

of attracting to the markets of this country a large quantity of sugar which would otherwise find its way to other countries, and consequently of mitigating any inconvenience we might feel. It may be said that increased price has done its work, and very considerably restrained consumption; and that, consequently, the stock on which we have to operate, offers to us a by no means unsatisfactory prospect. On the last day of February, 1862, the stock of sugar in the country was 1,707,000 cwt.; in 1862 it had risen to 2,038,000 cwt., and in 1864 it was 2,272,000 cwt., so that as regards stock, we are actually in excess over preceding years, and it is only what is known with respect to the late crops which makes us apprehend that on the whole we cannot have an abundant supply.

I come now to the subject which is the most formidable part of my task. I have said that we propose to deal with the sugar duties. How are we to deal with them? There arises here a question which is grave in two senses—it is grave in the sense of being important, and it is grave, also I am afraid, in the sense of being dull. The question whether sugar is to be taxed on a uniform or classified duties, is one of great fiscal moment and great importance to an immense amount of trade and breadth of cultivation throughout the world. I am bound, therefore, to treat it as thoroughly and conclusively as I can. On the other hand, it is a subject which, as to details, abounds, I may say, in every element of repulsiveness. It is bad enough to talk about "Muscovado," "treacle," and "molasses;" it is a great deal worse to talk of "Dutch numbers," "glycose," "core," and "jaggery" (laughter), and that is the technical phraseology of the sugar duties. I will endeavour to avoid it as much as I can, and to state, intelligibly, the views of the Government on the subject.

At present we have classified duties upon sugar—approved by many—a scandal and offence to many more. Now, I am not able to deny, that a classified duty has been the growth of experience. When the sugar-market of this country was the monopoly of the colonial producer, we had a system of uniform duty. That system of uniform duty was gradually modified and departed from in proportion as our market was opened to all the sugars of the world, and as we found that we had to deal with a multitude of varieties of classes of sugar, of which previously little or nothing had been known, I am not able to say that this system of classified duty has been condemned by experience.

Let us look at the consumption of sugar per head of the population. In 1841, which was, however, a period of relative scarcity, the consumption of sugar was, 17 lbs. per head. In 1851, when there had been a change to a period of almost entire free trade, the consumption had risen to 26½ lbs. per head. In 1861 we had been