

we can gather their views from their speeches, to a re-adjustment of the sugar duties, but it so happens that the chief advocates of the sugar-refining interest, and of the shipping interest, which it is supposed would be benefited by an extension of the West India trade are strong free traders in other respects and wholly opposed to a national policy. Accordingly the protectionist party met the demand of the sugar-refiners, backed by the Quebec delegation, with an amendment in favour of a national policy. The sugar question has been already very fully discussed in our columns, and we shall therefore endeavour to be as brief as possible in our notice of the speeches on the subject. The sugar-refiners are most anxious to disclaim any desire whatever for *protection*, all they want is to be *fostered*. Unfortunately they are not in accord with one another. Mr. Wood of Quebec stated that "what he wanted was a cent a pound on all grades of sugar, and this was not protection." Most assuredly it is not, but those who have read Mr. Dustan's letters in this journal are aware that he is entirely opposed to a uniform duty on all grades. Mr. Wood cannot understand the interest of the sugar-refiners, or he would never have made such a declaration. Mr. Thomas White, although he commences his remarks on the sugar duties by declaring on the authority of Dundreary that "it is one of those questions which no fellow can understand"—has really placed the question more fairly before the public in his lecture than any of the speakers did at the Board of Trade. The tea and sugar duties stand on a different footing altogether from the other duties established by the tariff. Neither of these articles are manufactures, either of Canada or the United States, but, to give special encouragement to her shipping and her refineries the United States imposes a differential duty on tea imported via Canada, and grants a drawback on refined sugar exported to Canada. Now the European Governments came to a specific agreement on the subject of sugar bounties, viz., that they should be met by a surtax equivalent to the bounty granted. Such a surtax would entirely meet the case of the Canadian sugar-refiners, who had no difficulty in carrying on their works until the establishment of the increased bounty in the United States. Not long since the *Toronto Globe*, in the course of lengthened remarks on the whole subject, used the following language:

"Certain propositions may be laid down that will receive general assent:—First, that it is desirable to encourage, by all proper means, every class of manufactur-

ing industry; secondly, that a direct trade with the West Indies would prove a great benefit to the country; thirdly, that having regard to the importance of sugar as an article of general consumption in any fiscal arrangements, the public must be first considered; and, fourthly, that while it may not be a violation of political economy for the Government of one country to resist by counter-action the granting of bounties by a foreign Government, such action, as well as any change in the fiscal policy relating to sugar generally, should only be taken after the necessity has been clearly and absolutely demonstrated."

We are inclined to think that the necessity has been clearly and absolutely demonstrated. We need not, however, discuss the subject further. The remedy for the present depressed state of the refining interests is a surtax on sugar imported from any country which grants bounties on exportations and such surtax could easily be established. The extension of trade with the West Indies is a wholly different question, and, judging from the remarks of gentlemen who have good opportunities of knowing better, we should be inclined to think that very great ignorance prevails on the subject. The resolution moved by Mr. Wood of Quebec, called for efforts to obtain a more "uniform and less obstructive fiscal policy" on the part of the British West Indies "as applied to the Dominion." Now we should very much like to be informed what "obstructive fiscal policy" prevails in any part of the British West Indies. Not a member of the Board of Trade appears to have the slightest information on the subject, and the intelligent Secretary, who spoke soon after Mr. Wood, and whose pamphlet possibly led to the mistake, was silent on the point. The fact is there is no obstructive policy in any of the British West India Colonies and moreover there could be no object in establishing such a policy. The staple exports of those colonies are sugar, rum, molasses, coffee, and arrowroot, while the imports are chiefly food and clothing. There are no manufactures to protect except sugar. Mr. Stairs declares that *his policy* "would improve the sale of our dried fish," whereas the very reverse is the case. Already the British West Indies take all their dried fish from us, but, inasmuch as Messrs. Stairs & Dustan want to transfer the manufacture of sugar from the West Indies to Canada, their policy, by diminishing the number of hands employed in the manufacture of sugar in the West Indies, would diminish the consumption of both fish and lumber. Mr. Secretary Patterson, says "what the

"people of the West Indies wanted was "an honest free-trade with Canada, by which they could send us their raw sugars and take our fish, lumber and manufactures." Mr. Patterson is still under a complete delusion on this subject. What the people of the West Indies want is a trade with Canada, by which they could send us sugar, already manufactured by themselves, in exchange for our products, and not such refuse as our refiners are willing to take. We are very anxious to encourage our own manufactures, but we are as blind as bats when we consider the interests of our neighbors. The West Indians are just as anxious to promote the interests of their manufactures as any of our manufacturers can be. But we ignore all this,—we coolly ask the manufacturers of sugar in the West Indies to sacrifice the large capital invested in their works and to retrograde into producers of concrete or melado in order to encourage sugar-refiners in Canada.

We have no objection whatever to the application of the principle adopted in other cases of making a difference between the duty on manufactured articles ready for consumption, and quasi raw material requiring further manipulation. The policy of encouraging the importation both of raw materials and partially manufactured articles may be considered as established, and the present sugar duties would be in strict accordance with that policy, if the surtax on United States refined were imposed as it ought to have been, long since. The Quebec shipping interest would no doubt like to have a subsidized line of steamers to the West Indies, but really when we find a representative of that interest gravely declaring that we can supply the West Indies with boots and shoes, and matches, we are a little ashamed of our commercial representatives. Our readers, however, have had enough of the sugar-refiners grievance, which does not seem to have been much benefited by the discussions to which we have referred.

We have copied the proceedings on the subject of the Insolvent Act. There seems to be a general opinion that the act must be amended, and we hope that the Minister of Justice will give his special attention to the numerous complaints of the working of the present law. It is, however, vain to imagine that the sufferings which have chiefly led to complaints of the act can be removed either by its amendment or repeal. The President of the Board of Trade hit the chief blot in our commercial system when he said, "credit became too cheap and the