

Order paper that there is no work that we can go on with, we might as well adjourn until Monday. There is no use in meeting merely to adjourn. I hope the Prime Minister will reconsider the matter.

Mr. WALLACE. Speaking for myself, I am not much in sympathy with the proposal to adjourn over to-morrow. We have met to do business, and we should be ready to do it. But, when the First Minister tells us that the government are not responsible for the Auditor General's Report not being down, I cannot agree with him—and for two reasons. In the first place, the Auditor General's Report will be prepared promptly if the ministers present their documents to the Auditor General in good time to give him the opportunity of going over and revising them. And when the Auditor General's Report is prepared, it is a matter for the printer; and the printers are under the direct control of the government. If the Auditor General has no control over the printing of the documents that he presents, the ministers have. There must be control somewhere, and where is it? The Printing Department is in the control of the ministers themselves. We hear today that the government are sending part of their printing down to the city of Montreal; and I am told by printers who know what it means, that the printing of the Trade and Navigation Returns is most profitable, because it is printed in both languages, and the same figures are retained for both the French and English edition, so that it is a doubly profitable transaction for the printers. That was sent down to the favoured newspapers, giving them enormous profits, though the ministers state at regular rates. Well, the regular rate is double the rate for column work, and it is double rate again for printing in English and French, though as a matter of fact it is printed in the one language only, the figures being the same for both languages. And still we are waiting for the Trade and Navigation Returns that should have been in the hands of the public many months ago.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. As regards the Auditor General's Report, of which alone I care to speak, the hon. gentleman is entirely mistaken in assuming that it is under the control of the government. The Auditor General is not an officer of the government; he has been purposely made an officer of this House.

Mr. WALLACE. Nobody said he was an officer of the government.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Well, the hon. gentleman says that we are responsible, but if he is not our officer, we cannot be responsible.

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Mr. WALLACE. I said the ministers are responsible for the printing, I did not say they are responsible for the work of the Auditor General's Report.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. This happens to be a question of the work of the Auditor General, because, as I said a day or two ago, the Auditor General, in the discharge of what he deems to be his duty, includes in his report correspondence which occurs down to the very eve of the meeting of the House. I am not sure that is the wisest possible plan, if we are to get the document promptly. But he desires, and it is a convenience no doubt to the members when the book comes out, that the correspondence should be placed in that part of the book where the particular matter referred to is found, and that keeps a large quantity of printing matter open and undetermined up to the very last day, on the eve of the session.

Mr. WALLACE. When was the copy handed over?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The copy goes down by stages, it is not matter that goes down all at once, that vast volume cannot be all tumbled into the hands of the Auditor General at once, he prepares his report from time to time. I am not prepared to say, I have not heard any complaint from him as to the time when he receives the copy, but I think the difficulty arises from the fact that the Auditor General, in his desire to do his work well and faithfully, tries to include documents covering a period down to the very eve of the meeting of the House. That is my own opinion of it, and while it is convenient for the members to get the document in that shape ultimately, it inevitably leads to some delay.

Mr. WALLACE. But the Auditor General's Report does not come down to any recent date at all.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The hon. gentleman will find, when the report comes down, that it contains correspondence down to within the last few days.

Mr. WALLACE. It may contain the correspondence, but that is not what we most want.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The correspondence is a part of the one and the same book, the document we are talking about; and if the Auditor General, in his desire to make these very interesting notes and comments, wishes to bring the book down to a very late date, I am sure he only does so for the convenience and information of parliament. But the plan has its disadvantages.