seem to think, by the force of a broad assertion. The general rule is rather the other way: that the balance of advantages lies with the country of production. But it may not be and probably is not so, in the case of the sugar-growing West Indies.

The United States bounty on the export of refined sugar has been as great a cause of complaint by Canadian refiners (that were) as those granted by France and Austria have been in England. A countervailing duty is the remedy generally proposed by those interested in sugar refining; though some persons have gone as far, in England, as to suggest, what will certainly not be adopted, a refusal to admit to consumption the bounty-favored sugar. The stoppage of some English sugar refineries shows the tendency of the French bounties to produce a monopoly, and that state of things, which does not appear to be far off, when it presents itself as the equivalent of the apparent favor offered by a foreign nation, in the hope of a temporarily cheap sugar will show the nature of the gift which foreign rivalry intended as a snare and and a delusion. England, having wholly abolished the sugar duties, would not find it easy to lay on a duty avowedly to countervail the French bounty. But if she should become embroiled in the Russian-Turkish war, and a sugar duty should appear once more as a war-tax a remedy may be found for a state of things which Lord Derby has, for some time, regarded as forboding only evil to English interests. In Canada, we think, the question of the sugar duties deserves more attention than it has received.

The low consumption of sugar in Canada if not exaggerated, certainly shows that there is something seriously wrong. Our population, taken as a whole, is in a condition of far greater material comfort than that of England; and, other things being equal, would consume a greater proportion of sugar. But a duty of anything like fifty per cent. against no duty at all is a wonderful difference. We cannot afford to abolish our sugar duties, or even materially to reduce them below the revenue standard. But we ought to ascertain whether they do not exceed the revenue limit; and in the adjudgment of raw, partially manufactured, and completely refined sugars a rational discrimination should be observed.

OUR RAILWAYS.

Twenty-five years ago Canada was nearly in the position that Italy was in when Cavour resolved to strain her resources by constructing railways as wealth-creating machines. Within the borders of the Dominion there are now 4,929¼ miles of railway, exclusive of lines owned by Canadian companies, which form the complement of our own within the United States. Of these, 79 only, on the Great Western, have a double track. Starting with a guage of 5 feet 6, which was long kept up on all the lines, we have now only 618¾ miles of what was once the "provincial guage," against 3,938½ of 4 feet 8 inches and a half, and 600½ miles of 3 feet 6 inches, or "narrow gauge," including the aforementioned lines outside of Canada.

The cost of the lines in operation has been $317,795,468.47, the only portion of which that is directly productive, as an investment, is the bonded debt of $827,382.66, on which the average earnings over working expenses are equal to 4.67 per cent. It follows that over $241,000,000 of capital invested in Canadian railways gives no direct return. Of this amount $61,578,275.46, representing Government and municipal contributions, was not necessarily in-invested with a view to direct returns. This capital may be deemed to have been fructified if it has brought the indirect advantage to be obtained from the existence and operation of the road. Of this portion of the capital the Dominion furnished nearly sixty-two millions ($51,948,529.33). Of the provinces New Brunswick was the largest contributor, having supplied $2,090,000 against $1,884,719.43 contributed by Ontario and $228,521 by Quebec. The latter province, however, is enormously increasing its railway liabilities. The rest of this amount, $5,426,505.70, was supplied by the municipalities. No doubt the Government and municipal contributors were, in the early stages of railway construction, led to believe that they would get a direct return; but at a later date they continued their contributions with a distinct understanding that only indirect returns were to be expected.

The other classes of contributors are, for the most part, in a totally different position. But few of them can hope to obtain any indirect advantages; when their capital fails to yield a direct return the venture is, for them, a disastrous one. A few local shareholders looked rather to indirect than to direct benefits; but they form only a fraction of the whole. Taken in the lump, the holders of ordinary share capital, to the amount of $111,208,479, get no return on their capital, and the preference shareholders, to the amount of $69,747,177, are in no better position. As this result is arrived at by spreading the net earnings over the whole amount of the bonds, it is not necessarily correct in detail, but every dollar paid in dividends on share capital is so much deducted from the 4.67 per cent. which the aggregate net earnings bear to the bonded aggregate debt. It results, in fact, that bondholders, sometimes, have to go without their interest, and a class of securities, which ought to be good, are brought into discredit.

Still construction goes on; but the capital-motor is changing its form. Shareholders bear a less proportion of the burthen than formerly. During the years 1875-6, there was an increase of capital over the amount already given, of $19,293,613, of which Government and municipal loans and bonuses figured up to $11,828,914. It was still possible to borrow on bonds $4,004,139, and what is more surprising, to raise on ordinary share capital $2,155,560, and $1,305,000 on preference shares. The total paid-up capital invested in our railways, including those under construction as well as those in operation, was $333,886,047. Future railway construction must depend, till the roads in operation become directly profitable, mainly on Government and municipal aid and the bonds of the companies.

The future of the lines in operation is not easy to forecast. Many of them cost too much and are carrying too great a weight of capital to leave ground for hope that they will speedily become paying investments. The great miscalculations were in the estimated proportions of working expenses to income: last year it was 81.63 per cent. against 81 per cent. in the previous year. From narrowed guage and steel rails a large decrease from the original figures should result. Instances of waste, extravagance and corruption have lately been brought to light, and it is probable that the canker has spread farther than a single surgical operation could reveal.

THE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT.

Among the Acts passed latest by the Dominion House at its recent session, is the one assented to on 27th April, providing for the amendment of that passed four years ago, relating to Weights and Measures. The Imperial bushel measure, containing eight Imperial or standard gallons, is now the standard measure of capacity for commodities sold by dry measure; and from this all other measures require to be computed, these forming parts or multiples of the standard bushel. It is also provided that after the date named, the standard bushel thus established shall be held, unless otherwise stipulated, to be the measure agreed to as between the parties to any sale of goods by "dry measure." It is quite permissible to use the wine gallons of 231 cubic inches, or the Winchester bushel of