THE BUSINESS BAROMETER.

An Index to the Condition of Trade Generally.

WHOLESALE GROCERIES ARE ACTIVE.

An Upward Tendency to Many Staples—Refined Sugar Lower—Strawberries in Large Supply—Notes.

Office of The Post,
Houston, Tuesday, March 23.

There has been considerable activity in the wholesale grocery market during the last week or so. The upward tendency of prices was mainly responsible for the increased business. It is a noticeable fact that whenever prices are in a rut, no matter how low they may be, the buying is always of a hand-to-mouth character. As soon as the market begins to shoot upward there is a scramble of purchasers to secure everything in sight. This was especially noticeable in sugar last week. The prospect of higher prices through the proposed tariff changes caused dealers to show much anxiety over taking supplies, and there were two or three days in which the record of sales was almost beyond precedent. This naturally resulted in large accumulations at all points, and then the demand suddenly ceased. Prices are therefore somewhat weaker and ¼c lower this week. In coffee, especially Brazil grades, there has been decided depression, with a reduction of about ½c on many lines. The rice market is very firm, with higher quotations anticipated for the near future. Importers have already advanced Japan grades ¼c, on account of the proposed new tariff duties. Flour is weaker, due to the drop in wheat. Canned goods are attracting little attention, with prices showing no changes of consequence.

Strawberries Took a Tumble.

The bottom dropped out of the strawberry market today. Houston dealers held prices up to the top notch last week, but this morning a combination of heavy receipts and stubborn bankers caused a sharp decline. The supply was much larger than on any previous day this season, and the commission men were forced to accept nearly anything offered. Added to this was the fact that many consignments consisted of inferior fruit, which naturally helped to depress prices. Sales were made at $1.00@1.50, with the majority of transaction. At $1.50@1.75 for each crate of 24 quarts. Marketers retailed them at 75@90c per quart. Anything more than that was a shortcoming price according to wholesale quotations, although there were a few whole crates probably justified the retailer in asking $1.

The Coffee Market.

In Brazil coffee dealers depression has been the favorite recently, with a reduction of ½c on cargo lots at importing points, while at the interior there has been no decided decline. The steady large receipts at the primary markets for the spring time have given the impression that even the outside city estimates (they have been made by very much under the actual quantities, and yet the season is made to reach nearly twice as large as last year) are much larger than the actual crop. The small receipts which had been hoping to get rid of them with the feeling that they were getting cheap, often have to exchange this early buttonwood, and regret the trade in the cheaper grades. The low prices have kept the consumption up to the statistical position, and the visible supply. All Water ports crudes are now quoted better demand for the regular Brazil country and Mocha and Java.

Business Failures.

In the United States during the past week [illegible]

	Week	Last week	Week last year
East	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
South	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
West	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Pacific	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
United States	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Canada	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Another Decline in Sugar.

Super week of another 1-16c under making a total decline of ⅛c in all grades of refined this week. It is estimated that the American Sugar Refining company and others earlier last week during the settlement of accounts to secure supplies at the refineries journal. Since then demand has fallen off, and there is less a promise of any kind of a market for a short period. The new sugar market did not show the many advances for at most months as refined last week, though importers were not offering their holdings.

Trade Notes.

The Elgin butter market is very firm, with an advancing tendency.

Cottonseed is in good demand and the outlook is for higher prices.

There was a big supply of Alvin strawberries on the local market this morning.

Eggs were a fraction lower today, selling at 10c as a rule, though some sales were reported at 9½c.

The poultry market shows continued activity, and everything in the line of chickens and turkeys sells readily at good prices.

The wool market still shows much activity, and manufacturers are disposed to buy more freely in expectation of a further advance.

Indications point to a crop of about 20,000 hogsheads of pineapples from Cuba this year. This is about one-half the usual quantity.

Owing to the prospect of an increase in the duty the market for domestic refined canned is reported to be stronger with a prospect of higher prices in the near future.

The principal feature of the past week in the dried fruit line has been the effort on the part of a large Chicago concern to corner the market on prunes, having bought seventy-five cars in one day.

HOUSTON PRICE CURRENT.

These quotations are revised daily and their correctness can be relied upon. The prices are those ruling in the Houston wholesale markets.

AXLE GREASE—Diamond, $4.75 per gross; Frazier, 10 lb box, $5.00 per gross; Golden, Sample per dozen boxes; carbon oil, 62½@65c; Axaline, 1 lb tin, per dozen, $1.00.

AMMUNITION—Powder, per keg, $6.00; blasting powder, $1.65 per keg, agents' price; drop shot, per sack, $1.30; buck, $1.55.

BACON—Short clear, boxed, 6¼@6 5-8c; in sacks, 5¾@5¾c; New York salt bellies 6½@6¾c; Western salt bellies 6¼c; smoked bellies, 6¾c; Western salt bellies 6¼c; smoked bellies, 6¾@7c.

BAGGING AND TIES—Carload lots, f. o. b. Houston or Galveston: Bagging, 2 lb, 5c; 2¼ lb, 6½c; 2½ lb, 7c. Ties, Arrow, 75c; Delta, 80c. In small lots, from store, bagging ½c per yard higher; ties, 5c per bundle higher.

BAKING POWDER—Apex, 1 lb, $2.00; ½ lb, $1.25; ¼ lb, 75c; Victor, 1 lb, per dozen, 90c; ½ lb, 70c; ¼ lb, 45c; Isis, One Spoon, 1 lb, per dozen, $2.40; ½ lb, $1.35; ¼ lb, 90c. K. C., 25 oz cans, $2.00 per dozen; Price's, 16 oz, $3.00 per dozen; Royal, 16 oz, $5.00; Bon Bon, 20 oz, 85c; 10 oz, 60c; 6 oz, 40c.

CANNED FRUIT—Per dozen: Strawberries, 90c@$1.00; pineapples, standard, $1.00@1.50; eyeless and coreless, $1.85; seconds, 90c@$1; pears, standard, 90c@$1.00; Clipper Bartlett pears, 2 lb, $1.00@1.05; 3 lb, $1.60@1.85; peaches, standard, 2 lb, 90c@$1.00; seconds, 2 lb, 80@90c; 3 lb standard, $1.25@1.40; 2 lb pie peaches, 75@80c; 3 lb pie peaches, 85@90c; blackberries, 65@70c; 3 lb standard apples, 75@85c.

CALIFORNIA CANNED FRUITS—Standard goods, 2½ lb cans: Peaches, $1.50@1.70 per dozen; apricots, $1.25@1.45; pears, $1.60@1.70; egg plums, $1.35@1.45; green gages, $1.30@1.45; nectarines, $1.35@1.50; grapes, $1.35@1.45; white cherries, $2.50@2.60; black cherries, $2.25@2.35.

CANDY—Plain stick, 5½@6¼c; wrapped, 6¼@7½c; fancy mixed, in pails, 7@8c.

CANNED VEGETABLES—Marrowfat peas, 90c@$1.00; lima beans, 80c@$1.00; string beans, 60@70c; corn, 60c@$1.25; tomatoes, 2 lb, 62½@65c; seconds, 50c; 3 lb, 80@85c; red kidney beans, 2 lb, 80@85c.

CANNED MEATS—Roast beef, 1 lb, $1.10@1.15; 2 lb, $2.00@2.25; 1 lb corned beef, 2 dozen, $1.90@1.25; 1 lb lunch tongue, 1 dozen, $2.00@2.25; ½ lb Oxford sausage, 2 dozen, $2.00; Frankfort sausages, 1 lb $1.05; ¼ lb potted ham, 4 dozen, 80@85c; ½ lb potted ham, 2 dozen, $1.25; ¼ lb deviled ham 4 dozen, 85@90c; ½ lb deviled ham, 2 dozen, $1.00@1.10.

CANDLES—Granite 6s and 8s, 7@7½c; 16-oz paraffine, assorted colors, 9½@10c; Star, [illegible]

COFFEE—Rio and Cordova: Fair, 12½@12½c; prime, 13@13½c; choice, 13¾@14c; fancy, 15@16c. Peaberry 19@20c. Roasted coffee: Apex basis, 100 lb cases, $14.00; Arbuckle's, 100 lb cases, $14.00; in 5 lb cases, $14.30. Mocha and Java blend, 30c.

FLOUR—Carload lots: Patent Cave, $4.00; Sea Foam, second roller patent, $4.00; Sea Nymph, extra roller fancy, $4.20; Sea Pearl, $4.20; rye flour, $4.20; Pumpernickel, $4.20; special rates for shipments to interior points; flour in barrels 25c above sacks; in half barrels 50c above barrels. Albatross, first patent, $5.40 per barrel, in small sacks.

FARINACEOUS GOODS—Grits, hominy and cream meal, $3 per bbl, $2.25c@2.30 pearl meal, $3 per bbl, $1.60 per bbl of four sacks. Scotch oats, $2.25.

FISH—Mackerel, No. 1, in 10 lb kits, $1.30@1.20. No. 1 half bbls, $6.00@6.50; sardines, American quarters, in oil, $2.80@3.00.

HAMS—Standard, 10@10½c; picnic hams [illegible]

HONEY—In 60 lb cans, extracted 5@6c; in comb 8@9c; in 10 lb cans, extracted [illegible]

LARD—Refined pieces, compound, [illegible] leaf, 5½@5¾c. 50 lb cans, ¼c higher than pieces; 10 lb cans, ½c higher; 5 lb cans, ¾c higher; 3 lb cans, 1c higher.

MOLASSES—Centennial, fair, 14@16c; prime 18@20c; choice open kettle 22@25c.

RICE—Extra fancy head 5½@5¾c; choice, fair 5¼c; fancy imported 5¾@6c.

SALT—Lively, for 50 lb sack, Saint Paul, Manila $[illegible]; Liverpool, [illegible]

SALT—Liverpool, coarse 75c; fine 65c. Louisiana coarse 75c; fine 65c, barrel [illegible]

STARCH—Standard pearl, 5c; Pearl, in 47 lb cases, 4½c; Royal gloss, 6½c; Brown Nelson, 50 lb package, per box, $1.75; corn starch, 6½c per lb; 40 and 40 lb boxes.

SYRUP—Corn, per gal, 20@25c; extra fancy, [illegible]

TOBACCO—Plug, [illegible]

VINEGAR—Cedar, 10c.

WHISKEY—Rye, [illegible]

WOODENWARE—Tubs, [illegible]

WOODENWARE—Washboards, [illegible]

WOODENWARE—Brooms, [illegible]

WOODENWARE—Buckets, [illegible]

WOODENWARE—Toothpicks, [illegible]

WOODENWARE—Matches, [illegible]

PROVISIONS.

BEANS—California small white, 4½@5c per lb. Bayou Choctaw pink, [illegible]

BEEF—Extra mess, [illegible]

BUTTERINE—Star, 12c; daisy 10c; Jersey, [illegible]; Texas creamery butter 18@20c; common, [illegible]

CHEESE—Marrabine, [illegible]

CHEESE—Texas, [illegible] per crate.

CHEESE—New York full cream, [illegible]

CHEESE—Wisconsin full cream, [illegible]

CHEESE—Swiss, [illegible]

CHEESE—Limburger, [illegible]

CHEESE—Texas, [illegible]

EGGS—New Laid, per half bbl, [illegible]

HAMS—Sugar cured, [illegible]

LARD—Compound, per pound, [illegible]

LARD—Pure, per pound, [illegible]

POTATOES—Irish, per bbl, [illegible]

POTATOES—Texas, per bbl, [illegible]

POTATOES—Sweet, per bbl, [illegible]

POULTRY—Dressed and Cattle, [illegible]

POULTRY—Live hens, per dozen, [illegible]

POULTRY—Spring chickens, per dozen, [illegible]

POULTRY—Turkeys, per lb, [illegible]

POULTRY—Geese, per lb, [illegible]

POULTRY—Ducks, per dozen, [illegible]

POULTRY—Pigeons, per dozen, [illegible]

RICE—Japan, per lb, [illegible]

RICE—Louisiana, per lb, [illegible]

SALMON—Pink, per lb, [illegible]

SALMON—Red, per lb, [illegible]

SALMON—Salmon trout, per lb, [illegible]

SAUERKRAUT—Per half bbl, [illegible]

SHOULDERS—Long clear, per pound, [illegible]

SHOULDERS—Short clear, per pound, [illegible]

SHOULDERS—Dry salt, per pound, [illegible]

SHOULDERS—Smoked, per pound, [illegible]

SAUSAGE—Per gross, [illegible]

SAUSAGE—Per dozen, [illegible]

SAUSAGE—Per pound, [illegible]

TALLOW—Per pound, [illegible]

TALLOW—Per gross, [illegible]

TALLOW—Per dozen