

tax on land, but a tax paid by the consumer. Undoubtedly, by limiting consumption, it effects the distribution of crops, and is a grievance to that extent, but to that extent only.

Then I must ask, why it is that the House refuses to make any alteration in the existing Corn-laws. Is that refusal from a fear of lowering the price of corn? My own opinion is (and I do not state it now for the first time), that by a change the prices, on an average of years, would not be much lower than at present; it is my firm belief, that wheat could not be imported to be laid in at 30s., 32s., or 33s. per quarter, as has been most erroneously asserted—that is, in my judgment, perfectly out of the question; if there were a regular demand for it, and the supply was steadily taken, it would be impossible, from any calculation that has been made, that wheat could be brought into this country under 40s. or 50s. per quarter. The House ought to remember, that this country has this circumstance to contend with, that the farther from rivers or the sea shore, or other means of communication, we go to procure our supplies, the greater will be the expense; and not only a greater expense according to common progression, but according to an infinitely increasing progression. In my travels I have known, in a province of Russia, for instance, wheat sell at 5s. per quarter, but such was the expense of carriage and the charges of transport, that it could not be carried to a neighbouring province at a less price than 20s. and 25s. It is not many years ago since, in that very country, which forms such a bugbear to honourable gentlemen opposite, I mean the south of Russia, when the crops failed it was found to be cheaper to send the population to the food in a distant province, than to transport the food to them! But if honourable members are so afraid of lowering the price, I must be permitted to ask them to go back, and see how little their fears on other subjects have been justified by the events which have ensued. I will, as an instance, take the article of Wool. Honourable members will remember the debates which took place, when a proposal was made to admit foreign wool into this country, and when it was declared by a noble friend of mine in another place, that the sheep farmers of this country would be utterly and entirely ruined, that it would be impossible for them to compete with those flocks which produced wool so cheaply abroad. Now, what was the result? Why, that the sheep farmer in this country now receives a higher price for his wool than he did before the change took place.

This will appear from the following statement of the aver-