also been buying direct from farmers, as usual. Prices paid to farmers averaged about 76c at Manitoba points and 78c has been the ruling price for car lots, at country points, based on a 19 cent freight rate to Fort William. Dealers were offering quite freely at this figure on Thursday, but yesterday the feeling was firmer. The dealers who are buying from farmers and turning over their grain to millers, have just about been making profits of operating their elevators. The price paid for car lots in the country is equal to 90 to 91c at Fort William, which is above export basis. No. 2 hard 3c less than No. 1. No. 1 northern nominal at about 1c under No. 1 hard.

FLOUR—We have at last a change to report in flour, the market having

experienced a decline this week of 10c per 98 lb sack, except on second bakers, which declined 5c. We quote patents \$2.45 per sack of 98 lbs; strong bakers, 2.25; second bakers, \$1.85 and XXXX, \$1.35. Prices to local dealers here less 5c per sack for net cash.

MILLEED—Ton lots are held at \$10 to \$11 per ton for bran and \$12 for shorts, and \$1 per ton less in large lots. The demand for large and the market is very firm for bran, \$1 per ton higher being asked by some millers. Millers in fact can hardly supply the present local and western demand, and no shipment, are being made east in consequence.

GROUND FEED.—Pure grain feed is quoted at \$22 to \$24 for oats and barley, the outside price for rolled oat feed. Inferior mixed mill feed, \$18 to \$20 per ton. Ground corn feed is quoted at \$16 to \$17 per ton. Oil cake \$20 per ton.

CEREALS—The oatmeal market is firmer. Oats are a little higher in the States and the imported meal is costing a little higher to buy it down here, the cost to the jobbing trade being about \$1.65 in round lots. We quote rolled oat meal in lots to retail dealers at \$1.60 per sack.

OATS—Prices are about the same. Quotations hold at about 35c to 37c as to quality. The street price to farmers here is 34 to 35c as to quality. In Manitoba country markets 28 to 30c per bushels has been paid to farmers. Farmers are marketing nearly enough to supply the city demand. In fact some city dealers say they are getting more oats direct from farmers than they require for their local trade hence the demand for car lots is not active. It is said quite a large quantity of oats are held in store here by some of the exporting grain firms, the amount being variously estimated at 20,000 to 60,000 bushels.

CORN—Corn is in good demand from consumers, but dealers appear to be well stocked. At any rate a few cars which hung fire, were sold at cut prices, ranging from 35 1-2 to 36c, though the regular quotation is 37 to 38c per bushel of 56 pounds in car lots on track as to grade.

BARLEY—We quote 35 to 38c for feed and 38 to 42c for malting, per bushel of 48 lbs.

FLAX SEED—Nominal at 60c to farmers in country markets.

BUTTER—Creamery, quiet. We quote dealers selling prices at 21 to 23c as to quality and quantity.

Butter dairy—There is nothing new to say of butter this week. The market is quiet. Dealers quote 14 to 15 1-2c for round lots of country dairy. The outside quotation for late made dairy could only be realized for choice lots; and held goods are quoted at 13 to 14c, the latter being the very outside for well kept lots of held goods.

CHEESE—Dealers quote 10 1-2c to 11c.

EGGS—Dealers are paying 18c net for receipts of fresh and selling at 20c. Lined are offered at 16 to 17c.

POULTRY—Dealers are paying from 7 to 7 1-2c per lb. for chickens, 10c for native turkeys, and for geese and ducks 8 to 8 1-2c per lb., Ontario turkeys lobbying at 13c.

LARD AND CURED MEATS—Prices unchanged. See quotations on another page.

GAME—Dealers are paying 5c each for rabbits, Jack rabbits quoted at 40c per pair.