

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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February 20, 1940

The Honorable Lewis O. Barrows
Governor of Maine
Augusta, Maine

My dear Governor Barrows:

In your letter of yesterday, February 20th, you called my attention to certain statements which have been published in one of the newspapers of the State in which it is claimed that the financial condition of our State, as indicated in the report compiled by the State Controller each year for the past two fiscal years is not correct; that certain columns are juggled, and that the State has not been able to maintain a balanced budget.

You then informed me that, after having discussed the matter with the members of the Executive Council, you have engaged the firm of Ernst & Ernst to make an audit and examination of the State's finances for the past two fiscal years, and to report their findings to you in writing.

You ask my advice as to whether or not this is a legal procedure for you to follow.

The citizens of the State are entitled to full information regarding the true financial condition of the State. The statements to which you have referred as appearing in at least one of the newspapers of the State have undoubtedly created a feeling that the reports made by the State Controller do not reflect the true condition of State finances, and they have occasioned considerable discussion and uncertainty. I believe that, in view of this situation, it would be for the best interests of the State and all its citizens to have full investigation made of this entire situation, and your decision to employ a firm of auditors not in any way connected with the State administration seems to me very sound. I believe that you are justified, with the approval of the Executive Council, in using sufficient sums from the Contingent Fund for this purpose.

Sincerely yours,

Franz U. Burkett
Attorney General