

CONDITION OF OMAHA'S TRADE

Business Situation Practically Unchanged During the Week.

COLLECTIONS ARE STILL FAIRLY GOOD

Jobs in Most Lines Report a Rather Quiet Trade—Business Likely to Be Slow Until After the First of the Year.

As a general thing even during seasons when trade is at its best the latter half of December sees very little business transacted by the jobbers. Before the middle of the month is reached the retail merchants of the country have in almost all instances laid over their holdings, and during the balance of the month they are too busy in selling out these stocks to admit of any thought of buying more. As soon as the holiday rush is over the retailer commences to take stock, which occupies his attention until the coming of the new year. Thus, it follows that the jobber has very little to do in the way of selling goods during the last half of the last month of the year.

As most retail merchants put in good stocks in the latter part of the year, it is frequently the case that they are not forced to buy to any extent until well along in the month of January, and for that reason jobbers have come to expect a very busy business during the first month of the year. The past week was no exception to the general rule, and as regards the condition of business in some lines there was a fair movement of goods, made up to a considerable extent of small orders, for articles which have not been in demand for which there has arisen some special demand. Quite a good many orders for goods intended for Christmas presents were received, and these were filled to a large extent. The goods were packed and shipped to reach their destination in time. The jobbers of hardware report some trade of this character, and there is a considerable movement of fancy groceries. Boots and shoes, dry goods, hats and caps and kindred lines were rather quiet.

Most reports indicate that collections are quite good in the country, where money appears to be more plenty than in the city. There will be some collections, but they will close with few obligations unprovided for.

While trade during the past week was light, it is safe to say that in some lines the condition of business is better than it was some time ago. In the clothing line, for example, the trade is coming pretty well up to the mark set last year, as business was very active during the first two weeks of the month. Others, however, will be considerably below last season's record.

The Retail Trade.

Business in a retail way in Omaha has been fair, but it has fallen considerably below last year's. There has been a marked tendency to limit the purchases to the more inexpensive class of goods, and while the number of buyers may have been as large as last year, the amount of goods sold has not been nearly so large in the aggregate. This appears to have been the experience in most of the cities, regardless of any special line of business.

It is very frequently the case that holiday purchases consist very largely of articles which do not tend to reduce the subsequent demand for articles of necessity, and this is especially true in the case of many merchants who are commencing upon the fact that purchasers of Christmas goods appeared to give the preference to articles of utility, rather than to those of luxury. It might be of immediate use in the family and passing by the more showy but less useful articles. Cheapness and utility appear to have been the two features most sought for by the purchasers of holiday goods.

The dealers in produce and fruits who usually enjoy a rather brisk trade at this time, amounting frequently to a positive rush, report a much lighter business than usual, showing that people are practicing economy in their purchases of goods as well as in their expenditures.

Bank Clearings.

The decrease in the bank clearings at Omaha was large last week, amounting to 30 per cent. below the corresponding week recorded in a long time. For the first time this winter the decrease at Omaha has been heavier than at Minneapolis. St. Paul leads the city, with a decrease of 20 per cent. over 38, Sioux City 30 and Milwaukee 51 per cent. The cities of the country which have suffered the greatest decrease in the matter of clearings are Spokane, 74; Nashville, 62; and Denver 58.

The following will show the clearings at Omaha for each day of the past week:

Table showing daily bank clearings at Omaha for the week ending Dec 23, 1893. Total: \$5,159,111.33

AS DUES SEES IT.

Christmas Week and the Coming of a Bright New Year. "Christmas week," says W. H. Robertson, Omaha manager of R. G. Dun & Co., "is always a poor one in jobbing circles. Purchases for the Christmas trade have all been made, and the approach of January inevitably causes a falling off among buyers, who wait until their annual statements are completed before they figure on the year's business. There is, therefore, nothing of great interest to be said concerning the jobbing trade except that it is duller, if possible, than usual, and that the demand is very light."

Among retail dealers the last two days of the week have been active, but the volume of Christmas business has been disappointed, and the demand for the various articles, but buyers are especially economical, and Christmas gifts are generally inexpensive. Some of the houses have had an unusually large trade, but generally speaking, it was disappointing.

The last two weeks of December in banking circles are generally quiet, and a slight increase in deposits for the reason that depositors are preparing to a considerable extent for January payments. Usually the money market is quiet, and the market contraction is noted on all sides. After the first of the year money matters generally ease up and the large amounts of cash in the hands of the various banks, unobscured by the list of February good judges of the situation think money will be plentiful and the demand for loans will be accommodated borrowers who can offer reasonable security.

Commercial Club and Charity. The Commercial club inaugurated a new department, think in holding a meeting in the interest of charity under its auspices. So far as I am aware this is not customary. The general purpose of the Commercial club has been to promote the interests of the city, and to this young organization, creditable, however, to this young organization that its members were not only willing to be identified with a movement for the benefit of the poor and distressed, but that they have done so promptly and cheerfully raised over \$100 for the benevolent purpose. It is very gratifying to see a young organization taking the place of the old one, and it is hoped that the work of this organization will be a permanent one. It has established itself here for a definite purpose and is making most excellent headway. Its members should contain all the business men of Omaha, both those engaged in wholesale and in retail trade, and those who are interested in the welfare of the city. It is a very important organization, and it is to be hoped that it will be able to do much for the benefit of the city.

Terminal Company Doing Business. In my opinion the fact that the Terminal company has brought into Omaha a line of cars of this character is a very significant one. It is very significant, it is to be hoped, that this institution is in position to afford terminal transportation

facilities for all lines not now properly accommodated, and that whatever doubt may have existed as to the good faith of the enterprise, it ought to satisfy critics of the East Omaha Bridge and Terminal company is not the case with the old corporation, but it is in position to add them all others in improving the transportation conditions at this center.

One of the curious things connected with business in Omaha is the fact that the statistics have not yet been published, but the statistics of the month of December are generally in line with the results which will shortly be shown.

Another curious but more important fact in connection with the statistics is the disposition to circulate rumors affecting the credit of old and well established houses. During the last summer this was very noticeable, and scarcely a bank in Omaha escaped the annoyance of this kind of slander. Our citizens should be more cautious as well as more loyal in matters of this kind. In uncertain times a false rumor unfavorably affecting the credit of a house entirely solvent and in no way connected with the business of the city, is a very serious matter.

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that butter is too high in the country. The surplus is being sold to farmers at 15 cents for butter but mostly to 10 cents in this market. In a vain endeavor to get the lower merchants are shipping a great deal of their butter to retail stores and hotels, which receive more than they can use and are compelled to turn over the surplus to the commission men to dispose of. All this only tends to demoralize the market and make trade still more lifeless.

A sample of dried figs, raised and cured in California, has been received by Branch & Co. from George J. Kellough, fruit trader of Newcastle, Cal. Mr. Branch submitted the sample to an Omaha broker, who has the reputation of being an expert in that line, and he pronounced the fruit equal to the figs imported from Smyrna. The fruit was of good size and color and the skins tender and juicy. It is still in the experimental stage in California, but it looks very much as if the problem was about solved and that in the near future the surplus figs will not be compelled to look to the Mediterranean countries for its supply of figs.

The New York Commercial Bulletin says: "Notwithstanding the 'cotton' inhabitant" has the position of the banana market been so unfavorable as has been witnessed during the past two or three months, the fruit appears to have no friends in the trade, but when the matter is sifted down for the true cause of the depression I can readily be seen that to the doors of the importing interest can be laid the slow and unrelenting price which is being maintained at present prices to continue. The Bulletin then proceeds to show that the unsatisfactory condition of the trade is due to the action of a system of disposing of the surplus fruit altogether was about as mean as it ever gets. Buyers would condescend to take the fair to good article at very low prices, but it was hard to get them to look at common and inferior stuff. This condition of the market resulted in shutting off receipts and in the end since then prices have been on the mend and a better feeling is noticeable in all branches of the trade. Up to Wednesday there was a 25c drop in beef cattle values, but this decline has been practically regained during the past two or three days, so that the market closes about the same as a week ago.

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The cow market experienced much the same fluctuations that were noted in the market for hogs, and the latter part of the week and strong and active later. There were pretty close to thirty loads of cows and mixed stock included in the fresh receipts, and prices were generally unchanged, and was brisk and prices ruled anywhere from \$1.25 to \$1.50. There was a strong demand for a few choice cows, and prices were nominally stronger—albeit of a quarter's advance, but the market offerings furnished an insufficient test of the strength of trade. A few odd bunches of poor to fair quality of beef cattle changed hands at from \$2.75 to \$3.35 and a string of pretty decent western cattle brought \$1.40. The feeling was firm and everything sold in good shape, hams and hocks.

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OMAHA LIVE STOCK MARKETS

Week Shows a Falling Off in Quantity and Quality of Receipts.

SOMEWHAT STRONGER FEELING PREVAILS

Cattle Close the Week with a Good Advance but Uncertain—Hogs Still Adversely Affect Market—Cattle for Much—Anxious Speculation.

RECEIPTS ALL KINDS HAVE BEEN LIGHT THIS WEEK. This is usually the case during the week immediately preceding the holidays, but receipts have been even lighter than that of the corresponding week last year. The figures are as follows:

Table showing receipts for Cattle, Hogs, Sheep, and other livestock. Includes columns for No., Av. Wt., and Price.

During the early part of the week, with fairly liberal supplies, the market was dull, dragging and lower. The demand was entirely local and decidedly limited. Then, the generally inferior quality of the offerings had a most depressing influence, and the trade altogether was about as mean as it ever gets. Buyers would condescend to take the fair to good article at very low prices, but it was hard to get them to look at common and inferior stuff.

This condition of the market resulted in shutting off receipts and in the end since then prices have been on the mend and a better feeling is noticeable in all branches of the trade. Up to Wednesday there was a 25c drop in beef cattle values, but this decline has been practically regained during the past two or three days, so that the market closes about the same as a week ago.

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average weight, 395 pounds, is about the same as last year's. From the seller's standpoint the market was a very satisfactory one. Reports from eastern markets were rather favorable, offerings were not so numerous, and while there was a fair local demand, Armour of Chicago was again a liberal offerer, taking 1,500 hogs, or nearly one-half of the entire receipts. Prices averaged all of 10c higher than Friday, and business was active at the advance from start to finish. A couple of loads of choice heavy butcher weights brought \$5.00, and there were scattering sales of underweight stuff and rough packers down around \$4.80 and \$4.90, but the big bulk of the fair to good hogs of all weights sold at \$4.95 and \$5, with the latter by far the more popular figure. On Friday the hog market closed at \$4.85 and \$4.95 and on last Saturday trading was mostly at \$4.90 and \$4