

who now are, in the employ of the Crown, have no rights, and all acts which have been done by them in pursuance of their supposed powers, as servants of the Crown, are void. It is unnecessary to remark that such a conclusion would be startling.

I suppose that you have hitherto been under the impression that your duties and responsibilities were greater than they are, and I feel sure you will be glad to learn that they are defined within the limits above explained.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) Z. A. LASH,

D. M. J.

I concur in this opinion.

(Signed) JAS. McDONALD,
Minister of Justice.

No reply has been sent to this letter, as it appeared that it could be better dealt with here. Whether for the purpose of preventing irregularities in making payments, or of reporting them to Parliament, if they have occurred in the disbursement of accountable moneys, it is the duty of the undersigned to be fully informed as to all the brakes which have been put by Parliament or the Government on the expenditure of the public funds. The undersigned should possess more information on such subjects than any other official. That information should, no doubt, be used in reporting infringements of the rules laid down by Parliament, if the rules have been broken; but it seems more in the public interest that the Auditor-General of the time being should do what he can to prevent the illegality, than that he should take part in making payments contrary to Acts of Parliament without drawing the attention of those who have ordered the illegal payments, and who would not have done so had their attention been drawn to the legal or other sound objection. The undersigned cannot think of anything more desirable in payments and account-keeping than uniformity. He believes that when an Act of Parliament establishing certain limits to payments, or an Order in Council of a general nature with the same object has been passed, great good will arise from there being a person who can point, and who is expected to point, out when the provisions of either are about being disregarded, not with the object of hindering the Government from carrying out its wishes, but with a view of securing that uniformity which the Government itself has determined upon when passing the general Order in Council or submitting the bill to Parliament. It is plain that the attempt to control, against the will of the Government, their expenditure while within the Parliamentary grants, through a single person, the inferior of each of the members of the Cabinet in rank, would be out of the question—would, indeed, be as useless to the country as it would be unpleasant to the officer.

Assuming, however, that the Government is disposed to carry out the wishes of the people, as shewn by the acts of their representatives, the Auditor General must report some points on which he does not agree with the Executive, but the greater