

to be drawn between solid and liquid sugars. When it becomes the interest of a man to narrow the line between these two classes the only difference being that the one contains more moisture than the other, you will not be able to mark the distinction between
 225 them. One principle governs the whole matter. *If you are to have a uniform duty, it must be on the footing of a principle which will cover alike the cane juice as expressed from the cane, and the refined sugar consumed at the tables of our families.* The question, therefore, really lies between a uniform duty and a
 230 classified duty founded on the principle of the present scale.

How, then, do we deal with the point? I deal with it in the first place by making an admission. I do not contend that the present scale is a perfect one. Though authority is in favor of the principle of the present system, yet the Government would not, I
 235 admit, be justified in sheltering themselves under that authority, particularly when it is borne in mind that it was pointed out by a committee that the existing scale operated unjustly at two points. It constitutes a *prohibitive duty on the lower descriptions of sugar which may come here to be refined for consumption*, and operates
 240 severely, also, on the higher descriptions of unrefined sugar which come from the Mauritius, the East Indies, and elsewhere.

In dealing with the subject, I think we ought to come to the resolution, that no class interests ought to govern the question, and I admit that, although there would be difficulties connected with
 245 the right of drawbacks in the event of our adopting a uniform rate of duty, yet those difficulties may not be sufficient to call upon us to reject that principle, if, in other respects, we should come to the conclusion that it was sound. The proposition which I lay down, and which I invite the Committee to proceed on, is that the
 250 form of our duty should be *such as will least interfere with the natural course of trade, (hear, hear), and be the least open to the charge of offering to the producer or manufacturer a premium on doing something different from that which he would do if there were no duty at all.* Now, let us try how we are to proceed on that prin-
 255 ciple. I am quite willing to accept the doctrine laid down by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and in which the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce concurred. I received the other day an address from Manchester, to which was attached a name distinguished in the annals of free trade—that of Mr. Ashworth—and
 260 which I think contains sound doctrine on this question. It says:

"Your memorialists are most desirous that the duties on sugar should be fixed at as low a rate as possible, and that in the interests of the consumer no impediments should be opposed to the importation of any class of sugar, from the very lowest quality to the
 265 finest loaf sugar; and in order that no one class of persons should be protected at the expense of another, it is, in the opinion of your