

was making every endeavour to cut down expenses ; and what is the complaint ? That the Auditor General, in this general cutting down, which affects every department, has lost \$500 with which to employ special clerks. That is the whole sum and substance of it. Hon. gentlemen opposite need not expect it to go forth to the world, that the Auditor General has stated in this petition that he is hampered in his work, or that he finds difficulty in criticising the Government, or that he has not hands enough with which to do his work. No statement of that kind is made. The Auditor General goes out of his way to say, as he should say, and as it was perfectly proper for him to say :

Your petitioner does not want it to be understood that he complains about the treatment of this office until the last year or two. The success of the office, such as it is, has been brought about in a great measure by Ministers who supported it when it was placed on its present basis, particularly by Sir John Macdonald.

So that the Auditor General tells you that during all these years he has been handsomely supported in his office by the Ministers of the Conservative party, and that it is only as to the last year or two, when we have found the stress of falling revenue obliging us to cut down expenses, that he begins to complain almost as badly as an ordinary politician would, that he has not enough to pay his extra clerks. That is the sum and substance of the matter. I do not propose to detain the House with any further argument, except to restate the position I take—that this petition is a bad precedent, a precedent that will come home to roost some day in quarters where it is not anticipated ; that the Auditor General was badly advised, whoever advised him, when he made this petition ; and that substantially there is no grievance complained of, and nothing suggested but a committee to go into a fishing excursion in connection with this matter. I beg to state along with the Minister of Justice, that there is not the slightest wish on the part of the Government to do anything in this matter other than to uphold what we consider to be the ancient practice and just privileges of this House and the executive Government which leads it.

Mr. LAURIER. Mr. Speaker, I have only a few observations to offer to the House on this occasion, and I would not have opened my mouth at all were it not for the fact that a doctrine altogether inadmissible in my judgment has pervaded all the speeches which we have heard from hon. gentlemen opposite on this question. In the first place, I think it is to be deplored that the spirit in which the hon. member for Bothwell approached this question has not been at all reciprocated by the hon. gentlemen who have spoken on the other side of the House. My hon. friend from Bothwell presented the question, which undoubtedly is a very important one, not so much in regard to the

particular matters referred to as in regard to the principle involved, in a calm, temperate and judicial manner ; and I think the judgment of the House must be that the answer given on the other side was not at all in the same spirit. That is to be deprecated ; but what is more to be deprecated, in my opinion—and this is the only reason why I offer any observations to the House—is the doctrine which has been asserted, that the Auditor General is nothing more than an officer of this Government. Sir, this is a very important distinction to be made. If the Auditor General were nothing more than an officer of the Government, I quite agree with the Minister of Militia, that the petition which he presented to the House would be worse than unwarranted, and should not be even received by this House. But, if, on the other hand, the Auditor General is not an officer of the Government, but an officer of this House, independent of the Government and directly responsible to Parliament, and to nobody else, then this petition was quite within his rights. If he felt that he was not properly treated, or that he had a grievance, he had the right, like every other subject of Her Majesty, of petitioning Parliament. This is the whole question. Now, two reasons have been given for the statement, unheard of until this evening that the Auditor General is simply an officer of this Government. The first reason is that he is appointed by the Governor in Council. That is true ; but the Governor in Council who appoints him has no authority over him. As to all the other officers appointed by the Governor in Council who are officers of this Government, the power which appoints has the power to remove. That is what constitutes an officer of the Government. But when an officer is appointed by the Government whom the Government has no power to remove, manifestly the intention of the law is that that officer should not be responsible to the Government. Judges are not appointed by the Governor in Council, in exactly the same manner as the Auditor General ; but they cannot be removed by the Government. They can be removed only by a vote of this House, and not an ordinary vote, but by a vote recorded in a certain manner and with certain formalities observed. Another reason put forward in support of the contention that the Auditor General is an officer of the Government is that he has not the power to appoint his own clerks. The same reasoning would apply to the judges. I do not know of any judge appointed by this Government who has the power of appointing his own clerk. The judges of the Supreme Court have not that power.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Did the hon. gentleman ever hear of a judge petitioning Parliament for a clerk ?

Mr. LAURIER. I have not heard of the judges petitioning Parliament for a clerk ;