

What induced me to refer to it was this: The hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) almost immediately—perhaps a day had elapsed, or the petition had just been read at the Table—on this motion, proposed to advert to that petition. And that was what was running in my mind, and the rule seems to refer to that. The immediate discussion of the petition and—

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). It was the next day.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER—and, therefore, my reference to it was unhappy, as to that point of order, because it relates evidently to the pressing forward immediately of a petition of that character for consideration. However, the other remarks in regard to the irregularity of the course taken I will insist upon. Now, Mr. Speaker, I was referring to some of the statements in the petition, this extraordinary document of the Auditor General. I promised to emphasize from a point of view of the Auditor General in England and the Auditor General in Canada the fact that the Auditor General's course was a course not contemplated by the legislature, and not justified by the practice obtaining in these matters; and, to show that he had unfortunately misapprehended his functions and the responsibility resting upon him. I think his course unfortunate, not only from his point of view, but in every sense, in view of his high and important office. I do not suppose there will be any dispute about this, however much we may differ about the facts—that nothing would be more unfortunate for the Parliament of Canada, and for the Audit Department, than that it should appear that the Auditor General had departed from the impartial position he should occupy. His duties, it may be said, are in some respects ministerial, and, in others, judicial. And the moment it can be feared even, by the people of this country—to say nothing of the political parties, leaving them aside for the moment—that he is assuming a position of antagonism to the Government, or sympathizing with the party on either side of the House, the usefulness of his office would be gone; his usefulness, at any rate, would be gone. And it is with these ideas solely that I approach the criticism of this petition. To make his position strong with the country and strong with Parliament, there should be nothing that would induce a reasonable mind to assume that he wished to either attack or defend the Government of the day. To attack any party is none of his business; he is to be absolutely impartial. Now, he knows that before he presents this petition the responsibilities that lie upon the executive. He knows that the executive must stand or fall according to the opinion of this House, and, so eager is he for a verdict that he is induced, in addition

to other sentences to which I have referred, to write as follows:—

No fair-minded man can conclude that the Audit Office clerks should remain at \$1,074, while the general service is at \$1,228, and is advancing. The innuendo in that sentence is obvious: the attack is obvious. And, Mr. Speaker, that innuendo is resisted and resented, and that attack, as will be seen from the observations of the Minister of Finance, can be easily met, and easily dealt with. But the Auditor General goes on to say:

It should not be left to the executive of the day to determine the number of employees of the Audit Office, and particularly the number of their respective grades.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Parliament thought otherwise when the Bill establishing the audit office was passed, and the Government of that time, under whom the audit office was constituted, thought differently. Parliament, from that day down to this, has thought otherwise. And, in assuming the position of a critic, the Auditor General is going altogether outside of his functions that Parliament intended that he should discharge. He says further:

That should be done by Parliament.

But he does not add, as he apparently assumes, that this should be done by Parliament upon the inspiration of the Auditor General, or upon his advice. He goes on to say:

If the Auditor General does his duty, he and his staff will be unpopular with the Government, no matter what may be the political complexion of the dominant party.

I say that no more unfortunate sentence could come from the pen of the Auditor General; no more unjustifiable sentence, under the circumstances, could be written by him. It shows that he has absolutely mistaken his duty and his position. Why should he say, forsooth, that if he does his duty, he and his staff will be unpopular with the Government? Why should he offer, or venture, or dare to come to this House with such an assertion? I might almost term it an impudent assertion, in view of the position he is understood to occupy in connection with the legislation that this Parliament has decided to adopt, and in view of his experience as detailed by the Minister of Finance. Why did he venture such a remark? Upon what foundation could such a remark rest? Where has he ascertained that by doing his duty he became unpopular with this Government? Sir, I say, in corroboration of the statement of the Minister of Finance, that ever since I have been a member of the Government, I have never known the Minister of Finance, in Council or out of it, do otherwise than strengthen and fortify the position of the Auditor General, as his position was understood in the light of