

Commercial.

THE NEW ZEALAND LOAN AND MERCANTILE AGENCY CO., LIMITED, report for the week ending April 1, as follows:—

Store Cattle.—This market does not show much activity, though further on it is anticipated suitable cattle will be required for winter feeding, in the meantime, however, there is not much doing.

Store Sheep.—The demand continues good and the number now offering evidently insufficient to satisfy requirements. All classes are inquired for, but those in most demand are good breeding ewes, both crossbred and merino, which are freely taken up.

Wool.—There is nothing new to report regarding this staple. Centres now in the opening of the next series in London, respecting which the prevailing idea is that prices will continue firm. Locally a good demand exists, and very full prices are secured for all lots brought forward at the weekly auctions. Last week we offered about sixty packages which met with keen competition, and the whole were placed at prices fully up to those current at the earlier sales.

Sheepskins.—These continue to have a brisk demand; both dry and green command excellent attention. Country dry crossbreds, inferior to medium, brought 2s 3s 9d, do do merino, 1s 9d to 3s 10d; full-wooled crossbreds, 4s 9d to 6s 1d; do do merino, 4s to 5s 10d; dry pelts, 3d to 1s 9d. Butchers' green crossbreds, best brought 3s 2d, 3s 1d, 2s 11d, 2s 10d, 2s 9d, 2s 8d; good to medium, 2s 7d, 2s 6d, 2s 5d, 2s 4d, 2s 2d; inferior, 2s, 1s 10d, 1s 8d; green lambskins, best 3s 2d, 3s 1d, 3s, 2s 10d, 2s 8d; medium to inferior, 2s 5d, 2s 2d, 2s, 1s 9d.

Rabbitskins.—There is no new feature of any consequence to note. The few that now come forward are readily disposed of, and, considering the quality, realise prices comparing favourably with those secured for better skins earlier in the season.

Hides.—We have no change to report. The market continues steady with a good demand existing for heavy sorts, which are short, and if any offered in satisfactory condition would command higher prices, while those current for medium and light are less satisfactory. Quotations for inferior and slippy, 1d to 1½d; light, 1½d to 1¾d; medium, 2d to 2½d; up to 60 lbs, 2½d to 3d; 65 to 80 lbs, in prime condition, 3d to 1d more per lb.

Tallow.—A very fair demand continues to exist for the odd lots coming to hand. We quote—Prime rendered mutton, 18s 6d to 20s; medium to good, 15s 6d to 17s 6d; inferior and mixed, 12s to 15s. Rough fat has good attention and continues to realise prices relatively higher than those current for tallow. Best fresh caul fetches 13s to 13s 6d; inferior to medium and good, 9s to 12s per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat: The Easter holidays have interfered with business to a certain extent. The demand notwithstanding this has been good and now a slight advance on last week's quotations could be secured, for best samples there are indications of an improvement in the demand. We quote prime milling velvet and Tuscan, 4s to 4s 2d; medium to good, 3s 10d to 4s; inferior, 3s 6d to 3s 9d ex store. Oats:—The market continues exceedingly flat, the only demand existing being for stout bright milling. We quote best short milling, 1s 5d to 1s 5½d; best short bright feed, 1s 4½d to 1s 5d; medium to good, 1s 3d to 1s 4d; inferior, 1s to 1s 2d (ex store, sacks extra.) Barley: There are but few transactions taking place in this cereal. The supply to hand of really good malting is limited, an idea prevails that the quantity of prime malting to come forward will not be sufficient for requirements, the market in consequence is likely to remain firm. We quote best malting, 3s to 3s 3d; medium to good, 2s 6d to 2s 9d; feed and milling, 1s 10d to 2s 4d (ex store, sacks extra).

Ryegrass Seed.—A moderately fair business still continues to be done in this. Until the spring demand begins to set in, from now forward, transactions will be of very much less importance. We quote—Best machine dressed, off old pasture, 5s 6d to 5s 9d; medium, 5s to 5s 3d; farmers' best dressed, 4s to 4s 6d; medium, 3s to 3s 9d (ex store).—Cocksfoot seed is moving off quietly, but in slightly larger parcels. Stocks on hands are not excessive and prices likely to be maintained. Quotations—For best dressed, 5½d to 5½d; medium, 4½d to 5d per lb.

Potatoes.—The market is oversupplied, and consignments are difficult to place at satisfactory prices. A considerable portion of those coming forward are of inferior quality and almost unsaleable when better quality can be secured. Quotations this week—For best Derwents, 50s to 55s; medium, 40s to 47s 6d; kidneys, 30s to 40s per ton (sacks weighed in, ex store).

Chaff.—Sales are more easily effected, but there is no change in price, which we give as last week—for best, 40s to 42s 6d; extra prime, 45s; medium to good, 30s to 37s 5d per ton.

Dairy Produce.—There is no improvement to note in the demand for either cheese or butter, dairy-made cheese being obtained at 3d to 3½d per lb, while 4d to 4½d is asked for factory-made. Good salt butter is selling freely only for local consumption, but without any advance in price, which remains at 6½d to 8d per lb.

Flax.—A good deal of inquiry continues to be experienced for this. A considerable quantity is also coming forward, which we have been successful in placing at our late quotations—viz., for common, coarse and strawy, £13 to £15; medium, £15 10s to £17; good, £17 10s to £19; thoroughly well scutched, clean and good colour, £20 per t.n.

MESSERS. DONALD STRONACH AND SONS report for the week ending Wednesday, March 25, as follows:—

Fat Cattle.—161 head yarded, of which number scarcely half were of medium to prime quality—with very few of the last-mentioned offering—the balance light and inferior, with a good few aged cows, many of which were little more than half fat. Best bullocks brought £7 to £6 5s; one or two pens of very heavy and prime cattle, £9, £9 2s 6d, to £9 7s 6d; prime cows and heifers, £5 5s to £6 15s; medium, £4 5s to £4 12s 6d; light and inferior, £1 10s to £2 15s and £3.

Fat Sheep.—2325 yarded, nearly all crossbreds, and for the most part of fair to medium quality only, the supply of prime sheep, both in wethers and ewes, being limited to a small proportion of the total entry. Average weight wethers brought 13s 6d to 14s; extra good, to 14s 6d; medium, 13s 9d to 13s 3d; light, 11s 6d to 12s. A few very heavy ewes brought 14s, 14s 6d, to 14s 9d, but good lines may be quoted at 12s to 13s; medium, 10s 6d to 11s; light, 9s to 10s.

Fat Lambs.—387 to hand, being little more than half last week's entry. There were few, if any, lots calling for special mention, as regards quality; but buyers operated freely throughout the various lots being disposed of to local buyers under a brisk competition. Best lines brought, 10s 6d to 11s 6d; medium to good, 8s 6d to 10s; inferior, 7s to 8s.

Pigs.—159 penned, including all sorts and sizes. The market under this heading was particularly dull, several lines of small stores sent to hand from short distances being taken home by the owners unsold. Prices generally for those sold being low and unsatisfactory. Suckers brought, 4s to 7s 6d; stores, 12s to 18s; porkers, 20s to 24s; baconers, 27s to 33s; a few extra heavy to 40s. We sold ships at quotations.

Store Sheep.—During the past week extensive transactions have again taken place in store sheep, both privately and at auction sales held at the various centres throughout the province. Despite the very large number of sheep which have changed hands during the past month or six weeks, the demand is apparently as strong as ever; in fact for all classes the supply is far short of requirements. It would be difficult to mention any description of sheep for which there are not ready buyers, but the bulk of the business passing just now is in breeding ewes, both merinos and crossbreds. Young crossbreds for turnip feeding, as also good lambs are very scarce and difficult to procure.

Store Cattle.—Business in this line still continues quiet, in fact there is very little doing beyond an occasional sale or two through the Burnside yards.

Frozen Meat.—Late London cables report:—Canterbury mutton, at 4½d; Wellington, 4½d; Canterbury lamb, 6½d; beef, forequarters, 3 9-16d; hindquarters, 4½d.

Wool.—London cables of March 22nd report as follows:—“Since the close of the wool sales the market has been quiet. The arrivals up to date total 200,000 bales, of which 54,000 bales have been sent forward.” Melbourne news of March 20 states “that at the wool sales in that city business was fairly active—good lines maintaining their position, faulty lots being irregular. Greasy merino brought up to 9d; scoured wool, 1s to 1s 2d per lb.

Sheepskins.—The catalogues at recent sales on Tuesday were again limited. Buyers operated freely. Full-wooled skins brought 4s to 6s; merinos, 4s to 5s 6d; good early worn dry pelts, 1s 9s to 2s 4d; medium, 1s 4d to 1s 7d; inferior, 10d to 1s 2d; butchers' green pelts (best), 2s to 2s 3d; light, 1s 6d to 1s 9d; lambskins, 2s to 3s.

Rabbitskins.—The catalogues submitted this week were again very small, but values, however, ruled much about the same as at previous sale—viz., Spring skins, 9d to 11d, exceptional lots a shade over; summers, 7d to 8d; suckers and half-grown, 3d to 5d per lb.

Hides.—The market is in the same position as last week—i.e., bare of prime heavy ox—for which there is a good demand—and fully supplied with light and inferior sorts, which are but little in request. Best ox may be quoted at 3d to 3½d; medium 2½d to 2¾d; inferior to medium, 1½d to 1¾d and 2d per lb.

Tallow.—There is no improvement in the tallow trade to report from last week. The English market is, however, firm, and exporters are prepared to pay rates for good rendered tallow. We quote—Prime rendered mutton tallow (in shipping casks), 19s to 20s per cwt; good rendered mixed, 17s 6d to 18s 6d; medium, 16s to 17s; inferior, 12s to 14s; clear cauls, 13s to 13s 6d; rough fat, 10s to 11s 6d per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat: There has been a much healthier local feeling since our last report, for a though millers are not inclined to purchase to any great extent at present prices, there appears to be a strong speculative demand, sufficiently so to enable agents to clear all lots of new wheat coming to hand. Since the latter part of last week prices have advanced here a 1d to 1½d per bushel, and present quotations are as follows:—Prime new Tuscan and velvet, 3s 11½d to 4s per bushel, ex store on trucks (no old wheat offering); medium sorts, 3s 9d to 3s 10d; best red wheat, 3s 9d and 3s 10d to 3s 10½d; medium grades, 1d to 2d per bushel lower—these prices referring to bags weighed in, less 2½ per cent. to purchasers. Fowl Wheat: Little if any offering yet, but some has been sold at from 3s 3d to 3s 6d.—Oats: Meantime quotations may be given as under: Bright milling Sutherland to 1s 5½d per bushel (sacks extra), best bright sparrowbills to 1s 5d, medium to good feed, 1s 4d to 1s 4½d (ex truck or store, sacks extra). Barley: The only business doing in this just now, is in a few lines of the very best samples for malting. Quotations are as under: Prime malting, 3s to 3s 2d, medium malting, 2s 8d to 2s 10d, feed and milling, 2s to 2s 4d (sacks extra, ex store).

Grass Seeds are now in fewer hands than they were a month since, and at the time of writing comparatively little is being offered on growers account. Best machine-dressed parcels are worth, 4s 6d to 4s 9d, exceptional lots to 5s; good farmers' dressed, 4s to 4s 6d; inferior to medium, 3s to 3s 9d. Cocksfoot is now offering much more freely than of late, and anyone desirous of purchasing can do so on easier terms. Quotations for firm fair to good seed at from 4½d to 5d per lb; inferior, proportionate rates.

Potatoes.—There is still a large quantity of these offering, and prices are unaltered, prime Derwents selling at 52s 6d to 55s; medium, 47s 6d to 50s; while kidneys are difficult to quit at from 30s to 40s per ton.

Chaff.—The arrivals of chaff during the last week or ten days have not been so heavy, and if anything there is rather a scarcity of really first-class parcels, which could be placed in limited quantities at from 42s 6d to 45s. Inferior to medium may be quoted at 35s to 40s per ton.