

Commercial.

The NEW ZEALAND LOAN AND MERCANTILE AGENCY CO., LIMITED, report for the week ended January 5th as follows:—

Store Cattle.—No change of any consequence has occurred since we last reported. The market continues somewhat languid, and while a few odd lots are being placed graziers as a rule only operate to a very limited extent, owing, doubtless, to the fact that, except on very rare occasions, the supply of fat cattle is in excess of requirements, and in rather too many instances they (graziers) find that the price obtained when fat compared with that paid as stores is not by any means satisfactory.

Store Sheep.—A few lines of these are changing hands, but so far the business is only to a moderate extent. A good deal of enquiry, however, is being made for nearly all sorts, which it is anticipated will result in a considerable number being disposed of within the next few weeks. During the past week we placed about 8000, comprising full-mouthed merino ewes, two-tooth halfbreds, mixed sexes; also four-tooth to full-mouth crossbred wethers and ewes at satisfactory prices.

Wool.—Since our last there is no change of any moment to record. Supplies are coming into store daily for the sales to be held here on the 8th and 9th of this week, when some well-known choice clips of both merino and crossbred will be submitted, and there is every appearance of a full attendance of buyers being present.

Sheepskins.—These continue in good demand at recent rates. We had the usual attendance of buyers at our weekly sale on Tuesday at the Chamber of Commerce Hall, when we offered a full catalogue, comprising a number of country dry skins, also a fair share of town and country butchers, both woolly green skins and bare pelts. Competition was fairly active, and all were disposed of at the following rates:—For country dry crossbreds, inferior to medium, 1s 5d to 3s 2d; do do merino, 1s 4d to 3s; full-wooled crossbreds, 3s 8d to 6s 6d; do do merino, 3s 5d to 5s 9d; dry pelts, 3s to 1s 2d; green do, 1s 7d, 1s 6d, 1s 5d, 1s 4d, 1s 3d, 1s 2d, 1s 1d; green lambskins, 1s 9d, 1s 7d, 1s 6d, 1s 5d, 1s 4d, 1s 3d, 1s 2d, 1s 1d.

Rabbit skins.—There is very little to be said about these now; owing to the limited supply there is no business of any consequence being done. Consignments have fallen off almost to nothing, and those coming to hand are for the most part inferior sorts but still are saleable although prices as a rule are less satisfactory. On Tuesday we submitted a small catalogue, all low seasons skins, which brought from 4s 1d to 9s 1d; suckers and halfgrown, 1½d to 3d per lb.

Hides.—There is no alteration to report. The local demand continues sufficiently active to absorb all the supply and the prices paid, although considered low, leave little or no room for exporters to operate. Quotations for good to best, 2½d to 2¾d; extra heavy 3d; medium, 2d to 2½d; light, 1½d to 1¾d; inferior and shabby, 1d to 1½d per lb.

Tallow.—Has a moderately fair demand for local consumption, but there is hardly any prime rendered offering in this market, the bulk of the consignments coming forward being only odd lots of country rendered, mixed, and often inferior, but at the same time marketable at prices in sympathy with those current at Home. Quotations for prime rendered mutton, 19s to 20s; medium to good, 16s to 18s; inferior and mixed, 12s 6d to 15s 6d. Rough fat sells readily, prices being fully maintained, which are for best mutton caul 13s to 14s; inferior to medium and good, 10s to 12s 9d per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat.—There is a moderately fair demand for all classes of wheat, but more especially medium to good and prime milling. White velvet, which seems to be low in stock, and any lots of this class offering in milling condition, could be placed at late current rates. The business done however is not extensive, the demand being confined to local millers' exigencies, which are not very pressing; still owing to the small supplies in first hands the market is firm and hardly likely to become weaker before the new grain is to hand. We quote best Tuscan, 3s 9d to 3s 10d; best white velvet, 3s 8d to 3s 10d; medium to good, 3s 5d to 3s 7d; best red wheat, 3s 5d to 3s 6d; medium, 3s 4d to 3s 5d; broken inferior and musty, 2s 6d to 3s 3d (ex store). Oats. Locally there is no improvement in the position, and the chief business passing is in the placing of the few small arrivals coming to hand from day to day. Old stocks are almost entirely out of agents' hands, but there is a considerable quantity still lying in store which will have to be cleared out before prices are likely to further advance. Even now buyers are not quite so keen to operate at the prices obtaining during the past two or three weeks, and only that there are so few offering now, it is questionable if late rates could be maintained, but which we again give. For prime milling bright and stout, 1s 5½d to 1s 5¾d; best bright short feed, 1s 5d to 1s 5½d; medium, 1s 4½d; inferior and musty, 1s to 1s 3d; good Danish, 1s 4d to 1s 4½d; ex store, sacks extra. Barley has a good inquiry, but the supply in first hands being now almost all disposed of, the business done is only to a small extent confined to the odd consignments occasionally coming forward; quotations for prime milling, 2s 2d to 2s 9d; medium to good, 2s 3d to 2s 5d; feed and milling, 1s 9d to 2s 2d (ex store).

Grass Seed.—Some small sales of both ryegrass seed and cocksfoot have been effected during the week, owing to the moisture of the weather, but the demand is not by any means brisk, and according to recent reports considerable areas are under ryegrass in the North Island, which will doubtless tend to limit the demand for southern growth, of which large yields are expected. An idea is therefore prevailing that it will be somewhat difficult to maintain prices ruling during the past season. We quote—Best machine-dressed ryegrass seed, 4s 3d to 4s 9d; farmers best dressed, 3s to 3s 6d; medium, 2s 6d to 2s 9d (ex store). Cocksfoot seed, slow of sale, at from 1d to 4½d per lb.

Potatoes.—The market is over supplied, chiefly with inferior sorts, for which there is very little demand, being almost unfit for use, and in consequence difficult to place except at very low prices, while the few good lots coming to hand are saleable at prices more

in accordance with reasonable values. We quote—Inferior, 2s 10s to 2s 10s; best, 2s 10s to 2s 10s per ton.

Chaff.—Deliveries are only to a moderate extent and with a fair demand there is no difficulty in placing consignments immediately on arrival at slightly more satisfactory prices, say for best oaten well cut and heavy, 42s 6d to 45s; extra prime, 47s 6d; light and inferior to medium, 30s to 40s per ton.

Dairy Produce.—The market continues very sluggish for both cheese and butter, in respect to the latter especially, prime salted in Ponds Boxes, slow sale at 6d to 7d, medium almost unsaleable—Prime factory made cheese, medium size, in shipping condition, dull, at 4s to 4½d per lb.

Flax.—The market is barely supplied more especially with bright and properly dressed parcels, for which we have buyers at late quotations, which continue firm. Medium to common and strawy parcels can also be placed when in shipping condition. We quote for extra bright well dressed, £19 to £20 5s; medium to good, £15 to £18; coarse and strawy, £10 to £15 per ton.

MESSES DONALD STRONACH AND CO., Dunedin, report for week ending Monday, December 29, as follows:—

Fat Cattle.—Owing to the New Year coming so close on the regular market day, the sale this week was again held on Monday, and, like last week, was again a very dull one. 189 head were yarded, which was considerably in advance of requirements, most of the trade having supplied themselves. Bidding was dull. Best bullocks brought from £7 12s 6d to £9; medium, £5 2s 6d to £6 12s 6d; light, £3 10s to £4 15s; cows, from £2 7s 6d to £6 5s.

Fat Sheep.—1238 were penned, a few pens of which were in the wool, the balance shorn. The bidding was again dull, and last week's prices were not maintained. Best crossbred wethers brought from 12s 6d to 13s 6d; medium, 9s 6d to 12s; best crossbred ewes, 10s 6d to 13s; medium, 8s to 10s; crossbred wethers in the wool, 15s to 16s.

Fat Lambs.—916 came forward, principally good quality, for which there was fair competition—best realising from 9s to 10s 6d, medium, 7s to 9s, and a few inferior down to 5s 6d.

Pigs.—Eighty-seven of all sorts penned, for which there was fair competition—suckers selling from 9s to 15s, porkers 23s to 29s, baconers, 33s to 39s; and extra heavy up to 46s.

Store Cattle.—There are inquiries for well-grown steers and heifers, but little business doing.

Store Sheep.—There is still good inquiry for young crossbreds, also ewes and lambs, and the late beneficial rain will no doubt harden prices as owners who have had thoughts of selling will now be able to hold on, and large numbers are wanted for the south, where the grass is abundant.

Sheepskins.—The usual sales were held on Tuesday, when only moderate catalogues were submitted. There was the usual attendance of buyers, when all the lots were cleared. Dry crossbreds sold from 2s to 5s 9d; do merinos, 1s 8d to 5s; pelts and lambskins, 6d to 2s; green pelts, 10d to 1s 7d; do lambskins, 1s to 1s 6d.

Hides.—Owing to the holidays there are few lots coming to hand. Prices remain unaltered—viz., prime heavy weights, 2½d to 3d per lb; medium, 2½d to 2¾d; light, 1½d to 2d; damaged and cut, 1½d to 1¾d.

Grain.—Wheat: A few lots of milling samples have changed hands during the week, but inferior lots are dull of sale, and difficult to move. We quote: Prime milling wheat, 3s 6d to 3s 9d; medium, 3s 3d to 3s 4d; fowl wheat, 2s 6d to 3s 2d. Oats have been in brisk demand during the week, especially for bright, plump shipping samples, but very few are at present coming to hand. The farmers being mostly busy with their root crops cannot spare time to drive them, but, no doubt, during the next few weeks they will be coming forward freely. We quote—Prime milling, 1s 5d to 1s 5½d; feed, 1s 3d to 1s 4d (sacks extra). Barley is in demand at, for milling, 2s 5d to 2s 8d; milling, 2s to 2s 3d; feed, 1s 6d to 1s 9d.

Potatoes.—Only moderate supplies have been coming forward. Quotations are—For prime, 2s to 2s 8d; inferior, 1s to 1s 5d.

Chaff.—The market is bare, and at present there is a good demand for all qualities. We quote—Prime milling, 2s 2s 6d to 2s 7s 6d; medium, 2s.

DUNEDIN, HORSE SALEYARDS.

WRIGHT, STEPHENSON AND CO., report as follows:—At our usual weekly sale held on Saturday, January 3, a very small entry of horses was offered, and owing no doubt to the large number of people being out of town, the sale was very poorly attended. The only fresh horses forward were draughts from Mr. Twentymen Hodgson and Mr. E. Dixon (of Christchurch), consisting of carriage and buggy horses, hacks, and spring van horses, but owing to there being so few buyers present, prices were anything but encouraging. We quote—Really first-class heavy draught geldings, £22 to £27; medium draught horses, £14 to £20; light and aged draught horses, £7 to £12; good spring-carters, £10 to £15; well-matched carriage pairs, £40 to £50; well-matched buggy pairs, £30 to £40; first-class houters, £20 to £30.

Mr. F. MERNAN, King street, reports:—Wholesale prices—Oats, 1s 2d to 1s 5d (oats extra) good demand. Wheat: milling, 3s 3d to 3s 9d; fowls', 3s 3d—rather firm, sacks included. Chaff: Market value—1s 15d to 2s 2s 6d; bay, oaten, £3; best ryegrass, £3 Bran, £2 10s. Pollard, £3 10s. Potatoes, oil, £3 per ton; new, 6s per cwt. Flour: roller, £10 to £10 15s; stone, £9 5s to £9 15s. Fresh butter, very plentiful, value from 4s to 8s; salt, nominal, for prime, 6s. Eggs, 8d. Oatmeal, in 25 lb bags, £8 10s.

A Paris correspondent of a contemporary announces the death of the Dowager Marchioness de Castellane, sister of the Duc de Talleyrand, and niece of the celebrated Prince de Talleyrand. To her influence has been attributed the death-bed conversion of the great diplomatist.