

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. gentleman seems to doubt that. If he looks at the rules of this House he will find that Rule 86 states :

Every petition, not containing matter in breach of the privileges of this House, and which according to the rules of practice of this House can be received, is brought to the Table by direction of the Speaker, who cannot allow any debate, or any member to speak upon, or in relation to, such petition ; but it may be read by the Clerk at the Table, if required ; or, if it complains of some present personal grievance, requiring an immediate remedy, the matter contained therein may be brought into immediate discussion.

Let the hon. gentleman find a precedent for an officer holding this position, or any other position in the service of the Government, ventilating here, by way of petition, questions of this character, or questions concerning chiefly public officers who are members of the Civil Service. The petition involves, if it involves anything, an expenditure of public money ; and the demand for a committee is also most irregular—so irregular that the hon. member for Bothwell did not press that upon the attention of the House for a moment. I pointed out, however, to show the rash, not to say the indelicate manner—

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Does the hon. gentleman challenge the Auditor General's right to petition the House and to set forth his reasons for doing so ?

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I say that the objection to that procedure has been waived, and that perhaps under the circumstances, it is as well that it should be ; but I press the point upon the House, to show the indelicate haste with which the Auditor General has brought forward this one-sided statement, which the Government are convinced, as my colleagues inform me, and as I myself know in regard to many things within my own knowledge, is erroneous in many vital particulars. The demand for a committee in a matter for which this Government is certainly responsible—that is, the proper administration of that office and the seeing that adequate money is obtained from this Parliament in order to carry on the important duties of that office—could not for a moment be granted by this House without the House coming to the conclusion that the Government had lost the confidence of the House as a Government in every respect. Such a committee could not be granted by a Government that is strong enough to stand, as this Government is. Now, the hon. member for South Oxford dilated with pleasure upon the fact that there was much food for reflection in the Auditor General's Report ; and I have no doubt that that report is so framed as to make it acceptable to the Opposition. But how does that meet the point mentioned by the Minister of Finance, that an enormous

part of that thick and bulky volume serves no purpose whatever, and that an enormous part of it contains misleading and inaccurate statements ? But the Government of the day do not propose to say, " You shall not print the items, if you have the time and Parliament desires that to be done ; but the Government of the day and Parliament ought to insist that if you attempt to put the details of those items before the public, you shall not vary or alter them in the Department of the Auditor General " ; and, in that case, I take it, the sum the Auditor would require in order to have full transcripts made of all the accounts in detail, would be a sum that this Parliament would not for many a long day feel itself justified in granting. The work would be enormous. Take, again, the correspondence. What is it ? I have had some experience of this in a department which has to do with many small items of expenditure. You find many pages in the report to which the Public Accounts Committee never thinks of referring—why ? Because they relate to matters that have arisen between the accountant of some department and the Auditor's office, which have been adjusted, and as to which there is no dispute. The report shows that the two offices came into collision. A mistake is made ; the Auditor General calls attention to it; rectification is at once made, and four or five letters are immediately sent to the printer to be included in the report. If my memory serves me right, the only reason which the Auditor General gave is the absurd reason that these letters showed the value of the office. Who asked him to prove the wisdom of this Parliament in any particular ? What is the use of printing pages of correspondence when their publication cannot in any way benefit the public interest ? Why, for instance, publish correspondence concerning how much every member of this House drew for sessional indemnity, and items of that character, which take up page after page.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Why not ?

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I do not think any member of this House has ever suggested the good purpose of the correspondence to which I have referred or of the publication of details of expenditure in that way. Take, for instance, the misrepresentations in that report, perhaps owing to want of time—but ought not justice to be considered as well as time ? Take, for instance, an item in connection with my department, in which police gloves are put down at so much a pair. The price seems extraordinary, and then further down you see gloves charged at one-third the price, a suspicion enters the mind of the reader as to how these prices come to vary. The explanation in the account will satisfy everyone. Regimental regulation gloves, for certain purposes, cost a certain amount, on account of material and style, whereas other