

SESS. II.—1897.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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THE MINES DEPARTMENT AND THE AUDIT OFFICE :  
(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO FAILURE OF THE FORMER TO COMPLY WITH A  
REQUISITION.)

*Laid upon the Table by the Hon. the Speaker.*

The CONTROLLER and AUDITOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the SPEAKER of the HOUSE of  
REPRESENTATIVES.

11th November, 1897.

THE Controller and Auditor-General has the honour most respectfully to submit to the House of Representatives a copy of his correspondence relating to the reference which, in the report which he has appended to the public accounts for the quarter ended the 30th September, 1897, he has made to the failure of the Mines Department to comply with a requisition of the Audit Office.

J. K. WARBURTON,  
Controller and Auditor-General.

he Hon. the Speaker, House of Representatives.

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No. 1.

The CONTROLLER and AUDITOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of MINES.

SIR,—

Audit Office, 1st October, 1897.

I beg leave most respectfully to represent that I have, for the purpose of a satisfactory audit of the gold revenue, deemed it necessary to make, particularly in a memorandum of the 20th February, and in another of the 21st August, a requisition on the Under-Secretary of your department for a statement, certified by the Warden at Greymouth, of the leases and licenses which he issues under the Mines Act.

The statement is sought as an effective check on the accounts which the Receivers of Gold Revenue render of their receipts of the rent and charges paid to them under those leases and licenses. The Under-Secretary, however, declares himself, in his memorandum of the 22nd ultimo, after asking the Warden to suggest what means might be adopted, unable to do anything further in the matter.

As the statement required is merely such a return or report from the Warden of the contracts in the form of leases and licenses which he makes as it appears to me reasonable to suppose that he can readily certify with his signature, and as every Government officer, not even excepting a Minister of the Crown, would generally regard himself as obliged even by the unwritten law of Government service to furnish when required by the Audit Office to do so, and as the Minister himself might call for and obtain, as he calls for and obtains many reports from such officers, I have informed the Under-Secretary that it will be my duty, in reporting on the public accounts of the colony for the quarter which has just closed, to refer to the inability of the department to comply with the requisition, though this inability appears to arise only in respect of the one Warden.

I have already explained very fully and clearly in my memoranda to the Under-Secretary that what I require is not a statement under or in pursuance of any statute, and I need not add anything on this point. My main object, indeed, in addressing this letter to you is to provide against a doubt which I entertain whether this matter, which it may be of importance for the Government to consider, ought not to be directly communicated by the Audit Office to the Minister in charge of the department; and in order to further this object I attach a copy of the correspondence comprising the memoranda to which I have referred.

Regretting that there should be any occasion for the communication as necessary to a due performance of my duty,

I am, &c.,

J. K. WARBURTON,  
Controller and Auditor-General.

The Hon. the Minister of Mines.

1—B. 20.