

before any measure could be presented to Parliament a most careful and painstaking study of the revenue wants of the country would have to be made. There were other considerations; for instance, with regard to enforcement, the date of the act coming into force, etc. All these matters would have to be carefully considered and studied before a bill could be presented to Parliament. The deputation would, therefore, realize that they could not expect the Government to make a pledge on this question for the present session. With regard to the future, he knew what they would desire him to say, but he must tell them frankly that he could make no pledge. He said that out of respect to them. He could do as some others are said to have done, he could listen to them and give them a pledge and then walk out of it with both arms akimbo; but he would be false to them and false to those whom they represented if he were to do so. Parliament has been going upon certain lines with regard to the task of ascertaining what this great reform involves. A commission has been sitting for the last three years and taking evidence which would not be found very instructive to the members of the deputation, for the obvious reason that they had studied the question half a life-time, and many of them knew more about it than half the witnesses examined. But for the mass of the people of this country the report would be of great value. He did not claim to be so enlightened on the questions involved in the inquiry as to say he would not be instructed by the information contained in the report. As regards the great financial interests involved, if the reform was of the great importance which it was represented to be, measures must be devised for grappling with that difficulty. A remark had been made which seemed to imply impatience in the minds of the deputation at the delay which had taken place. Sir John