

Commercial.

Messrs. Donald Stronach and Son report for the week ending May 14, as follows:—

Fat Sheep.—For the week's supply 3323 came forward, which number included 250 merinos. Competition was rather dull at the beginning of the sales, but showed a considerable improvement a little later on till values steadied down at about the level of last week, except for sheep of poorer quality for which prices were easier throughout. Best crossbred wethers made 13s 6l to 16s 6l; ordinary, 11s 6d to 13s; ewes, prime quality, 12s 6l to 14s 6l; ordinary, 8s 3d to 11s 6d; merinos, 4s 6d to 6s 9l. We sold drafts on account of Mr. J. Henderson and Mr. J. Butherford at quotations.

Lambs.—390 were penned and sold at from 3s 9l to 10s 9d. Quality was not quite so good as usual. We sold 76 at 8s 6d, 8s 9d, and 10s 9d.

Fat Cattle.—An average supply of 209 head was yarded to-day. Owing to the late hour the sales finished, prices suffered considerably before the close. Cattle of good quality were very scarce, and any answering to that description and offered earlier in the day brought fair value at about last Wednesday's rates. Best bullocks sold at £6 10s to £7 17s 6d—an odd pen or two a shade more; medium, £5 5s to £6 5s; light weights, £3 2s 6d to £5; cows, £2 15s to £6 10s.

Pigs.—To-day's exceptionally heavy entry—viz., 751—coming after the several overstocked markets of late proved far too many for the trade to deal with, except at prices considerably lower than ever before known at Burnside. Suckers brought 6s to 9s; stores, 15s to 21s; porkers, 20s to 26s; baconers, 28s to 37s.

Wool.—Latest cable advices from London read:—"May 11, 305,000 bales were catalogued for the series of wool sales just finished, and of which 100,000 bales were held over. Besides this 101,000 bales were exported." Telegrams received by the various agents here would go to show that the decline in prices compared with closing values of previous series may be taken at about 7½ per cent., except for crossbreds and lambs, which have fallen 3d per lb., and for superior merino greasy, for which the market is easier. It is, however, satisfactory to note that the tone of the market at the close was rather firmer for New Zealand wools. Locally, the usual small weekly catalogues have been cleared at fair rates.

Sheepskins.—A keen demand is still experienced for all qualities. Tuesday's auction sales were well attended, and prices—allowing for the usual slight advance in green skins for extra growth—ruled about level with last week's. Quotations run:—Butchers' green crossbred, 4s 6l, 4s 3d, 4s 2d, 4s, and 3s 10d for best, other qualities in proportion; merinos, 3s 6d, 3s 3l, 3s 1d, 3s, 2s 9d, 2s 6d; lambs, up to 4s. Country skins: Dry crossbred, inferior to medium, 1s 3d to 4s 3d; do. merino, 1s 4l to 3s 6l; full wool crossbred up to 6s 3d, and merino to 10s 6l for an extra line and 6s 3d for ordinary. Station skins in bales; merino, 6½l; crossbred, 6d.

Hides.—The market shows no change, ordinary supplies being readily placed at the following range of prices:—Best heavy, 2½d to 3d; medium 2½d to 2½d; light 2d to 2½d; inferior 1½l to 1½l. A large number of the hides that reach this market bring much lower prices than they should, on account of the damage they receive through cuts in flaying; a little care in this respect would make a great difference in the value of many of the hides sold in Dunedin.

Rabbitskins.—Supplies are very meagre. Prices at the usual weekly sales are well maintained:—2d to 3l for suckers to ordinary summers, and to 10d and 1s for autumn skins.

Tallow. Business is only small, but late prices are firm:—Medium to good, 15s to 17s; inferior and mixed, 12s to 14s 6d; rough fat, best, 11s 6d to 12s 6l; inferior to medium, 8s 6l to 10s 6d.

Grain.—Wheat: Really prime samples are in good demand, but scarce, at fully last week's quotations. Second quality is more plentiful and not so easily placed, but still commands fair attention. The market is bare of fowl wheat, which would command high prices if obtainable. Last week's quotations may be repeated:—Milling, prime Tuscan, 3s 2d to 3s 4d; best velvet, 3s to 3s 2d; best red wheat, 2s 1ld to 3s 1d; medium to good, 2s 8d to 2s 10d.—Oats: Arrivals are still heavy, and stores are filling rapidly. A fair amount of business has been done at about equal to late figures, say 1s 4½d for prime milling, and 1s 2½d to 1s 3½d for good feed.—Barley: Nothing doing. Quotations, nominally, 2s 9d to 3s. All quotations sacks extra, ex store.

Byegrass.—No business of any importance passing. Dressed seed is worth 4s to 4s 6d; undressed, 2s 6d to 3s 9d, ex store. Cocksfoot, 3½d to 4½d per lb.

Potatoes.—The market is without animation in consequence of large supplies forward. Quotations, £2 to £3 per ton.

Chaff is in good supply, and saleable at 35s to 47s 6d per ton.

Messrs. Donald Reid and Co. report for the week ending May 21 as follows:—

Wool.—At auction on Tuesday we offered a few bales and bags, which sold under fairly active competition.

Rabbitskins.—For our usual weekly sale on Tuesday we submitted a small catalogue, consisting of summer and autumn skins. The local buyers were in attendance, and all were sold under brisk competition. Summers sold at 3d to 7d; autumn, 9d to 11d per lb.

Sheepskins.—For our usual weekly sale on Tuesday we put forward a moderate catalogue, consisting of green skins from local butchers, and dry lines from country clients. With a few exceptions, all the skins offered were second class, there being very few choice lines forward. The local buyers were in attendance, and bidding all through the sale was fairly active. Green crossbreds sold at 2s 10d to 4s; merinos, 1s 10d to 2s 11d, lambs, 2s 10d to 3s 7d.

Hides.—The demand continues good, and all coming forward are readily placed. Prime heavy hides are still in most request, and to secure this class buyers are prepared to give full rates. Last week's quotations remain unaltered.

Tallow.—There is still a good demand for all descriptions, and as the supply has not been large for a few weeks past, local manufacturers show more disposition to buy, and all qualities are readily placed. During the week we sold several small lines at for medium rendered, 15s to 16s; inferior, 10s to 13s; rough fat, 9s to 12s 6d per cwt.

Weekly Auction Sale.—Our usual weekly auction sale of grain and produce held at our stores on Monday last was well attended. Bidding was, however, far from brisk, and offers, as a rule, not reaching our valuations, a considerable part of the catalogue was withdrawn.

Grain.—Wheat: There is little animation. Millers are well stocked, and can scarcely be said to be in the market for ordinary milling samples, but anything particularly tempting in quality still meets with ready sale at late prices. Fowl wheat is in good demand at quotations:—Extra prime milling, 3s 3d to 3s 4d; ordinary, 3s to 3s 2d; medium, 2s 7d to 2s 11d; fowl wheat and inferior, 2s 3d to 2s 7d.

Oats.—As a very large proportion of this grain coming forward is being held in the meantime, the market is in no way forced, and prices continue steady. A moderate business is being done both with millers and exporters, which is sufficient, as a rule, to clear the market of the small quantity consigned for immediate sale. We quote—Milling, 1s 3½d to 1s 4½d; feed, 1s 2d to 1s 3d (sacks extra).

Barley.—A small business in malting and milling is being done, but feed is quite neglected. We quote—Malting, 2s 7d to 2s 11d; feed, 2s to 2s 6d (sacks extra).

Potatoes.—Only a small supply forward during the week, and stocks are being gradually reduced. We quote—Prime, £2 10s to £2 15s; ordinary, £2 5s to £2 7s 6d.

Chaff.—The market is very sparingly supplied. Prices, however, remain at about last week's quotations. A larger supply could be placed if it were to hand. We quote—Prime heavy, £2 7s 6d to £2 10s; ordinary, £2 to £2 5s.

Store Sheep.—For this class of stock there are still numerous inquiries, chiefly for small lots of breeding ewes and crossbred wethers, and if suitable lots were offering a large business could be done. There are very few good crossbreds now offering, and buyers have to be content with what can be got. We have buyers for 1000 good crossbred breeding ewes and 1000 half-bred lambs, off tussock. Privately we have sold 630 4, 6, and 8-tooth crossbred ewes and wethers, 340 4, 6, and 8-tooth crossbred ewes, 9000 full-mouthed merino wethers and ewes, and 250 full-mouthed ewes.

RABBITSKINS.

Messrs. Robert Cleland and Co. report as follows:—For the benefit of our numerous country clients we have opened premises in Crawford street (next the Pier Hotel), where we shall be happy to meet all who have rabbitskins, sheepskins, horsehair, etc., to dispose of. For all classes of rabbitskins we have larger orders this season than we have hitherto held, and we are prepared to pay full prices in order to fulfil our contracts. Supplies are coming to hand very freely, and we quote autumns and early winters at 11d per lb., other sorts in proportion. We would ask our friends to consign all goods to Dunedin, as there is often delay through consigning to Caversham. Offices and buying room—Crawford street; stores—Glen Road, Caversham.

Mr. F. Meenan, King street, reports:—Wholesale prices:—Oats, 1s 2d to 1s 5d, bags extra. Wheat: Milling, 2s 10l to 3s 5d; fowls, 2s to 2s 9d, sacks included. Chaff, New, £2 10s for best; inferior, 30s to 40s, unsaleable. Hay: Oaten, £3; rye-grass, £3. Bran, £3 0s. Pollard, £4. Scarce. Potatoes: Kidneys, £1 10s to £2; derwents, £2 10s to £3—sample of Oamaru to hand, small. Flour: Stone, £8, for sacks; £8 10s for fifties; roller, £8 15s; fifties, £9 10s. Butter, fresh, 9d to 1s—rather scarce; salt, 6d to 8d—demand moderate. Eggs, 1s 4d.

THE LOST SEAT.

THERE was a Unionist rally at Ayr Burghs as we (*Nation*) anticipated. The four hundred and odd Unionists who either slept on their 1200 majority in 1888, or did not see their way to voting for an Irish rackrenter against a Scottish Liberal, re-appeared once more and decided this contest. The Unionists won, therefore, by a majority of 130, which is 1,145 under their 1886 majority. The Home Rule vote, on the other hand, was higher than it has ever been, and has increased even on the vote that won in 1888. The Liberal vote in 1885 was 2,460; in 1886 the Liberal Home Rule vote sank to 1,498; in 1888 it rose to 2,331; now it stands at the high-water mark of 2,480. On the other hand the Unionist vote was higher in 1886 than it is at present; so that while the tide flows on the side of Home Rule, it ebbs on the side of the Union. Nevertheless, the capture, by a majority of 130 votes, of a seat held in 1886 by a majority of 1,175 votes is claimed as a great Unionist victory! May the Coercionists find their majority reduced by 1,045 votes in every contest. If they do, the balance in the final tot will be on the wrong side.

This is the *Spectator's* comment on the Ayr election: "It is not a victory that should induce Unionists to exalt their horn, or even to indulge in sanguine expectations; but it should convince them that there is no springtide flowing strongly towards Home Rule, no wave of emotion that is in the least likely to sweep away Unionists' efforts. If by industry and sobriety of judgment we can regain a few inches of political ground, by more industry and still more discrimination we may regain a few furlongs, or even a few miles. We cannot throw up our caps over the Ayr Burghs, but we should take heart to struggle on patiently, tenaciously, doggedly, and even cheerfully." This is doleful-dumppish rejoicement surely. But why comment on the eloquent humility and melancholy of that "even cheerfully."