☞ *The Canadian Monetary Times may be had at any of the News Depots of the Dominion at 5 cents per copy. Orders for quantities to be addressed to A. S. Irving, Bookseller, Toronto.*

Subscription one year, $2; six months, $1; All letters to be addressed "The Canadian Monetary Times," Box 490, Toronto. Registered letters so addressed are at the risk of the Publishers.

The Canadian Monetary Times.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 1868.

THE SUGAR DUTIES.

As the House of Commons will be called on within a few weeks, at furthest, to deal with the sugar duties, we propose to lay before the trade and the public some facts respecting them. We shall also endeavour to point out a few leading principles that should be adhered to in the adjustment of the new tariff, in order to deal fairly with all the interests concerned, and to give that degree of general satisfaction which legislation should always aim to secure.

The question has been much discussed; it has invited and received the best attention of political economists on this Continent, in Britain, and in Continental Europe, and, so far as our researches extend, the result has not been to establish any system as *the* correct one, opinions generally differing in this as in most other matters. So far as this country is concerned, whatever plan or principle is adopted in future, it is to be hoped that it will be a decided modification of that now in vogue; for, we believe we are correct in saying that, ever since its enactment, the present tariff has been regarded as unfair and unsatisfactory. Unlike, as on former occasions, when tariff changes were pending, the wholesale trade now exhibit a creditable amount of activity in endeavouring to guard their interests in the matter. Meetings have been held in St. John, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, and probably other cities, and the question discussed, and resolutions, embodying the views of the different assemblages, adopted. But the importing interest do not have it all their own way. The refiners are also wide-awake, and are using the very considerable influence which the large trade they have controlled now for some years, and the possession of ample means, afford them, in endeavoring to support their view of the question. From this latter class no complaints arise respecting the tariff as now constructed; it is the importers who are dissatisfied. There is another class more important than either of the above, and whose interests are deeply involved—the great body of consumers; but the advocacy of their cause is very properly left to a free press and their representatives in Parliament. We lay it down here as a cardinal principle that, whatever changes may be made, their interests should be the chief care of the Legislature in dealing with the question. The importance to the whole people of correctly distributing or imposing the taxation which has to be laid on the article of sugar for revenue purposes, is apparent from the fact that the consumption of imported sugar has doubled within a few years, and that within the year ended June 30th, 1867, as much as 53,000,000 lbs. were entered at our ports from foreign countries.

To adapt our observations to the general reader, and to place the matter in as clear a light as possible, we shall refer to each of the different modes in which sugar duties are, or have been, levied. These are four in number—(1) Specific, in which case so many cents per pound are levied, without reference to quality of grade; (2) Ad valorem, in which a certain per centage is charged upon the cost of the sugar, as shown by the invoice; (3) A combination of the specific and *ad valorem* modes; and (4) A classified system, framed on the specific principle, but aiming at an approximation to the ad valorem, such as that now in force both here and in other countries. We shall deal with these in the above order.

Specific duties.—A pure specific or uniform duty is that to which we now refer. This method was at one time adopted in England, years ago when there was comparatively little variety in the qualities and classes of sugars sent to that market by the colonial producer, who had the monopoly of it; but was gradually departed from, as that market was opened to all the sugars of the world, and a variety of classes presented themselves, of which, before, little was known. For this system the present principle of classification was gradually substituted. There are, however, still advocates of an uniform duty. These ground their opposition to the classified system on the great difficulty—nay, practical impossibility—of assessing classified duties fairly; and while they admit that grave objections lie against an uniform system, still, the frequent injustice perpetrated in the assessment of classified duties, they regard as more than a set-off, so that, upon the whole, the uniform system is the better. We cannot take this view of the case. The true principle, and that which should always be aimed at, is to levy the duty *upon the actual amount of crystallizable saccharine matter* the sugar contains. To arrive at that is, however, a difficulty. But the uniform system ignores this principle, and, in consequence, would work great injustice. This we will test by an example. Let us take 200 lbs. of a very low grade of brown sugar, in which there is considerable waste or refuse matter, and suppose that it contains 80 per cent. of actual extractable sugar, leaving out of consideration, for the purpose of this illustration, the quantity of