

recommends. We desire to explain here, as we had occasion to do on former occasions, that we are not objecting to a policy calculated to benefit the sugar refiners so much as we are endeavoring to demonstrate the mistake into which people fall who imagine that they will please the West Indians and encourage trade with those colonies by virtually excluding by high duties the grocery sugars suitable for the consumption of all classes of our population in order to encourage the importation of low priced sugars and melado adapted for the refiners. Admitting, for argument's sake, that it is expedient that our own consumers should be deprived of the superior crystallized sugar that is produced in British Guiana and Trinidad in order to encourage our sugar refiners, let us not be so absurd as to suppose that by such a policy we will please the manufacturers of those sugars. It is just about twelve months ago since, in discussing this question, we quoted from the sugar refiners' own report the following statement:—"The bulk of the British Guiana crop now comes in the form of crystallized centrifugal sugar and goes to the consumer." That crop averages about 75,000 tons, but, although eagerly sought for by all who know the article, it is, as we have already stated, almost excluded from the Canadian market. Our own position on this question is that countervailing duties against foreign sugars receiving bounties are perfectly justifiable, but that the exclusion from our markets, by differential duties in favor of inferior sugars, of the superior West India grocery sugars, will not be satisfactory to the most influential classes in the West Indies. This question has attracted unusual attention, partly owing to the special interest taken in it in Halifax. We shall resume its consideration in our next issue.

#### THE INSOLVENCY LAWS.

There was a greater manifestation of conflicting opinions on this important subject than on any other. A good deal of irritation has been felt during the period of commercial depression which we have been passing through, but Mr. Andrew Robertson was, we have no doubt, correct in his declaration that the Montreal merchants did not desire "to go back to the old days of grab." The advocates of the repeal of the insolvency laws were in a minority of 7 to 25.

#### TELEGRAPH FACILITIES.

A good deal of discussion took place on this subject, but, with every desire for fair play and hostility to monopoly, it was not felt just to propose interference with vested rights, as some seemed inclined to recommend.

#### WEST INDIA RECIPROCITY.

A resolution favorable to reciprocal trade with the West Indies and the Brazils was carried apparently without discussion, the probability being that neither the mover nor any of those who voted understood very clearly the effect of such a measure, which, however, is wholly illusory and undeserving of serious discussion.

#### INSPECTION OF FISH, BUTTER AND HIDES.

All these subjects engaged consideration, the chief discussion having taken place on butter, and whether it was desirable to establish compulsory inspection of that article. Wide differences of opinion were found to exist, and there seem to be very serious practical difficulties in the way of compulsory inspection. It was decided by a majority that examiners should be appointed by the municipalities for the compulsory inspection of butter.

Several other subjects engaged consideration, among which were a proposition of Mr. Dobell, that there should be a confederation of the Boards of Trade of the dependencies of Great Britain with a view of drawing closer the trade relations between them. This motion was carried, although we have no idea that it will lead to any result. There was a good deal of discussion as to the expediency of reducing the number of ports of entry, and in connection with this subject the enforcement of a more uniform system of valuing goods. The law regarding weights and measures was the subject of much complaint, and it is to be feared that there are great difficulties in preventing fraud without subjecting retailers to great inconvenience and expense. The stamp tax was fully discussed and the usual objections stated. Mr. Andrew Robertson made the best practical suggestion, which was to introduce the use of stamped paper as in England, and to permit either the maker of a note or the endorser to stamp it. It is very objectionable to make the recipient of an unstamped note pay a penalty of double the amount of stamps for the neglect of the maker. A resolution was unanimously adopted in favor of repealing the malt duty, and placing it on beer. A resolution was likewise adopted with a view of obtaining the assistance of the Government to procure the registration in France of Canadian built ships on the same terms as British ships. The system of pilotage on the St. Lawrence also engaged consideration, and a resolution was adopted favorable to compulsory pilotage. Complaint was most justly made of the illiberality of the Americans in refusing to Canadian vessels the privileges

granted to them in navigating the Canals and inland waters. This subject, as well as the registration of foreign vessels, is to be referred for the consideration of the government. The propriety of imposing a duty on coal was discussed at considerable length, and there was a very general expression of the opinions of the members. The vote was 17 to 14 against the imposition of a duty on coal. We have adverted to the chief subjects which engaged the consideration of the Dominion Board of Trade during their four days of session. They certainly were very industrious, and occupied themselves with subjects of general interest to the Dominion. The time is rapidly approaching when we shall learn to what extent their recommendations will receive the approval of the Government and Parliament of the Dominion.

#### THE CREDIT SYSTEM.

We give place to two out of several letters on this subject received from subscribers in various parts of the country, all of them from leading houses in their respective localities. There is some diversity of opinion on the subject; but all agree that the practice of dating forward is a great evil. We fancy, however, the eastern wholesale firms are not likely to enter into any combination for eradicating it, unless there were some prospect that western men and those of other cities would join and on the basis of an allowance of time for delivery. A great deal is charged to the commercial travellers, and doubtless, in some instances with reason enough, but retailers should remember that the root of the evil is in the too active competition caused by there being too many persons in business. It is not alone the retail business that is overdone, and "dating forward" bears the same relation to the wholesaler as long and indefinite credit to farmers does to the retail dealer. The competition of English travellers for several seasons past in their attempts to sell to the retailers of Canada, compelled wholesale houses from Montreal, Toronto, &c., to send their men out earlier in the season, and much of the trouble lies at the doors of these English jobbers who have no advantage whatever over our own importing houses who buy, as these English jobbers do, direct from the manufacturers, but who have the advantage of a knowledge of the wants of the retail trade of the country. With the system adopted of late years, our merchants can have orders filled by their resident buyers in Europe and landed in Canada in ten to fifteen days from the time of cabling.

Our retail friends complain of the per-