

Commercial.

THE NEW ZEALAND LOAN AND MERCANTILE AGENCY CO., LIMITED, report for the week ending February 26, as follows:—

Store Cattle.—There is no improvement of any consequence apparent in the tone of the market, two or three lines have been disposed of at auction lately, but at somewhat low prices considering the quality of the stock offered: buyers being very chary in operating except when prices are tempting.

Store Sheep.—These continue in good demand, all the young sheep both merino and crossbred available being picked up. There are also considerable numbers of aged merino ewes and wethers being placed, late rates being firmly maintained.

Wool.—The London sales are making good progress. Latest advices report that since the opening of the sales superior greasy and scoured merino and fine greasy crossbred have advanced $\frac{1}{4}$ d per lb while medium and inferior scoured and greasy merino have declined $\frac{1}{4}$ d per lb, other descriptions unchanged. Competition by both home and foreign buyers is fairly active and the latter operating with confidence.

Sheepskins.—We submitted a good catalogue at our auction sale this week, when we had nearly all the buyers in the trade present. Competition was fairly active for butchers' green skins, especially well saved early shorn shearlings, while for bear and badly saved pelts there was less demand and prices a shade easier. Country dry skins had good attention, and realised very satisfactory prices, of these crossbreds, low to medium, brought 1s 9d to 3s 9d; do do merino, 1s 8d to 3s 7d; full-woolled crossbreds, 4s 9d to 6s 9d; do do merino, 4s 2d to 5s 9d; dry pelts, 1d to 1s 6d; green country pelts for special purposes, 2s 8d, 2s 7d, 2s 6d, 2s 4d, 2s 2d; good to medium, 2s 1d, 2s, 1s 11d, 1s 10d, 1s 8d, 1s 7d; inferior, 1s 6d, 1s 5d, 1s 4d, 1s 3d; green lambskins, 2s 6d, 2s 4d, 2s 3d, 2s 1d, 1s 11d, 1s 9d, 1s 7d, 1s 5d, 1s 3d, 1s each.

Rabbitskins.—A good market exists for the few that do come to hand, the regular buyers are invariably keen competitors at the auctions wherever any are being offered, prices, however, owing to the drop at Home, are slightly easier, but there is no difficulty experienced in placing the small consignments coming forward.—Spring skins realise 9d to 1s; summer do, 6d to 8d; half-grown and mixed, 3d to 4d per lb.

Hides.—A moderately good demand exists, but there is no quotable alteration to note in values which range for heavy weights free from scars and offal, 40 lbs and over, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ l to 3d; medium 2l to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ l; light 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ l to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ l; inferior and slippy, 1d to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ l per lb.

Tallow.—The market continues steady, a fair demand is experienced; all the local manufactures purchase freely, late rates are fully maintained and quite in sympathy with those maintained at Home. We quote—Prime rendered mutton 19s to 20s; medium to good, 16s to 18s; inferior and mixed, 12s to 15s 6d; rough fat bas., 13s to 13s 6d; inferior to medium and good, 9s to 12s 6d per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat: Some sales in northern wheat are now being effected at about equal to late quotations, but there is no southern as yet on the market, and should the weather continue so broken it will be some weeks before there is any to hand. The market being bare for some time of good milling, there is no difficulty in placing any offering, and considering the fact that the market at Home is slowly but surely tending upwards, the position in the meantime seems to be in favour of producers, and likely to continue so for the next three or four months, at any rate. We quote prime milling, velvet and Tuscan, 3s 10d to 4s, best red wheat, 3s 8d to 3s 9d; medium, 3s 6d to 3s 7d, ex store. The market is almost clear of inferior and good fowls wheat.—Oats: These have had a very fair demand during the past week, both for shipment and local consumption, but now buyers are more careless about purchasing, and only extra prime samples fetch up to last week's top price. All the old stocks are about cleared out, and farmers busy securing the new crop, deliveries are therefore at the moment on a limited scale, in consequence sales are effected at prices nearly approaching late rates, but it is evident that any considerable quantity put on the market unreservedly would have a prompt effect on present quotations, which we give as follows, viz:—For bright feed and milling, 3s 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1s 6d; medium to good 1s 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1s 5d; inferior to medium, 1s 2d to 1s 4d, ex store, sacks extra.—Barley has some enquiry for shipment but in the absence of suitable parcels offering there is no business resulting. Malsters are operating, but only when really prime samples are offering. A good demand exists for feed and millers. We quote, prime malting, 3s to 3s 3d; medium to good, 2s 6d to 2s 9d; feed and milling, 1s 9d to 2s 4d, ex store, sacks extra.

Ryegrass Seed.—The market continues active, and a considerable amount of business is being put through, which could be increased if growers would only make up their minds to fix the price they are disposed to quit at. Should the present opportunity be allowed to slip by, it is somewhat doubtful if present prices can be secured at the close of the season. We repeat last week's quotations—viz., for farmers' best dressed off old pasture, 3s 3d to 4s 8d; extra prime a shade more; medium to good, 3s to 4s (sacks extra). Cockfoot seed has had but little attention so far, and we hear of nothing of any consequence pressing. We quote 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb.

Potatoes.—The market continues to be fairly well supplied. Sales of prime lots are readily effected at last week's rates, while inferior sorts are difficult to place. We quote for best 23 5s to 23 10s; inferior to medium, 42s 6d to 55s per ton.

Chaff.—There is no alteration to note with regard to either demand or value. We quote—For prime, 42s 6d to 45s; extra, 47s 6d; medium to good, 30s to 40s per ton.

Dairy Produce. A slightly better demand for local consumption is experienced for good salt butter, but none for export. The demand for cheese shows no improvement. We quote—Best salt butter, 6d to 7d; cheese, 3d to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb.

MESSES. DONALD STRONACH AND SONS report for the week ending Wednesday, February 18, as follows:—

Fat Cattle.—A fair supply came forward for to-day's market, 204 head being yarded, principally prime quality, for which there was good competition, while medium and inferior were neglected, and prices all through were about the same as last week's. Best bullocks brought from 27 to 27 17s 6d; medium, 25 to 26 7s 6d; light and inferior, 23 to 24 15s; best cows, 25 15s to 26 15s; light, 22 10s to 24. We sold for Mr. David Davidson (Saddle Hill), light bullocks 25 7s 6d to 24 2s 6d, cows to 24.

Fat Sheep were in short supply, only 1,963 being penned, of which 150 were merinos. Competition was very brisk, and prices showed an improvement of 1s 6d per head on late rates. Best crossbred wethers sold from 13s to 15s; medium, 10s 6d to 12s 6d; best do ewe, 12s 6d to 13s 9d; medium, 9s to 11s 6d; merino wethers, 9s to 10s 6d. We sold halfbred wethers for Mr. Peter Duncan at 15s 6d, and halfbred ewes for same vendor at 12s 9d, 11s 3d, 10s 6d; for Mr. Watson Sheenan (Cone Hills) halfbred ewes at 12s 9d to 12s 3d.

Fat Lambs.—620 were forward, and under good competition also showed an advance in price. Best brought up to 12s, a few extra prime up to 13s; medium, 8s 6d to 9s 6d. We sold lambs for Mr. Peter Duncan (Waikouaiti) at 12s 3d to 10s 9d.

Pigs.—131 of all sorts were forward. Bacon pigs were in fair demand, but stores and suckers were neglected and difficult of sale. Baconers sold from 39s to 32s; porkers, 30s to 21s; suckers, 11s 6d to 5s. We sold small pigs for Mr. W. Scott at 9s 6d, and suckers for Mr. David Andrew at 6s 6d. We sold during the week the following lots at market rates:—740 halfbred wethers, 425 quarter-back do, 1000 crossbred ewes, 500 hoggets, 2000 full-mouthed merino ewes, 750 four, six, and eight-tooth crossbred wethers, 250 do do ewes, 500 four and six-tooth merino wethers. We report our first monthly sale at Palmerston, when the following lots were disposed of:—150 crossbred wethers at 8s 8d, 250 crossbred ewes at 7s 10d, 50 crossbred wethers at 9s 6d.

Sheepskins.—Full catalogues were submitted at the usual weekly auction sales on Tuesday last. The attendance of buyers was good, and all were disposed of under very keen competition at slightly advanced prices. Full-woolled crossbreds brought from 4s 6d to 8s; do merinos, 4s to 5s 9d; green crossbred pelts, 2s 6s to 2s 2d; medium, 2s to 1s 6d; merino pelts, to 1s 8d; lambskins, from 1s to 2s 4d.

Hides.—Quotations unaltered; all coming to hand are taken by local manufacturers.

Grain.—There is still a good demand for prime milling samples, but there are now very few lots of good old wheat in first hands.—We quote—Prime milling, 3s 9d to 3s 11d; medium, 3s 7d to 3s 8d; fowl wheat 3s 2d to 3s 4d. Oats are in steady demand, especially good bright samples fit for shipment. Prime milling may be quoted at 1s 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1s 6d; best feed, 1s 5d to 1s 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d; inferior, 1s 3d to 1s 4d. Barley is in improved demand, especially for malting samples, which are now scarce, and very little will be done until the new crop comes on the market.

Ryegrass.—A large number of samples are offering, but owing to farmers wanting offers from one or more agents, very little business is being done. We quote—Prime machine-dressed, 4s to 4s 9d; medium quality, 3s 6d to 3s 9d; farmers' parcels, 3s to 3s 6d.

Chaff a fair supply coming forward, with prices well maintained, at, for prime, from 40s to 45s; medium, 35s to 37s 6d; inferior, 30s to 32s 6d.

Potatoes.—The market is well supplied with both kidneys and derwents. Quotations—for the former, 22 to 23; and for derwents, 23 to 23 10s.

MESSES. DONALD REID AND CO., Dunedin, report for the week ending February 25, as follows:—

Wool.—At auction on Monday we disposed of a small catalogue of bags of locks, pieces, etc. There was brisk competition amongst the local buyers who were present and satisfactory prices were realised.

Sheepskins.—We held our skin sale on Monday this week, in consequence of the wool sales being held on Tuesday. We submitted only a small catalogue of dry and green skins, most of them local butchers green skins. There was keen competition throughout the sale, and prices were rather better than last week. Dry crossbreds sold at 2s 2d to 6s 8d; merinos, 1s 7d to 5s 1d; pelts and lambs, 6d to 2s 5d; green pelts, 1s 4d to 2s 3d; lambs, 1s 10d to 2s 2d.

Hides.—This market shows no change.

Tallow.—For the quantity arriving which consists principally of rough fat, with an occasional one of rendered from country clients, there is a brisk local demand, and no difficulty is experienced in quitting all grades at fairly satisfactory values. We quote—Medium rendered, 14s to 16s; inferior, 11s to 13s; rough fat 9s 6d to 13s per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat: The market is very bare of sound old wheat, there is a fair demand for this class for mixing, and any arriving would meet with ready sale at quotations. Fowls' wheat is in strong demand, the supply being quite inadequate to meet requirements. We quote—Prime milling, 3s 10d to 3s 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d; medium, 3s 7d to 3s 9d; fowls' wheat, 3s to 3s 6d.

Oats.—There is still a good demand at current rates, but the market is rather quieter, and prices are hardly so firm as when last reporting. We quote—Milling, 1s 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1s 6d; short bright feed 1s 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1s 5d; discoloured and long, 1s 1d to 1s 4d, sacks extra.

Barley.—A few lines of old are changing hands at from 2s to 2s 8d per bu-bel, sacks extra.

Chaff.—The market is fairly well supplied, and prices are a shade easier. We quote—Prime heavy, 22 2s 6d to 22 5s; mixed light, 21 17s 6d to 22 (sacks extra).

Potatoes.—Kidneys are in moderate supply and meet with ready sale at quotations. Derwents are scarce but meet with plentiful inquiry. We expect to see plenty in the market shortly, and as soon as they are available, they will supersede the kidneys altogether in the market. We quote—Kidneys, 22 15s to 23 2s 6d; derwents, 22 15s to 23 5s.