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SUGAR DUTIES.

The Montreal Gazette makes what it no doubt supposes to be a noble rally in behalf of the Canadian sugar refiners. In an editorial, A Bad Precedent, it alludes to a speech delivered a few days before in the House of Commons by Mr. Charlton in which he objected to the duty of 64-100 of a cent per pound upon sugar above 16 Dutch standard, and in which he said:—

The protection afforded to Canadian refiners by this

section is almost exactly five times as great as the United States Congress has seen fit to give the sugar refiners in the United States. Their duty on sugar is 40 per cent. and an additional one-eighth cent per pound on refined sugar. This duty is sixty-four-one-hundredths cent per pound. I protest now, as before, against this duty, on behalf of the consumers as being larger than necessary for the refiners.

It will be observed that Mr. Charlton did not ask that Canada adopt the American tariff as it now is, or even the substitute therefore proposed by the Senate. He merely called attention to the fact that the protection afforded Canadian refiners was nearly five times as great as that afforded American refiners, his protest being against a duty which, in his opinion, is unnecessarily high.

The Gazette points out the fact that under the late Canadian tariff the protection extended to our sugar refining industry was 8, 10 of a cent per pound, while in the United States, under the McKinley tariff (which is yet in force) the duty is only 5, 10 of a cent, notwithstanding which the price of refined sugar was lower last year in Canada than in the United States, which, it says, shows conclusively that Canadian refiners did not avail themselves of the protection afforded them.

The Gazette is usually very fair in its statements of facts but in this instance its allusion is to a single and isolated transaction wherein a comparatively small quantity of Canadian sugar was sold to the American trade at less than what the American refiners would sell for at that time. When that transaction occurred, the circumstances of which are quite fresh in the minds of many of the readers of the Gazette, the American sugar trust were manipulating the market, during which the Canadian refiners found an opening to sell a few hundred barrels of sugar to enable certain American dealers to fill some orders which they had previously accepted. These are substantially the facts upon which the Gazette builds its claim that "the price of refined sugar was lower in Canada last year than in the neighboring country, showing conclusively that our refiners did not avail themselves of the protection." The Gazette need not search for information regarding the average prices of Canadian sugar last year or any other year any further than the commercial reports in its own files; and if it will do this, taking the average price week by week during last year, including the transaction here alluded to, it will discover that the average price of sugar in Canada was quite as high or higher than in the United States, and that the refiners most certainly did avail themselves of the protection afforded them.

No one supposes that the Dominion Government will adopt the proposed American sugar tariff, even if it should become law. If the McKinley tariff is high, our tariff, until a few days ago was 60 per cent. higher, and even now it is 28 per cent. higher. The Gazette raises a warning finger, pointing to the fact that under the American tariff of 5/10 cent per pound "the sugar refining industry in the Republic is controlled by a trust second only in importance, influence and exactions to the Standard Oil monopoly;" and it quotes the New York Times as saying that the McKinley law "enabled that combination to extort from consumers a tribute yielding great dividends upon capital stock that is four-fifths water, and a surplus so large that the trust has discontinued its annual meetings in order that the