

Markets.

The Canada Butter Trade.

NO. I.

Among the leading articles of export from the Dominion, butter takes a very prominent place, exceeding, as it does, two millions of dollars annually. It becomes then of no slight importance to consider whether the return to Canada from the large quantity of butter yearly shipped to England and the United States is as profitable—the nature of the trade as satisfactory—as it might and ought to be. The apparently trifling variation of one cent. per pound in the price obtained at place of sale makes a difference to the shippers of \$120,000 and over, on the total amount exported, and if the variation in price be five or ten cents, the sum lost or gained becomes very considerable to those who are interested. And although the shippers are the persons apparently who thus lose or gain, they really and on the average are only to a slight extent involved in the matter. Primarily, the producers, and in a less but still to a considerable degree, those who purchase from them at first hand, are the parties to whom it is of consequence that the article in which they deal should be of such a quality as to command the highest price obtainable in any and every market where it may be offered.

That Canadian butter does not command the highest price in any market whatever is a fact too well known to need illustration, and the obvious result is that the trade in it is most unsatisfactory to all concerned whether the country store-keeper, the large shipper, or the foreign consignee. To give an idea of the different value which Canadian butter might bear, we have only refer to any Liverpool circular. We will find there Irish butter quoted at an average of 112s. per cwt., while for extra choice Canadian the average is only 70s. This means that the butter of this country, which now only brings 7c. to 13c. might be of a quality to command 20c. to 22c. in the present condition of the English market. And it happens also that a very large proportion of the total exports of butter will not now bring anything like 70s. but has to be sold at from 40s. to 50s., or about the current price of lard. Some shipments on Montreal account have proved entirely unsaleable, and the consignments have actually been ordered back to New York. Both literally and metaphorically Canadian butter is "stinks in the nostrils" of all who have anything to do with it; and though the cause of all this is well known, the evils of such nature and appears so almost impossible of eradication that the trade have become well nigh hopeless of seeing it removed. The strangest thing in connection with this is that the very two classes who are most interested in obtaining some change are those whose short-sighted conduct perpetuates the evil. Before proceeding to point out what this evil and what its remedy, we take occasion to make a couple of exceptions to the somewhat sweeping condemnation of Canadian made butter. It is well known to the trade that in the Eastern Townships, bordering on the State of Vermont, and in the vicinity of Brockville, there is produced rich, sweet, marketable butter—butter that is very seldom handled by Canadian buyers at all—that made in the Eastern Townships being generally contracted for by Americans before a pound of it is gathered, shipped to Boston, rebranded and sold for the highest price under the name of "Vermont Dairy," while that from Brockville is also taken by Americans and finds its way to market to be sold as St. Lawrence County butter at an excellent per centage of profit.

The great prime cause of bad butter is, of course, because it is badly and carelessly and often dilly dally made; and for this the farmers' wives are for the most part directly responsible. But this responsibility also to a very considerable extent belongs to the country storekeepers who buy up the butter. The fault of the storekeepers consists in their actually offering a premium to their customers to make bad instead of good butter by paying the same price for an inferior as for a superior article—paying it not because they are ignorant of the quality, or deceived by the appearance, but because they do not feel sufficiently independent to say to a customer, "Your butter is poor—we cannot pay you the same price we give for the beautiful butter your neighbour brings us," because they cannot afford to run the risk of offending a profitable customer, whose patronage they think will more than make up for any subsequent loss on her butter. The matter is made worse by the fact that, generally speaking, there is not a sufficient amount of good butter to be kept and packed by itself, and the packages when shipped are streaky and uneven, and ever so much less valuable and less ready for sale than they ought to be.

It is exceedingly natural, when butter-makers learn—and it takes them a very short time to do it—that as high a price will be paid for an article upon which no care or trouble is expended, in the making of cheap salt and too much of it is used, as for that to the making of which all possible care has been given, and still and forethought exercised, it is most natural, we say, that they should in their generally over-worked lives select that course which involves the least expenditure of time and labour. It could not possibly be otherwise, it would be nonsensical to expect it. The fault does not lie, as a rule, in the ignorance of the dairymen, but in the absence of any strong inducement to do as well as they know how. They get the highest rate paid, in cash or its equivalent, and they are satisfied and fail to see that the highest price is not what could be paid were the character of Canadian butter generally raised to the proper standard, and were it known abroad as it is, it and ought to be, by its good instead of by its poor quality. If they could only be made to feel that they could command five or six or seven cents a pound more than they now get, there would be hope that their natural shrewdness and fantastic desire to increase their profits would lead them to take such pains with their dairy produce as very soon to establish an important improvement in this, so be it an article of Canadian export. Storekeepers should lose no opportunities of pointing out the necessity that exists why something should be done. They feel how heavily the loss they have to stand on poor butter falls into their pockets in selling their goods, but they seem unable to enfranchise themselves, and a change for the better appears to them almost impossible. The apparently impossible, however, might easily, by concerted action be made possible, and we will encourage, in a future article, to point out one or two modes in which a custom so hurtful to all concerned may be to some extent done away with.

Toronto Markets.

"CANADA FARMER" Office, July 15, 1872.

The produce and provision trades have been quiet during the past month, closing with slight receipts and generally limited demand. The movement in bread-stuffs, especially is devoid of activity, under declining quotations from Liverpool and the west, and prices of flour and grain have gone in a way very considerably.

In this city the wholesale prices are as follows—

FLOUR AND MEAL.

Flour—Superfine, \$5 75 to \$5 90. Fancy, \$6 00 to \$5 10. Extra, \$5 35 to \$5 50.

Oatmeal—\$4 00 to \$4 70.

Cornmeal—\$3 25.

Bran, in car lots, \$7 to \$8.

GRAIN.

Wheat Soules, \$1 32 to \$1 35, Treadwell, \$1 30 to \$1 31.

Spring, \$1 30 to \$1 32.

Barley—No. 1, 95c to 60c, No. 2, 50c to 55c.

Oats—37c to 38c.

Rye—Nominal, none offering.

Pees—62c to 65c f.o.b.

HAY AND STRAW.

Hay, in short supply, at \$16 to \$23.

Straw—\$12 to \$14.

PROVISIONS.

Beef, by the side, Nominal.

Mutton, by the carcass, 5c.

Potatoes—per bag, 30c. to 40c.

Pork—sides, \$14 50 to \$15 00.

Bacon—Cumberland Cut, 7c to 7 1/2c, Canada, 6 1/2c to 7c.

Hams—Salted, 10c to 10 1/2c; Smoked, 10c to 13c.

Lard—9c to 10c.

Butter—Dairy, choice, 13c to 14c.

Eggs—Packed, 14c to 15c.

Cheese—11c to 11 1/4c, Keesons's Edam, 10c to 10 1/2c.

Dried Apples—9 1/2c to 10c.

Salt—Goderich, \$12 1/2 to \$15.

HIDES AND SKINS.

Hides—No. 1, cured and inspected per lb 9c.

No. 1, inspected, green, 9c; No. 2, inspected, green, 8c.

Lambskins—50c.

Calfskins—revin, per lb, 10c.

Wool—1 fleece, 52c.

THE CATTLE MARKET.

Heeves (live weight) \$4 to \$5 per cwt.

Sheep—\$3 to \$5 50.

Calves—\$3 to \$7.

Lambs—\$2 50 to \$3 50.

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