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& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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and General Storekeepers.

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**SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.**

As the design of THE CANADIAN GROCER is to benefit mutually all interested in the business, we would request all parties ordering goods or making purchases of any description from houses advertising with us to mention in their letter that such advertisement was noticed in THE CANADIAN GROCER.

This year's Budget is essentially a grocery budget. Everything named in it, except malt and certain preparations containing spirits, falls under the classification of wet or dry groceries. The pressure which brought about an amendment to the Tariff Act at all was exerted solely by the weight of the great staple of the grocery trade, sugar. Any changes in the duty upon other goods were consequent upon the mere disturbance which attended the removal of the sugar duty or were called for to fill the yawning void which it left in the revenue. The duty on syrups has been lowered because the duty on the raw material of them has been taken off. The duty on molasses has been modified. The duty on refined sugar has been reduced because of the removal of that on the raw material. The duty on salt has been reduced to one-half. To make up for these losses 5c. a pound has been added to the excise duty on manufactured tobacco, and 5c. a pound to the customs duty on manufactured tobacco, while the duties on malt and spirits have been advanced. The country will still be short about two millions in its revenue. Retrenchment in the expenditure is the equivalent the Government pro-

poses for this shrinkage in the national income. The first saving will be in the Customs Department itself, where there will be a big reduction in the yearly outlay for handling raw sugar, which hereafter will require a comparatively small part of the customs service it had to have when dutiable.

The abolition of the duty on raw sugar was a measure almost rendered necessary by the drift of circumstances. Three months ago the United States gave free sugar to its people, and although Canada is not bound to imitate that country, yet, it is necessary that she keep pace with it in all economical movements. There is some rivalry between the United States and Canada for the best class of immigrants, and the most potent argument with that class is which is the cheaper country to live in. We aim also to make the country as cheap to those who live in it as the United States is, and to keep the duty on sugar would give a tremendous advantage to the United States in its bid for settlers both from this country and abroad. The lifting of a tax of three and a half millions not only from the shoulders of the producers but from those of their wives and children, is a popular and a timely act.

Heretofore the grocery trade has been too philanthropical, and by denying itself has done what it could to bring cheap sugar to the masses. Now that the Government has undertaken that paternal role, why should the trade continue in it? The laudable and patriotic desire to make the price a man pays for his sugar a rivet to keep him in this country can not now be pleaded as a reason why retailers should forego their profit on sugar. The trade will have more sugar to handle than ever. A better price ought to be got for it. At one swoop the Government can melt 2c. a pound off the price of sugar, and can take from the total yearly sugar outlay of our population \$3,650,000. If the yearly

profits of the refiners, the jobbers and the retailers of sugar were all put together, they would probably not amount to half this sum. So much heretofore has revenue had the advantage over trade

As the removal of the duty is unlikely, for some time, at least, to be generally taken advantage of by the trade for the betterment of prices, there is no other way in which the trade can be benefited by it. From 1½ to 2c. a pound on sugar, represents between two-sevenths and one-third of the total amount laid out for sugar. There will, therefore, be a smaller burden of debt to be taken up at the end of every thirty days. There will also be an equal reduction in the volume of receipts from consumers, so that the grocer in that particular will be no better than he was before. The wholesale trade will apparently be the gainers, as only about two-thirds of the original amount lost on sugar through the failure of retailers will now be in peril. But this proceeds on the idea that consumption will not be enhanced, which is an improbable supposition. Under present prices it cannot but be increased, and the amount of money paid out by the people for sugar for one year from the present may be equal to what was paid last year.

The sugar market has now got completely out of the deadlock into which it was thrown by the combination of forces that struck it last week. Anticipation of the change had virtually muzzled and famished the demand for weeks; the strawberry crop could be saved only by sugar, and its most critical week had arrived. So much for the demand. The supply, on the other hand, had ceased. Then the Budget came down. The long quiescent demand became ravenous, but there had to be delay until stock was taken of all the sugar in bond at the refineries. Thus the supply was kept in curb so far as this market was concerned till Monday morning. In that interval United States refined, which is now admissible at eight-tenths of a cent per pound, might have been imported to lessen the strain here. That, however, was made a less available source of relief because of the fact that nearly all the trade had their orders in at our own refineries before the change.