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### TRADING IN FUTURES.

The president of the New Orleans Cotton Exchange delivered an address the other day in which he made some interesting references to trading in futures and the usefulness and the abuses of the system. Speaking of the tremendous advance in prices for cotton last season, which stimulated the great production and consequent fall in prices this season, he gave as his opinion that it was due to the fact that there was more short selling for future delivery than in any previous year on record. In spite of the liability of the "future contract" system to abuse, he said it was indispensable to the modern cotton trade and, he thought, it had, generally speaking, an uplifting influence on values.

Of course as to the latter part of this contention, there are undoubtedly two sides to the question. The "future" system may raise prices too much, while at other times and in wider circumstances, it may depress them. The system is worked by bears as well as bulls, and one kind of operator is just as likely to abuse it as another.

The chief liability to create trouble lies chiefly in efforts to corner a short supply. There is little chance to increase the supply that can be let into the market to depress the price. Depression is the result of the actual supply that may be had for delivery, and the only defence against it is withholding some part of the supply which can be controlled. But when the supply is short it can be made more so by a comparatively easy control of all or a large part of that available for delivery. Then short selling for future delivery may run into abuse and become pernicious, not only to manufacturers and consumers who are forced to pay a higher than the normal price for what they must have, but to producers as well. It seems to us that a very large proportion of the

excessive price last season went to speculators, but its effect was to stimulate planting and lead to this season's over-production. Thus to the speculators chiefly comes the benefit, while to the growers there is left the reaction.

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### BOOTS, SHOES, AND LEATHER.

The chief subject for discussion in both the tanning and the boot and shoe trades is the question of prices. The price of hides, and—to some extent—the difficulty of obtaining those of good quality, has for some time past been a cause of anxiety to leather men, and they have at last, after considerable delay, succeeded in raising the level of values of leather. The tendency, however, is still upward, and the probabilities are that further advances will take place in the near future. Across the line, very material price increases have been made, ranging from 5 to 7½ per cent. or even more on some lines, and even yet the manufacturers are not satisfied that they are receiving a fair share of profits, comparing it with the cost of raw material. The same may be said of Canada.

Present quotations for leather in the Toronto market are as follows: Sole, slaughter, medium heavy, per pound, 29 to 31c.; No. 2, 28 to 29c.; No. 3, 27 to 28c.; calfskins, French, \$1.15 to \$1.50; French kip, 85 to 95c.; Canadian kip, 60 to 70c.; upper light, medium, 40 to 45c.; pebbles, 15 to 16c.; harness, union oak tanned, No. 1, 33 to 34c.; No. 2, 30 to 32c.; light, 29 to 31c.; cod oil, gallon, 45 to 48c.; degreas, per pound, 3c.; japonica, or gambia, 6c.; lampblack, 20 to 25c.; sumach, per ton, \$50 to \$60.

Something very similar is the point of view of the boot and shoe manufacturer, although at the present time several of the Quebec and Montreal factories re-