

prised to hear the Minister of Finance make the statement he did respecting the increase of expenditure in the different departments. Why, the hon. gentleman, after hearing the statement made by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), should have been more ingenuous. He talks about the expenditure of the Auditor General in 1880 and compares it with 1894, and triumphantly asks his followers: Has there not been a very large increase in the staff of that department between 1880 and 1894? And asking the question, he supposes he has answered it. Did not the hon. gentleman here read to him that since 1880 there has been an enormous amount of work thrown on that department, work that did not devolve upon it in 1879 and 1880. What are the facts? The whole Indian accounts in 1882 were placed upon the Auditor General; the whole accounts connected with the Franchise Act were placed upon him in 1886, and the examination of the revenue returns in 1887—a new branch altogether—the Auditor not having been charged with this work until 1887 when it was entrusted to him by an Order in Council. The hon. member for Bothwell reminds me that this work required four additional clerks. Then there were the accounts of the banks, the currency account in 1887, and stores account in 1894. These go to show that it is not fair or just to the Auditor General to take up the staff as it stood in 1879 and compare it with 1894, and say, look at the great increase in the staff, and then declare that no increase should be asked. Such a course was calculated to mislead the judgment of the House and the country. The administrative audit was also added after that time. I will not trouble the House by attempting to justify the phraseology and verbiage of the Auditor General's petition. The Minister of Justice has criticised with the greatest severity the language used in that petition; but he failed to tell the House this, that the language although used in a broad and general sense must be understood to have reference to the specific duties of the Auditor General's Department, and understood in that sense, it is quite defensible. The Auditor General does not assume to dictate to this House and the country as to the mode of regulating the financial affairs, except in so far as the expenditure is concerned and so far as it comes within the purview of his powers as laid down by statute. I am not here to justify the Auditor General in attempting to dictate to the House and the Government the financial policy; that is a matter altogether beyond his ken or control. I have never heard that he has assumed any such power, I think he has kept fairly well within the duties of his office, difficult and onerous as they are, and not calculated at all events to make him a most popular officer, but I repeat that he is an officer whose hands should be strengthened by this House

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.)

on all proper occasions, and I venture to say that this is an occasion when he should receive the moral support of members on both sides. I am not competent to judge whether there should be an increase of one or two, or three clerks in his department; all he asks is that a joint committee should be struck, composed by members of both sides of the House, to determine that question. The proposition to my mind does not seem to be an unfair one. I do not think it should be refused, as the leader of the House refused it, and I think that the language in which that officer was denounced by the Minister of Justice is altogether indefensible.

Mr. DICKEY. The hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) generally begins a judicial speech by saying that the hon. gentleman who previously addressed the House did not speak in a judicial manner, but before he closes his speech it is evident that he preaches that which he does not practice, because no one will charge the hon. gentleman with having delivered an eminently judicial speech.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. DICKEY. There is one opinion only. In my remarks I will follow the hon. member for Prince Edward Island in reply to the Minister of Justice. The hon. gentleman said the quotations made by the Minister of Justice had no reference to this case. The quotations made by the Minister were with respect to the English Act, which is admitted to be in terms almost identical with the present Act, and where there is a difference from the present Act it is in favour of powers given to the English auditor. And yet the hon. member for Queen's said that the quotations of the Minister of Justice, which showed the limitations which the constitutional authorities in the mother Parliament deemed it necessary to throw around the power of the Auditor General of England, were not relevant to this discussion. What does the hon. member for Queen's think of the opinion of Mr. Lash, the Deputy Minister of Justice of the late Government, an opinion that was adopted by the Auditor General himself? When did the constitution of the office of the Auditor General change? Was the Auditor General right when he assumed office and stated his view of his functions in his report of 1879? And was Mr. Lash right when he gave his view, because if Mr. Lash was right, delivering a responsible opinion for the guidance of the Government, the hon. member for Queen's and other hon. gentlemen opposite are wrong in the opinions they are maintaining to-day, possibly for political purposes.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) We did not go on Mr. Lash's judgment.