

that because a board discusses certain facts that the action indicated as necessary to bring about a reduction or an increase to the figures mentioned will be taken. That is a matter to be settled by the Minister of Finance; that is a matter which he submits to his colleagues in the government.

As my hon. friend will probably remember, the Advisory Board on Tariff and Taxation never made a single finding of fact which was communicated to the people of this country, nor did it give any advice which was communicated in any formal way to the people. That is exactly what we are endeavouring to avoid. When the hon. member for Weyburn referred to the difficulties he experienced in understanding this bill, and mentioned the attitude of the consumers league, he must have known that that body sent out literature during the last elections. Everywhere I went in the province of Alberta I came across the literature sent out by the then Minister of the Interior. I do not make any objection so far as the use of the frank is concerned, because that is a privilege granted by parliament. I am fair enough to say that that was the right of the hon. member. But when the hon. member for Weyburn and other hon. members try to attribute to this measure a motive, shall I say, other than that which is the purpose of the legislation, then they are entirely wrong. This legislation means exactly what it says. It is not an attempt to fasten a high tariff policy on this country, it is merely to create a body which will find the fact, and on that fact the government will take the action which it thinks desirable. That is policy, and that is politics. That is the action which will determine the life or death of governments. This measure is entirely separate from that, and if we fail in a very sincere and earnest effort to get this matter out of the realm of politics, we shall know at least that we endeavoured to create a judicial tribunal to determine the facts. I believe that possible, despite the cynical smiles of hon. members opposite. We are going to try; if we fail, at least we shall have tried.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Chairman, just a few words in connection with the differences which my right hon. friend would have the committee believe existed between him and me as a result of the discussion which took place just before the six o'clock recess. My right hon. friend while in opposition had laid down the principle that one parliament had not the right to bind subsequent parliaments.

Mr. BENNETT: With respect to expenditures.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I think that principle is a sound one. My right hon. friend went on to say that I did not follow him in applying that principle. I have been thinking over this matter and I wish to tell my right hon. friend that the party to which I belong, while in office did follow that principle. I believe I can recall to his mind the circumstances of the case. The subject then before the house was an appropriation for the Federal District Commission. We were asking this house to vote a large sum of money to enable the government to expropriate what was then known as the Russell House block, the Russell theatre and other adjoining buildings. The appropriation asked for amounted to something like two or three millions of dollars, and our first thought was not to put the whole burden on the then existing parliament but to spread it over a series of years. My right hon. friend took exception to that and said that he did not think we had any right to bind subsequent parliaments. Upon reconsideration we decided to act in accordance with the principle laid down by the right hon. gentleman; and assume the whole obligation during our own parliament. We therefore undertook to provide that two or three millions of dollars out of current revenue. That is what we did. There was another relatively insignificant amount for the purpose of meeting the cost of maintaining improvements on the driveway, an annual expenditure that in the nature of things no one would think of questioning, an annual expenditure that I believe with respect to the Ottawa Improvement Commission had previously been voted for a period of years. I do not think that small amount—

Mr. BENNETT: It was \$300,000.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: For the entire period, not per annum. I have forgotten the Latin phrase—the law does not concern itself about little things.

Mr. BENNETT: De minimis non curat lex.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes. Those were small matters to which we did not think a big man like my right hon. friend would take any exception. As long as we adhered to the broad principle of not obligating future parliaments in the matter of millions, considering the object, we did not see we were violating any fundamental principle by asking for the payment of a small annual amount over a series of years. This did not