

for ten years under the operation of this classified system, but Parliament had not had it in its power between 1851 and 1861 to 85 give the consumer any such signal and decisive boon as it had conferred between 1841 and 1851, yet the growth of consumption had by no means stopped, but it had increased from 26½ to 35½ lbs., and in 1863—although that was a year of scarcity—it had increased to 35½ lbs. per head. 90

#### COBDEN'S OPINION OF CLASSIFIED DUTIES.

Neither can it be said that the system of classification has been condemned by authority. I speak in the presence of the hon. member for Rochdale, who, among living men on a question of free trade, has not only a right to be heard, but to claim the first 95 place. (Hear, hear.) He has been manfully challenged by his constituents—I am revealing no secret now, but only repeating what I have seen in the newspapers—and he has answered them like a man.

*His answers is to the effect that it is his opinion that ad valorem 100 duties, or an approximation to that system, are not in point of principle to be condemned. I say in point of principle, because in the application of that principle to practice there are several considerations which must govern our proceedings.*

On this question the authority of the *Economist* is, everybody 105 must admit, very high, and, indeed, independent of the *Economist*, the literature on the subject has been perfectly enormous. (A laugh.) To keep abreast of that literature, I laboured and struggled as long as I could, and until within the last fortnight, with entire success. Up to that time, I believe, I conscientiously placed myself 110 on a level with the press of the country, so far as the sugar duties are concerned, but the last fortnight beat me hollow (laughter)—without preventing me at the same time from seeing the very able publication of Professor Leone Levi, of King's College, who without being actuated by any bias on the subject, distinctly affirms the 115 principle of a classified duty on sugar.

Speaking in this House, however, I may allude to an authority on the question to which it will perhaps be deemed more to the purpose that I should refer. A select committee was appointed on the motion of my hon. friend, the member for the 120 city of London, which was constituted with great care, and which was presided over by my right hon. friend now the Secretary for the Colonies, and that committee, after a patient and impartial investigation of the question under their consideration, pronounced distinctly in favour of the present system of classifying sugar. 125

Nor is that all, for last year we had what may be called an international discussion on the subject. Chosen officers from the countries most interested in the sugar trade—namely, England, France, Belgium, and Holland—met in Paris to discuss the matter ;