

gloves, for other purposes, cost much cheaper; but in the Auditor General's Report, ordinary gloves apparently go in at the same price as the special article. And so all the way through. To my mind, if the public and Parliament want that information, they want it in full, and it ought to be put in the report as received by the Auditor General from the department. It ought not to be put in as his clerks are pleased to consider will suffice. Time and again, page after page, there are the most unfair representations that could possibly be made. The hon. gentleman referred to the question of superannuation. I think the Minister of Finance explained how much there is in the theory of the Auditor General on that subject. Those who are on that list connected with his office have died; those connected with the Finance Department on the list have not. The promotion of men has been more rapid in the Auditor General's Department, as I am informed, than in any other in the service of the Government, taking the clerks all round. What complaint can be founded on that? As regards the cutting down of the expenditure, nearly every department has had its expenditure cut down this year, as has been said more than once. But the only point on which the hon. member for South Oxford seemed to dwell was this question of the \$500 or so in connection with clerical assistance. It is well known that the Auditor General and the clerks of his department, instead of doing this work which he thinks will be in arrears, attend needlessly the Committee of Public Accounts which sits twice a week, even when that committee is not engaged in any system of audit but in an inquiry into the policy and the manner of carrying on our public works. You will find at every meeting present the Auditor General himself and one of his clerks. A different course pursued by him would, I am satisfied, enable him to do much of the work he complains will not be done if he does not receive this \$500 additional and have one or two promotions made. Let me quote one or two extracts from the petition to show that the Auditor General has most unduly misconceived his responsibilities and his duties as such. He says:

That it is quite useless to make the Auditor General a parliamentary officer with the object of securing an independent examination of the expenditure of \$40,000,000 and of the collection of the same amount of revenue, as well as of giving an intelligible statement in detail of all, while there is left entirely in the hands of those whose financial transactions he is to criticise, the power to give or withhold assistance, and the power to promote the clerks or keep them for ever in the same position.

That statement shows that he does not properly appreciate his duties in that connection. What are they? It is not for him to tell us how we are to establish an audit office, how we are to amend the Act, or

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how we are to get the most perfect system of audit, unless we ask him. He is simply what the founder of the system in England has called a "passive officer." He is an officer who simply puts facts before Parliament, and it is his duty to confine himself to the facts. If the staff at his disposal was only able to put so much work before Parliament, he would place that work before Parliament. Then if he were asked by the Public Accounts Committee why he did not investigate further, he could make his reply: I did all I could with the staff at my command. He would then be examined as to the work his staff were employed upon, and it would be for the committee to report to the House that the audit office was not sufficiently manned, or some other action would be taken. That is the manner in which the audit office ought to speak, and not by criticising. It is not, according to English precedent, for the audit office to take a position which makes it an ally of the members of the Opposition and causes it to speak from the Opposition benches. The object of the audit office is simply to ascertain the naked facts and leave them for Parliament to consider or discuss. In that way alone would the Auditor General properly fill the position he holds—that is, if he is to be of service to any government and not to be, as he thinks necessary, hostile to or unpopular with any government. If he does his duty properly, it is to the disgrace and discredit of the Government that he should be unpopular. If he performs his duty as laid down by Parliament, under directions given him by the Public Accounts Committee, he does what any government should be grateful to him for doing; but if he steps outside of that, in the way he is attempting to do now, and goes beyond his duty, he creates the suspicion, in the minds of many in the country, that he has some object in making these criticisms and attacks on the Government. I propose not only to submit this petition to the test of eminent experts on the question in England, but to the opinion which the same Auditor General himself formed of his public duties as far back as 1879, when he first assumed the position, and also to the opinion given at that time from the Department of Justice, written by Mr. Lash, who was then Deputy Minister of Justice.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Mr. Speaker, before I resume the observations that I ventured to begin before the House rose, I would like to add to what I said in referring to Rule 86. Of course, the Government did not take any objection, nor did any member of the House, to the consideration of this petition; and, perhaps, I went too far in the application of that rule.