

No doubt it was the intention of the hon. member for South Oxford, as it has been the intention of Parliament ever since, not that politicians as such should secure appointments to the office of Auditor General, but that the responsible executive of this Government should have the right of appointment to that office. That has never been questioned in this Parliament up to to-day, and we are to learn from this impartial officer, we are to learn from this Auditor, if you please, to-day that ever since 1867 there has been something radically wrong, and that only political considerations prevailed in the first appointment, either to his office, or any office of any other department. I think that is an overdrawn statement, even regarding the system under which we live and under which this country is governed. Party men, hon. gentlemen opposite me to-day, may have that opinion, but that is not a fair or impartial judgment of the considerations that prevail in appointments to office. Many good cases could be cited to illustrate the contrary. Then, again, he says :

Supposing there were a change of government to-morrow, what efficiency would there be in the Audit Office if the incomers could put their friends, with short experience, and, therefore, insufficient knowledge of the more important work of the office, over the heads of those who have always done their duty, and have full knowledge of it ?

I call attention to that in order to put in a stronger light the authorities to which I will refer later in regard to the sphere and the duties of the Auditor General. Again, there is a sentence to which the Minister of Finance, the leader of the Government in this House, referred to to-day, where the Auditor says :

As long as your petitioner is in his present office, no matter what party holds the reins of power, every effort will be made to keep the financial affairs right, and in cases where it is impossible to do that, to make it as clear as possible to the tax-payers of the country wherein, in his opinion, the wrong consists.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask how it can be that the Auditor General should attempt to keep the financial affairs of this country right ? I say that the tax-payers of this country look at present to the executive to keep the financial affairs right. I say that the Opposition are charged with the duty of seeing that the executive perform those duties themselves, and the Opposition would be the first to deride, and sneer at, and laugh down any executive that attempted to shield themselves behind the Auditor General, and to say that Parliament had put that responsibility upon him as supervisor. But would the Auditor General like to appear as the responsible supervisor, for instance, of the charges, whether exaggerated or otherwise, that have been levelled against the executive in regard to the conduct of financial affairs of this country from 1878 down to this date ?

We are attacked, day in and day out, because of crass negligence, as it is alleged, by hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to the conduct of financial affairs. We are charged with having permitted large sums of money being improperly taken from the public treasury ; we are charged with having allowed thieves to break in and steal.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Some hon. members say, "Hear, hear." Thank God, these charges have not been founded upon facts.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. These charges, I say, have not been founded upon facts. But suppose they were, as hon. gentlemen by their derisive cries of "Hear, hear." would intimate, would they take it as an answer from us that the Auditor General neglected his duties, that he did not exercise every effort to keep the financial affairs right ? They know that if there is anything in half the cases they have urged before Parliament, that statement of the Auditor General would bring upon him a responsibility in connection with which he would occupy a very humiliating position, because, notwithstanding what he says of his powers and functions, if the statement of hon. gentlemen opposite be right, he is the man who is guilty, for he never smelled or thought of the wrong-doings those hon. gentlemen have tried to urge in this House, and before the country as having been committed by the Government of the day. With all the detectives at his command, with all the efforts to pry into this department, and into that department, it is the great boast of hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to their so-called scandals, that they, out of their own peculiar ingenuity, and with all their own peculiar means, unaided by the Government or any officer connected with the Government, unaided by this parliamentary officer, the Auditor General, or any one else, got upon the track of the guilty, and they proposed in their own particular way, to ferret out these iniquities and lay them bare. I have referred to some of the extraordinary statements most unfortunately put into that document, statements that will not, unfortunately for this country, and for this Parliament, leave him in as strong a position as he was before he put his name to those statements. But I should like the House, in order to appreciate some of the criticisms that I venture to make, to hear from the Auditor General himself what he thought his proper functions were, not on the eve of a general election, mark you, Mr. Speaker, not at a critical time, as this may possibly be, but when he came to that office with good intentions, when he had studied, as no doubt, judging from his report, he had studied the legislation from which our