

his Premier in keeping off these hungry and dangerous supporters. The hon. gentleman (Sir Richard Cartwright) has contended that it was always the intention that this officer should be a parliamentary officer, and under parliamentary control. I refer the hon. gentleman (Sir Richard Cartwright) to his own Bill, and he will find that that was not his intention, and that when he introduced the Bill he did not propose that the Auditor General should be half so independent in the conduct of his office, as he is to-day. He did not propose that the Auditor General should have power, either to promote, suspend, or dismiss the officers of the Audit Department. That suggestion came from an outside member and was incorporated in the Bill. The hon. gentleman did advocate that we should keep, as nearly as possible to the English system of audit, and efforts were made in that direction, and all that the Finance Minister has contended to-day is in the direction of the English system of audit. No one at any time, whether at the inception of this legislation or since, has suggested that the English system, which was the system we attempted to copy, is violated in any respect. And, while the same great powers are given to the Auditor General in England as are confided in our Auditor, the Minister of Finance to-day made reference to the manner in which the Auditor General in England performs his duties, to show, as I take it, how far the Auditor General in Canada goes beyond the proper spirit of the discharge of his duty, beyond the scope of his duty, beyond the scope that was intended, and beyond the scope that serves any useful public purpose. No one will deny that it is to the benefit of the Opposition that there should be the greatest possible light thrown upon all affairs of Government, small as well as big. Often, public opinion forms around the smaller items of expenditure of Government, rather than around the larger items which more particularly concerns the public weal. But, I would submit for the consideration of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House: whether it is not a most creditable thing for the Government of the day, that since 1878, with a system of audit practised as you cannot find it in a British Parliament—a system of audit that lays bare every two-penny-halfpenny expenditure, and sets out the accounts in this enormous and bulky form—the Government has been able to stand criticism of every character, carping, generous or small, and has been able to live where strong and properly administered Governments might fall, in consequence of the slightest misconduct, simply because of an impression, a false impression, that might be created in the minds of many electors not thoroughly informed of the difficulty of controlling expenditure on the part of the best of governments. With all these facts and

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.

figures put before the public, the position of the Government to-day is as strong as ever. It reflects, of course, a great deal of credit upon the intelligence of the electorate; but I press that point to show to what an unfair extent any Auditor General may exercise what the House considers his powers, but what practice shows not to be his duty and not to be encouraged. I will make some references to very valuable information obtained on this point by the Public Accounts Committee in England. The Public Accounts Committee there, as we know, discharges duties of great importance and benefit to the state. They go, with the Auditor General, not on a venture to fasten on the Government and on the departments great wrongs; but they go with the Auditor General, as a business body, to assist him in a proper presentation of the parliamentary or national accounts; and, as I will show later on, their opinion and the opinion of the Auditor General in England, is totally at variance with the opinion of the Auditor General in Canada as to his duty and his position. I am surprised that in this House no comment should have been made upon an extraordinary and unparalleled procedure on the part of the Auditor General in petitioning the House of Commons in regard to the matter contained in that petition. It is perhaps as well that no point of order was raised, and that a full discussion was invited by the leader of the Government; but that the petition is irregular can hardly be gainsaid by any one. When Parliament created that officer and that office—whether he was to be wholly a parliamentary officer or not does not matter in this consideration—three modes only were specifically mentioned as to how and where he should be heard, and in what manner his views were to be laid before Parliament. In one part of his duties he was to communicate with the Treasury Board; in another respect, and for the information of Parliament, he was to communicate through the Minister of Finance as Receiver General; and he was at all times—as in England the Auditor confines himself, in ventilating his opinion in regard to the proper audit and the proper means of audit—to be in communication with the Public Accounts Committee. These are the ways in which it is pointed out that the Auditor General may be heard by the Parliament of his country; but in taking the extraordinary and irregular course of presenting a petition to this House, which the hon. gentleman deems a censure on the Government of the day, he has ridden roughshod over the rules of this House. A personal grievance may be presented here by petition and may be discussed; but I challenge hon. gentlemen to find that departmental grievances, or grievances from the judiciary or from parliamentary officers, are fit subjects of petition or of consideration by way of petition by this Parliament.