

**THE CANADIAN GROCER**  
& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY**  
\$200 PER YEAR

Published in the interest of Grocers, Cannery, Produce and Provision Dealers  
and General Storekeepers.

J. B. McLEAN & CO., (Ltd.)  
PUBLISHERS.

115 ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER STREET,  
MONTREAL.

6 WELLINGTON STREET WEST,  
TORONTO.

Vol. V.

TORONTO, MAY 29, 1891.

No. 22

**SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.**

As the design of THE CANADIAN GROCER is to benefit mutually all interested in the business, we would request all parties ordering goods or making purchases of any description from houses advertising with us to mention in their letter that such advertisement was noticed in THE CANADIAN GROCER.

**OUR MONTREAL OFFICE.**

Our Montreal Office is located at 115 St. Francois Xavier St. Our representative, Mr. G. Hector Clemes, will be pleased to have subscribers and advertisers call upon him there. He will also pay special attention to gathering business items and attending generally to the interests of this paper.

**NOTICE TO OUR ADVERTISERS.**

Of late, owing to the greatly increased circulation and number of pages of THE CANADIAN GROCER, we have to send part of the paper to press two days earlier than in the past. We would, therefore, ask our advertisers to have all changes of advertisements reach this office not later than Tuesday afternoon in order to insure insertion that week.

If the duty on raw sugar be removed, there will no doubt be a considerable quantity imported to go directly into consumption. The British West Indies, with whom we aim to establish trade connections, place considerable store upon their bright sugars as well as the grades for refining purposes, and any successful arrangements we make to attach the trade of Jamaica will probably have to involve the free access to our markets of those bright raws. The only consideration likely to stand in the way of removing the duty from these brighter grades of raw is the protection of our refiners.

Unless the trade should follow a different course from that taken by the majority of the grocers of the United States, the removal of the duty from sugar will be a matter of indifference to them. The cheapening of sugar ought to be favorable to the in-

creasing of profits, but it has not been so in the case of the bulk of the trade in the United States. Since the abolition of the duty in that country retailers have in most cases been selling as if they had only got a step closer towards a demonstration of the theorem that sugar should be sold without a profit or perhaps at a loss. The further the price recedes under economic changes, the more shadowy grows the profit on sugar. The experience of the United States trade is more than likely to be the experience of the Canadian trade if we too get our raw sugar duty-free. Why is this? It can be accounted for only by the law of contraries. Just when the circumstances are the most favorable for making a fair profit on sugar, the retailers' selling prices are the closest to the cost line. There is no other class of goods involving so much labor in the handling, there is no other on which shorter time is given or on which prompt payment is exacted. Why should it be a sacrifice commodity with the retailer? Unless the trade intend to recompense themselves more liberally for the outlay of money and trouble necessitated by the handling of sugar, they can have no object in desiring the removal of the duty. They should pull together to maintain prices that will compensate them for carrying sugar in stock. They cannot begin their preparations too soon, so as to be ready for any change that may be announced in the next few days.

Railways are nearly as potent to affect prices as are governments. An alteration in their freight rates raises or lowers prices as a change in the tariff does. They can therefore render local protection and impose a tax upon remoter competitors. An instance of this effect is exhibited in the British Columbia sugar trade. The freight on sugar

brought from the east has been advanced by the transcontinental lines. The rate was formerly \$1 per hundred-weight from Montreal, and \$1.15 per hundred-weight from Halifax. After the starting of the Vancouver refinery these rates were raised—the former 15c., the latter 20c. This, of course, is not likely to please either the eastern refiners or the British Columbia consumers. It is not the usual course of a railway to increase freight rates on any commodity from outside points when local production of that commodity is started. The railway in such cases not uncommonly lowers rates for the preservation of its own carrying trade. It is anomalous in this case that it does the very opposite. Such a favoring policy would seem to be inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that the railway company owned the refinery. What would further lend probability to that supposition is the fact that the prices of Vancouver granulated are quoted lower at Winnipeg than they are at Vancouver, which seems again to be due to freight discrimination in favor of Vancouver sugar, which begins to be met at Winnipeg by the strongest competition from the east.

The failures have been very much fewer among the Canadian grocery trade this spring and during the latter part of the past winter than they have been in the corresponding part of past years. The business done has also been considerably below the average. These two facts appear not to go well together, as failures are supposed to be numerous according as business is dull. But the dullness of trade is not the supreme cause of failures among grocers. With a certain class there is no time so prolific of failures as when business is liveliest. Then they are prodigal of profits, they slaughter prices unsparingly and wax poorer the more they do. There are more of this class fail probably in good times than in bad times. The dullness of trade has taught men to be conservative for several months past, and the strain of shortened time has been helpful in enforcing the lesson.