

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) He is not very anxious about it.

Mr. DICKEY. I do not think he is. Now, the clerks of the Auditor General's office are appointed by the Governor in Council under the express authority of the Act. The hon. gentleman from Queen's (Mr. Davies) says that the Auditor General was made an independent officer by Parliament. I entirely disagree with him in that. Parliament was invited to make him an independent officer, and to give him the right to appoint and promote and classify his own clerks, as under the English system, but Parliament deliberately refused to make him an independent officer in that regard. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Davies) may read that Act through and through, and he will find that the only way in which the Auditor General differs from the ordinary civil servant is in his tenure of office, in which respect, of course, he is entirely independent of the Executive of the country.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) That is the great thing.

Mr. DICKEY. But the clerks which he appoints, and the clerks which inferentially his petition asks should be appointed, are the appointees of the Governor in Council.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) In the first instance.

Mr. DICKEY. You may try to get around it any way you like, but in the end it comes to this, that this is an attempt on the part of the head of a department under this Government, to come to Parliament by way of petition, and through the means of a committee of the House, to force the hands of the Government to promote the expenditure and importance of his own department. It is a bad principle. It would lead to trouble. It would take from the Executive of the country the responsibility which it is forced to bear for the expenditure of the public money. Suppose that the Government acceded to this request, and as they could do, put a majority of their own friends on the committee, and suppose the committee recommended extravagant expenditures in the Auditor General's Department, what would be the position of the Government? I would like to know from the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) what would be the ministerial responsibility then? How could you graft on the English system of ministerial responsibility any such odious excrescence as an Auditor General who is independent of the Government in that way, and for whose expenditure nobody is responsible. He is not responsible himself, the committee of the House would not be responsible, the Government would not be responsible, and the result would be that public money would be spent without anybody being responsible. One more point, Sir, and I have done. What is the substantive trouble here? What is com-

Mr. DICKEY.

plained of? Why, if you listen to the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) and the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), you would imagine that there was some great wrong being perpetrated on the Auditor General; that he was subjected to persecution by this Government; that he had been carrying out his duties in the midst of all the difficulties that could be thrown in his path; that this Tory Government, in order to cover up their own iniquities—which the hon. gentleman from Queen's (Mr. Davies) alluded to in such a judicial and calm manner in his speech—that this Tory Government, in order to hide these, had been oppressing the Auditor General. Well, there is nothing in the petition whatever to endorse that. The petition says that the Auditor General complains that his men are not promoted fast enough. What has that got to do with their work? Will John Smith, who is a first-class clerk, do any more work because you make him John Smith, a chief clerk, or will Tom Jones, a third-class clerk, do any more work if you promote him to the second-class. It is not proposed to add a single man to the department. It is not alleged that the Auditor General is short handed. It is not alleged that in any one instance he has been hampered for want of hands. And yet these hon. gentlemen opposite make the statement, when the petition which they hold in their hand shows to the House and to the country that the only thing which the Auditor General complains of is that he cannot promote fast enough the men whom he has worked with and got fond of in his association with them. It is not a suggestion that they cannot do the work. It is not a suggestion that he cannot produce the bulky volume, half of which is work that the Auditor General—at least, if he took a more modest view of his functions—ought not to feel obliged to perform. The Auditor General complains that the vote for his extra clerks is reduced in the Estimates. Now, I will make a proposition to hon. gentlemen opposite. If they will go through the whole departments of this Government, and find any deputy head of a department that does not grumble at the Finance Minister for cutting off his appropriation for extra clerks, I will give them leave to say that the Auditor General has been badly treated. But if the hon. gentleman finds, as he would find, that the Auditor General, with respect to this matter of extra clerks, is treated better than any head of department in the whole range of the departments of the Government, then he will find that the Auditor General has nothing to complain of compared with other officers of the Government. Sir, we know that this is a time when we are trying, hon. gentlemen opposite may think not very successfully, to promote economy; the hon. member for South Oxford was candid and fair enough to say that he believed the Finance Minister