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HIDES AND THE ALLIED TRADES.

Just now more than the usual amount of interest is being displayed in the situation of the hide market. The trade has seldom seen hides manifest more strength than at the present moment. Prices are now very high—perhaps higher than ever before known except, it may be, in some ephemeral flurry. The cause is the universal lightness of stocks; in no part of the world, so far as can be seen, is there a surplus. A report from Chicago dated Monday last, stated that "there were no sales of common dry hides on Saturday, a condition due to the scarcity of stock, which is also responsible for the strength of the market. Prices are unaltered but well maintained on the basis of previous quotations, as noted below. The market for city slaughter hides is without change or new feature. Continued absence of important offerings restricts business and keeps prices firm on the former basis of 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ c. for native steers, and 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. for branded. The market for calfskins is unaltered and steady at former values."

English reports are similar. Large quantities of hides are being bought there for foreign markets, that is, when they can be obtained, and the consequence is that there is an insufficiency for local requirements. The Toronto market reflects these world conditions, and prices are very firm. Steers, cows and calfskins have made no actual change since last week, but sheepskins are now quoted at 90c. to \$1, and the undertone to the market is very firm indeed. Calfskins especially are very strong, due partially no doubt to the preference for box calf leather in the boot and shoe manufacturing business.

The butchers are jubilant at the present condition of affairs, but apart from them, it cannot be said that

the situation is pleasing to any class. The tanning trade is unsettled, as well it may be under the prevalent high prices for their material. And the boot and shoe manufacturers also find that the value of their finished product is by no means high enough to be on a parity with the cost of leather. The general leather trade is affected by the same cause. Merchants feel unsettled, though from every source come anticipations of brisker conditions later on.

The boot and shoe manufacturers, both in Ontario and Quebec have enjoyed a fairly good season so far as it has gone. October was quite brisk, and the demand from the North-West was particularly active. The sale for winter goods has been stimulated by the cool, frosty mornings, and travellers almost universally speak hopefully with regard to the remainder of the year. As to the prospects for spring, they are still more optimistic. Some houses have already sent out part of their spring samples, and they seem to have been well received. Styles show no very decided change. Patent leathers are still in demand, but only the better qualities "go," and these are looked upon as accessories, merely, and additional to a good strong pair of box calf. There is a satisfactory demand for tans, but it is not markedly large. White canvas shoes seem likely to be in brisk request. Both men's and women's boots are tending towards a narrower range of toe, but particularly the latter. However, there is no tendency to extravagance in the opposite direction for either class of footwear. Trouble has again arisen in some of the Quebec factories, but so far as we can learn it has not yet amounted to much. Payments from the country districts are reported to be fully up to normal expectations.