

Commercial

For week ending January 27.

PRODUCE.

THE AGENT-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Wellington, January 21 The Department of Industries and Commerce has received the following cablegram from the Agent-General, dated London, 20th inst. 'There is great competition and plenty of buyers are present at the wool sales. Prices current at the close of last series for merinos and all grades of fine crossbreds were well maintained. An advance has been established on all grades of medium crossbreds of a halfpenny per lb, and on all grades of coarse crossbreds of three-farthings per lb.

THE AGENT-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Wellington, January 25.—The Department of Industries and Commerce has received the following cablegram from the Agent-general, dated London, January 24.—Frozen Meat: The mutton market is quiet. There is a scarcity of prime quality stocks generally, and those on hand are light and firmly held in a few hands. The average price to-day was.—Canterbury brands, 4½d per lb; Dunedin and Southland and W.M.E. Company's brands, 4½d; other North Island brands, 4½d, Australian, 3½d; River Plate, 3½d. Lamb is dull of sale, and many carcasses are stale. The New Zealand stocks on hand are light, and the prices quoted nominal, the average prices being: Hindquarters, 3½d; fores, 2½d. Butter is steady, with signs of improvement in prices. The averages of choicest New Zealand to-day realised 95s per cwt, Australian and Argentine, 92; Danish, 199s. Cheese is quiet, the average price for the finest New Zealand being 52s. Hemp is firm in price; good fair Wellington grade, on spot, £32 10s. Cocksfoot is quiet. Buyers are not keen to do business. The average price for bright, clean New Zealand, weighing 17lb to the bushel, on spot, is 52s. Wool is firm at the advance cabled early this week. Hops are firm with an upward tendency. Supplies are limited, current price, 140s per cwt. Prospects are favorable for next year.

Invercargill prices current.—Wholesale—Butter farm, 6d; separator, 7d; factory, bulk, 10½d to 11½d; pats, 11½d to 11¾d cash. Eggs, 10d per dozen. Cheese, (factory), 6½d Hams, 9d. Potatoes, £4 per ton (bags weighed in) Barley, 2s to 2s 6d Chaff, £2 per ton. Flour, £9 10s to £10 10s. Oatmeal, £8 to £8 10s Bran £3. Pollard, £4 Retail.—Farm butter, 8d; separator, 9d, butter (factory), pats, 1s 1½d. Eggs, 1s per dozen. Cheese, 8d Bacon, 11d Hams, 10d. Potatoes, 5s 6d per cwt Flour, 200lb, 21s; 50lb, 5s 6d. Oatmeal, 50lb, 5s 6d, 25lb, 2s 6d. Pollard, 7s per bag. Bran, 4s. Chaff, 1s 6d.

Mr. F. Meenan, King street, Dunedin, reports:—Wholesale prices only—Oats: Milling, 1s 4d to 1s 6d; feed, 11d to 1s 3d. Wheat: Milling, 2s 9d to 3s 7d, fowl's wheat, 2s 4d to 2s 7d. Potatoes: £2 10s per ton Chaff, £2 5s to £3 5s. Straw. Pressed wheat, 30s; oaten, 35s; loose, 35s. Flour: Sacks, £9, 100lb, £9 10s; 50lb, £9 15s; 25lb £9 15s. Oatmeal, £8 10s Pollard, £3 19s Bran, £2 10s Butter, dairy, 8d to 10d, factory, 11d Cheese factory, 6d; dairy, 5½d Eggs, 1s. Onions: Melbourne, £5.

Messrs Donald Reid and Co. (Limited) report:—

We held our weekly auction sale of grain and produce at our stores on Monday, when we submitted an average catalogue of oats, wheat, barley, and potatoes, with a large offering of chaff. There was a good attendance of buyers, and with fair competition most of the lots on offer were cleared at valuations. Values ruled as under—

Oats.—Local stocks are made up almost entirely of medium to fair quality, for which there is little inquiry. Prime, sound, bright feed lots are not offering freely, and are in good demand at quotations. Prime milling sorts—Sutherlands preferred—also have some attention. Quotations Prime milling, 1s 5d to 1s 6d; good to best feed, 1s 4d to 1s 5d, inferior to medium, 10d to 1s 2d per bushel (sacks extra).

Wheat.—Millers' requirements are almost entirely confined to choice lines. Of these there are few on offer. Local stocks are chiefly of medium quality. Fowl wheat, is in shorter supply, and meets with ready sale. Quotations: Prime milling, 3s to 3s 3d, medium to good, 2s 8d to 2s 11d; best whole fowl wheat, 2s 5d to 2s 7d;

broken and damaged, 1s 10d to 2s 3d per bushel (sacks extra).

Potatoes.—The market has been heavily supplied during the past week, and prices have suffered a decided decline. Quotations: Prime kidneys, £2 to £2 10s; others, £1 10s to £2 per ton (bags in).

Chaff.—Alter a dearth of prime chaff, the market has suddenly become fully supplied with oaten sheaf of good to prime quality. We offered over 60 tons, nearly all good to prime. Best quality had most competition, and realised prices almost on a par with late values, but for good ordinary sorts the demand was not so keen, and in order to clear consignments lower values had to be accepted. Quotations: Best oaten sheaf, £2 17s 6d to £3 2s 6d; medium to good, £2 5s to £2 12s 6d; light and inferior, £1 10s to £2 per ton (bags extra).

Pressed Straw.—This is in short supply, and has good inquiry at 27s 6d to 30s per ton for good, bright quality.

COLONIAL BUTTER.

London, December 19.—On Thursday I had placed before me (says a London correspondent) an illustration of how necessary it is in the manufacture of butter there should be the utmost cleanliness, particularly so with that produced in the colonies. While in conversation with a gentleman who occupies a prominent position in the butter market here, and through whose hands scores of thousands of boxes of colonial butter pass every season, he showed me a slab of butter some 2in in thickness, marked all over with brownish marks. These marks went right through the butter from side to side. They were caused by mould, and had their origin in the dirtiness of the dairy in which the butter had been made in Cangda—for it was a piece of Canadian butter.

'The whole thing developed in the retailer's shop,' said the authority with whom I was speaking, and he showed me the unsavory-looking lump. 'It was all right when we sold it, and it was all right when the retailer bought it. But the germ must have got there during the process of manufacture. Probably the dairy was an old wooden one, had been allowed to get dusty and dirty, and the wind blew the germs with the dust into the milk or churn. The result you see. We shall be heavy losers, so will the shopkeeper, who, you may be sure, will not think so highly of Canadian butter in the future.'

How is New Zealand butter this season? I asked.

'Excellent,' was the reply. It is quite 2s per cwt better than Australian, and while 40 to 60 per cent. of New Zealand butter is now reaching high quotations, only 10 per cent. of that from Australia attains to that figure. The reason? Possibly it may be the use of private separators in Australia, in which case it is a score for New Zealand creameries,' said my informant as the interview closed.

WOOL.

LONDON WOOL SALES.

London, January 21. At the wool auction sales were brisk. Good merinos were 5 per cent. above December prices.

London, January 22.—The wool sales continue very active. Best greasy merinos have advanced 5 per cent.

Messrs Stronach, Morris, and Co. report as follows:

Rabbitskins.—We offered a small catalogue on Monday, when there was good competition, and prices in consequence were about ½d per lb above last sale.

Sheepskins—No sale this week.

Tallow and Fat—Buyers are doing their best to reduce values, and it is difficult to keep them up to late quotations.

Wool—London sales show a rise which brings values up to those ruling at September sales. This was expected, as the prices paid at our sale on 12th inst. pointed to a rise in London. Our next sale will be held on February 5, when we look for very satisfactory prices.

LIVE STOCK

DUNEDIN HORSE SALEYARDS.

Messrs. Wright, Stephenson, and Co. report as follows—

We held our weekly sale on Saturday, when about 40 horses were offered, of which number a dozen were draught. Among these were a few good useful sorts, which sold at satisfactory prices. Competition was keener than it has been for some weeks past, a number of country buyers, desirous of supplying their wants for the country harvest, being present. A bay gelding, six