

the Opposition will say that that decision is good law. We agree that it is bad law.

Mr. LAURIER. If the law is such that the judges make it bad, I think we had better amend the law.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). This is done every year in the Imperial Parliament. Without waiting to carry the case to the ultimate court, Parliament removes any doubt as to the meaning of the statute by a declaratory Act. Take, for instance, the Kyne case, in which on a material point the court took a view contrary to that Parliament had entertained. Parliament immediately passed a declaratory Act without a single dissenting voice. Surely, it would be better that we should have an Act of half a dozen lines declaring how we understand that the ballot should be marked, rather than have the judges, in perhaps twenty different constituencies, through a misconstruction of the law, disfranchising voters and returning the candidates of the minority.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. With great difference, I differ with the hon. gentleman. Where the law is so clear.—

Mr. LAURIER. Do you call it clear when the judges misinterpret it?

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Upon my word, I do not think that we could pass a declaratory Act that would be any clearer than the law as it now stands.

Mr. LAURIER. Better impeach the judge then.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I have nothing to do with the judge, nor has the hon. gentleman. At any rate, here is a matter of good faith pending at this stage. I do submit, that if we wish to change that law, this is not the time to discuss the change. That, of course, is most humbly submitted. I submitted a similar opinion the other day, with some confidence, which was not accepted in the proper spirit. But I do say that if hon. gentlemen in this House do not approve of the law as it stands, we cannot in Committee of Supply, certainly with consideration for economy of time, discuss amendments. A few moments ago we discovered from "Hansard" that the House was seized of the fact that \$2,500 was agreed upon with the patentee as the consideration for the adoption of that idea, the Government asked power from Parliament to adopt it and we unanimously adopted it. No matter what we may think, and I admit there is a good deal of room for discussion as to the advisability of continuing this, I again submit that so far as that item is concerned we are bound to vote that money and pay it like men. If the hon. gentleman from Bothwell thinks the law ought to be changed, there is a very easy way to do it.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman's position. Very frequently casual observations are flung out in the course of debate to which nobody pays attention and cannot be expected to pay attention, until the matter is brought before them in a substantive form. When we are being asked to pay over a disproportionate sum of money for what I regard as an extremely trifling improvement—

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. For the sum named at the time.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. It was not brought down here, and I cannot agree for a moment that a casual statement, whether made by the leader of the House or anybody else in that way, is to be regarded as binding the House to vote public money. It would be a dangerous doctrine to allow to prevail. I never supposed for an instant, from such a statement as the hon. gentleman has read, that we were going to be asked to pay for any such thing as this. I supposed it was for some complicated invention in a ballot box, not a mere modification of the ordinary ballot slip, as I now discover it to be. But whether that be the case or not, I do not think the House should agree that any such statements as the hon. gentleman has quoted can be regarded as binding on the House until the matter is properly submitted to them and discussed. It does appear to me that the late Minister of Justice was under a very grave misconception as to the value of this invention when he agreed to pay any such sum, or promised, which was all he could do, to recommend it to Parliament. All such declarations made by the Government are subject to revision here.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Of course, that is why it is here now.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. But the hon. gentleman tells us we are bound to pay it, and that is where I take issue with him. I do not consider myself bound in honour by a casual statement made by any or all the hon. gentlemen as to what the cost of a particular invention may be. I will consider that when a sum of money is brought down in the shape of a distinct vote, I entirely repudiate the idea that because such a statement may have been made at three o'clock in the morning when everybody was asleep, or half asleep, and impatient to get away, and may not have been heard by more than the hon. gentleman, and two or three of his colleagues—

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. gentleman himself was awake, because I see he spoke before and after this item.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Possibly I may have been, but certainly I did not understand that we were to be asked to pay