

The Controller and Auditor General audits for the House of Commons, and his first function in auditing is to see that no money has been spent except in accordance with the votes and with the Appropriation Act. Now, as a practical man, if you were to give him the audit and put it to his discretion how he should conduct the audit of the Army and Navy departments, he would never propose to take out of the hands of those great departments the whole labour and business and responsibility of a detailed examination of vouchers. Audit has to be conducted under certain reasonable and practical conditions. Every auditor trusts to a certain extent. He judges for himself how far he may trust the ordinary conduct of accounts in a department whose accounts he has to audit. From time to time he takes up a portion of those accounts and goes very minutely into them, and institutes what I might call a detective audit, but I do not know of any system of audit applied to the accounts of any commercial firm or of any company, which professes entirely to exonerate the department or the concern itself from the duty of understanding or looking after its own accounts.

Again he says, question 2271 :

Sometimes the Controller and Auditor General is asked by a department to undertake a departmental audit.

Then he bears in mind that he is auditing,—mark the distinction—not only for the House of Commons but for the department, and that therefore he has to exercise a much closer and a much more detailed examination.

Mr. LAURIER. Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. gentleman says "hear, hear." That is just it. The trouble the Auditor makes in this case is that he is auditing for the departments and not for the House of Commons. That is the criticism, I would make; that he goes so far as to encumber his staff; and I have further references which will make it clear that he cannot, with any staff we can put at his hands, honestly, fairly and fully present that audit to this House. He has never yet done so or attempted to do so, in my opinion. Another expert in these matters was called, Mr. Foster, not the leader of the House here, but a gentleman who has the same broad public knowledge of the way public business should be conducted. He was asked :

What have you to say as to the possibility of detecting any irregularity from information which you might receive casually from any of the gentlemen at the War Office ?

Mr. Foster was evidently a member of the audit department. He said :

I think that under the present system there is very little probability of detection. We are bound to accept, and practically the accountants render the vouchers for the amount recorded in the books, and not the sub-vouchers. We do not look into the sub-vouchers, but we accept the account and certificate of the departmental officers. That account might be composed of a variety of things, some of which might be im-

properly authorized, improperly made or improperly vouched. I have, in fact, no means of discovering irregularities or of bringing them under the notice of Parliament.

That is with regard to one of the largest spending departments in the Imperial Kingdom. Sir William Dunbar affirms the evidence of the Right Hon. Mr. Stansfeld, at question 2722, and says a little more. I would trouble the House to follow what he says in that particular. He had been asked to carefully consider this evidence and to come at a later day to the Public Accounts Committee and give them the benefit of his expert and mature consideration. He said :

I entirely concur in the evidence which was given by Mr. Stansfeld upon that subject, in answer to question 2270, on page 9. The views which he therein sets forth, so much more ably and lucidly than I could have expressed them, are the views which I have steadily maintained before this committee.

Again at 2725, he says :

Then, may we take it that that was your whole object in framing the two first paragraphs of your report?—That was my object; I have drawn the attention of Parliament to the difference of principle, because it seemed to me that, sooner or later, it might become a question for consideration, whether the powers of the Controller and Auditor General, on behalf of Parliament, should not be enlarged as regards the Army and Navy accounts. The question is distinctly for the House of Commons.

Mark this, Mr. Speaker, if you please :

If the House of Commons is satisfied with the present audit, so is the Controller and Auditor General. He has only to obey the instructions of the House of Commons, and not to lay down regulations for them.

I think that goes a long way to support the position I have ventured to take in this discussion, that this officer is not to instruct us, but that we were to instruct him. Again, Sir William Dunbar says, in reply to the question: What extent of audit would satisfy you? I ask the attention of hon. gentlemen to this particularly, and I hope I am not wearying the House. I only submit this evidence for what it is worth. It affected my opinion, and it may have some weight with other hon. gentlemen. Sir William Dunbar was asked what extent of audit would satisfy him, and he replied :

I hold that that is a question which ought never to be put to me. It is not a question of what will satisfy me, but of what will satisfy the House of Commons. As I explained before, I am the instrument of the House of Commons. Supposing that an audit committee had been appointed by the House of Commons; they would have exercised the very functions assigned to the Controller and Auditor General. They would have made the whole of the public accountants accountable to them; they would, through the instrumentality of their own officers, have examined their accounts; they might have examined some accounts very minutely and others with a lighter hand, and, in their discretion, they might have made an audit of the Army and Navy