

comes out on a page of the Auditor General's Report, and requires no further comment. But where the shoe pinches is here, that in thousands of instances the expenditure is indefensible, and they know it, but they do not want the public to know it. Now, I venture to ask the hon. gentleman himself, who has had a large experience in the Public Accounts Committee, what position that committee would be in to-day if we had not the Auditor General's Report before us? We get two days out of the week for that committee, at the latter end of the session, with a great deal of trouble. We sit for two hours, and it takes five or six sessions to go through any large inquiry at all, and I say that if the details of the expenditure were not published in the Auditor General's report, if we had to move for them, and wait until they were brought down from the Public Accounts Committee, as formerly had to be done, all audit and all criticism of public expenditure would be avoided. The hon. gentleman would then live in his political Utopia; he could spend what he liked, and challenge hon. gentlemen to show how it was extravagant.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. gentleman asks me a question; does he want an answer?

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I am replying to the hon. gentleman's statement that the publication of the items generates suspicion in the minds of the reader, and I wish to repeat again that if the expenditure has been just and fair, or within the limit of what is just and fair, no suspicion can be generated; everybody who wishes to defend the expenditure can do it, because the purpose for which it was expended, the amount which was expended, the time it was expended, and the person to whom it is paid, are all published.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. gentleman says that I made that statement. I know he does not wish to misrepresent me, and I wish to say that I was referring particularly to the police account. I did not say that the publication of the account misrepresented the facts; I said that the manner in which it was published did misrepresent the facts, and cause an unfair suspicion, and I instanced one particular case, the case of gloves. But I did not make the general statement that the fact of making the publication created an unfair suspicion.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I am willing to accept the hon. gentleman's withdrawal, and I am willing to let the statement he made with respect to the gloves, go for what it was worth. But I want to ask the House this: If the Minister of Justice believes, as he says to-night he does, that the manner in which that expenditure is set out in the Auditor General's Report is

unfair, how is it that with the Auditor General attending every meeting of the Public Accounts Committee for years back, the hon. gentleman, with the book in his hand, has never called the attention of the committee or of the Auditor General to the fault? How is it that he has not called upon the Auditor General where he can answer for himself, and rise in the Public Accounts Committee, and explain? Instead of that, the hon. gentleman gets up in this House, where the mouth of the Auditor General is shut, and he can make no reply, and makes a charge which is calculated to undermine his character for impartiality. I venture to tell the hon. gentleman that the position he took to-night is an undignified one, as well as an unjust one. Now, Sir, the hon. gentleman in quoting a phrase which he read from the evidence given in England, in this inquiry, said: "The duty of the Auditor should be a passive duty." Well, Sir, in the sense that the Auditor General is not to give instructions to the Government, no one disputes that position. The Government have not to give instructions to him in his own sphere; he is independent of the Government, just as the Government is independent of him. He has been made so by Parliament, and it will be a dangerous step when the Government asks their parliamentary majority to withdraw that independence from the Auditor General; it will be a dangerous day for the tax-payer of this country when the only check upon extravagant expenditure is taken away. I venture to submit this to the House, that when the hon. gentleman made use of that expression that the Auditor should be a passive Auditor, his object was to compel him to act with just such a staff as the Government choose to give him, whether that staff is an efficient one or an inefficient one.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Hear, hear.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) The hon. gentleman cheers that. That shows I am right. Very well, now let us examine where this is gong to end. Suppose, for instance, that the hon. gentleman supplies him with an inefficient staff, and the Auditor General finds that he cannot discharge his duties as prescribed by statute with the staff given him. Still, my hon. friend would say to him: You must remain perfectly passive, with the knowledge that you are not discharging the duty which you are paid to discharge; you are not to say a word, you are not to come to Parliament with a complaint. I charge that if the hon. gentleman's argument was carried to a logical conclusion the result would be this, that you would destroy the efficiency of the Auditor General's Department by an indirect blow, by a stab below the ribs; you would do that which you have not the courage to do openly. Now, Sir, I was sur-