



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
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Mr. Elwin Hermanson, Chair  
Rosetown-Elrose

Mr. Lon Borgerson, Deputy Chair  
Saskatchewan Rivers

Mr. Glenn Hagel  
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Glen Hart  
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Mr. Ken Krawetz  
Canora-Pelly

Mr. Kim Trew  
Regina Coronation Park

Mr. Kevin Yates  
Regina Dewdney

The committee met at 10:30.

**The Chair:** — Good morning, everyone. We will call the meeting to order. I would like to welcome everyone to the meeting.

If you will notice on the agenda, we have three items to cover: the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation report by the Provincial Auditor, chapter 15 of the 2003 report, volume 3; then we want to get on and talk a bit more about the Audit Committee; and conclude with the broadcasting of committee proceedings.

We have a number of guests with us. First of all, welcome Terry Paton and Chris Bayda, also the Provincial Auditor, and I will have Mr. Wendel introduce his colleagues. And we have officials here from SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), Ray Clayton. And we will ask, Ray, if you would introduce your officials, and then we will commence with the review of chapter 15.

So first, Mr. Wendel, would you introduce your officials?

**Mr. Wendel:** — Sure. Thank you, Chair. With me today is Rodd Jersak who leads our work at SPMC; and Brian Atkinson, the assistant provincial auditor who attends all the meetings.

**The Chair:** — And Mr. Clayton.

**Mr. Clayton:** — Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Garth Rusconi; he's the vice president of our accommodations division. Phil Lambert, vice president, and he also serves as our chief information officer. And behind me is Donald Koop, who is the vice president in charge of our commercial services division.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you all very much. We will ask you, Mr. Wendel or one of your officials, to bring us a report on chapter 15 of the 2003 report.

**Mr. Wendel:** — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'll have Rodd Jersak speak to the opening comments.

**Mr. Jersak:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Chapter 15 of our 2003 report, volume 3, includes our audit conclusions and findings for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2003. We worked with Deloitte, the appointed auditor for SPMC on this audit.

To summarize the audit findings, we found that SPMC's financial statements were reliable. SPMC had adequate rules and procedures to safeguard its resources, except that it needs to complete its disaster recovery plan. And we found that SPMC complied with authorities governing its activities.

Regarding SPMC's need for a disaster recovery plan, we note that SPMC depends on a number of IT (information technology) systems to deliver its services to customers and to manage its financial affairs. Therefore it is important that SPMC ensure that its IT systems and data are available to ensure the continuity of its operations.

SPMC safeguards its data in a number of ways, but at March 31, 2003, had not tested or approved a disaster recovery plan. The purpose of a disaster recovery plan is to minimize the impact of a disaster on SPMC and its customers. You may wish to ask SPMC about the progress they have made since we reported this issue last year.

There are two other matters that I would like to mention. First, we carried out an audit of the adequacy of the information made public by SPMC about its infrastructure in 2002 and the first half of 2003. Chapter 12 of our 2003 report, volume 3, includes the results of this audit. Your committee would discuss that chapter at a future date. Second, our office assessed whether the annual reports of government departments and three agencies, including SPMC, complied with the content requirements of the Department of Finance's reporting guidelines. We found that SPMC had substantially met these requirements.

Chapter 13 of our report includes the summarized results of this assessment. Our office will discuss the content of chapter 13 with you when it is on a future agenda for this committee.

That concludes my presentation. We would be happy to answer your questions you have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Rodd. I think first of all we will have a statement from SPMC, and then we'll be opening the floor to questions from the committee members. Mr. Clayton.

**Mr. Clayton:** — Thank you Mr. Chairman. I might preface my remarks by indicating that SPMC has had a very constructive working relationship with the Provincial Auditor and our outside auditors, and we found that the input that they provided to us was of substantial assistance to us as we try to ensure that our organization is operating in the most effective way possible.

In regard to the observations that the Provincial Auditor has made, we have no disagreement whatsoever. We agree with the outline of the work they felt the organization needed to proceed with, and we have done so. I can provide additional details if the committee so desires.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you, Mr. Clayton. This morning I woke up, and I could have had my own little disaster because my clock was flashing, and it said 12:35. Had it said 2:35, I would have been late for this committee meeting because apparently there was a power interruption.

I think those are sorts of things that we're talking about when we talk about your disaster plan. This issue has come up before this committee in the past. It seems to be an ongoing process, and so I think committee members will be wanting to clarify what progress has been made. So are there any questions? Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As noted in the auditor's report, it says that as of March 31 of last year nothing had been tested or approved, and you seemed to indicate that progress has been made. Could you bring us up to date whether or not, you know, you're satisfied with the plan that your auditor obviously is going to take a look at for its next report?

**Mr. Clayton:** — I'd be happy to do that, Mr. Chairman. The executive of SPMC has indeed now approved a disaster recovery plan and has undertaken the tests of that plan. The plan was based on the criteria, the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor, and it covers procedures dealing with our financial systems, our inventories, our network infrastructure, our server infrastructure, our desktop computers. It covers four levels of disasters including those that arise as a result of human error or those that come about as a result of the loss of a hardware component or even a complete server and ultimately the loss of the site itself.

The areas covered in the plan include environmental protection, guarding against unauthorized access, power interruption protection, backup tape retrieval, backup tape validation, and so on. And tests, as I indicated, have been done with regard to the plan, and we will repeat those tests on a periodic basis to ensure that the plan is working effectively.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — As a follow-up, Mr. Clayton, does SPMC become involved with all agencies and departments of government? And I guess the question that I am looking to raise is . . . not too long ago there was a problem with the disappearance of a hard drive and all the concerns and costs that were incurred by not only government departments, by individuals, etc. Is SPMC responsible for overseeing that as well?

**Mr. Clayton:** — Certain respects of that, yes. I'll — with the permission of the committee — ask my vice-president, Phil Lambert, to speak to that.

**Mr. Lambert:** — SPMC will work with each of the departments to achieve the requirements that they have within their department. The overall responsibility for IT within government is the responsibility of the Information Technology Office, and regarding disaster recovery and security of information. So they're the departments that are responsible for the overall government response in that area. But if any departments have any requirements for facilities and those things, then we will work with them to achieve their requirements.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — And just a final question . . . and I know there is one brief mention of the infrastructure concerns raised by the auditor's office on page 290 of the report. And I know we'll deal with this on another chapter, but I would like to raise that point now so that when we get to chapter 12 and discussions, whenever that appears on our agenda, when we look at the infrastructure that is in the hands of SPMC and is administered by SPMC on behalf of all the departments — whether they be Education, whether they be Agriculture— there's a need I think, at least from my point of view, there is a need to know the extent of agreements that exist currently, whether they be with an individual who owns property and is leasing that directly to SPMC or whether it's a municipal level, a municipal government level, that is leasing that property to SPMC.

Those are the kinds of concerns that we're hearing from individuals around the province regarding SPMC's infrastructure and what are the lengths of leases, what are the obligations of taxpayers to those individuals and to municipalities.

So that will be . . . You know, I note that it's not part of this even though it's mentioned in this chapter, but we'll raise that in chapter 12, and I'd hope that you'd be able to supply those answers at that time.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Krawetz. Any further questions? Mr. Yates, did you have your hand up? Okay, Mr. Hart.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. As my colleague has said, there is a number of issues that we will be dealing with in chapter 11 on reporting . . . or, chapter 12, excuse me, reporting on infrastructure.

But further to some of the concerns that Mr. Krawetz has raised, in light of this year's budget and the closure of rural service centres and those sorts of things, I know the public is quite concerned about the financial obligations of SPMC in facilities that perhaps may be closed and no other government service operating out of those facilities. I'm not sure whether that in fact is the case. Whether, in towns like . . . I know, I'm familiar with Wynyard, that the rural service centre, extension agrologists will no longer be operating out of that facility because those services will no longer be provided. But there are other government agencies in that facility. And I guess the question would be as to, you know, what type of financial impact that will have.

Also I'm receiving quite a few questions about the Echo Valley Conference Centre and that whole, that facility. And we have had some individuals ask for budgets, past budgets, and that sort of thing. And I would presume you would be willing to make that information — operating budgets, revenue and expenditures, and also capital projections — you have that information and will be making that available when those requests are received.

**Mr. Clayton:** — In accordance with the standard processes for raising those questions, yes. We'd be quite happy to provide whatever information we can.

**Mr. Hart:** — Now I'm not sure whether this is an appropriate question for this chapter or for chapter 12, but I'll ask it anyway and the chairman can rule me out of order if he sees fit.

**The Chair:** — I think you're pretty close.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Just consider yourself out of order and plunge forward.

**Mr. Hart:** — I think I'll take Mr. Hagel's advice.

As far as when . . . I guess I'll put it in a . . . term it in a general nature. When a property that SPMC is . . . that's owned by SPMC is being closed, what type of procedures do you have as far as disposing of that property as far as in a . . . so that the taxpayer receives, you know, fair value for the property?

Do you work with . . . do you seek interest from the private sector and, if so, to what extent do you follow that process? Though I'm not sure whether you'd want to answer that question today, but it'll certainly be coming forward in chapter 12.

**The Chair:** — If I could just interject, this isn't part of what we had planned for discussion. If Mr. Clayton is, does have the information available and would like to answer that, I think that would be certainly acceptable. We would understand if you didn't have the information today.

I think what you're asking, Mr. Hart, is if it's available you'd like to know; if not, you'd like to have that information made available at a future date.

**Mr. Hart:** — Yes, absolutely.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Trew.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am concerned with the fact that we're now delving into a different chapter. It puts not only our guests, our witnesses, but it puts all committee members at a sort of a . . . I don't know whether we can all be disadvantaged simultaneously but it almost feels that way to me.

I would really ask that you urge that we stick fairly closely with chapter 15 and visit chapter 12 at the appropriate time. So I'm just encouraging that and asking, Mr. Chair, that you do that.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Trew. I generally agree with you, but I would allow Mr. Clayton just to briefly respond as to whether or not he's prepared to deal with this subject matter either today or at a future time.

**Mr. Clayton:** — I think, Mr. Chairman, there's one particular aspect of the question which is generic in nature and relates to general processes that I could respond to. And I believe the question had to do with the process that SPMC uses when a property becomes surplus to its needs. And that is the first step in a process of that nature is indeed to determine whether the property is surplus. And once that determination has been made, there are a set of procedures that we go through to determine alternative usages. And I could ask Mr. Rusconi to lay out that procedure for the members.

**The Chair:** — As long as it's brief, because I don't want to get on to another subject area because we do have a fairly limited time to address three items on the agenda. So if it's just very brief, we would permit that.

**Mr. Rusconi:** — I'll keep it brief. But generally speaking once the asset is declared surplus, we have a priority list of agencies or types of agencies that we deal with, the first being government. So if government doesn't need the facility for another government use, it becomes surplus.

We then go to the priority list of municipalities and third parties that are somewhat funded by government. We then go to the federal government and the TLE process, the treaty land entitlement process. We then go to the public. And we, in all those instances, we seek market value for the asset.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. I think this is information for another day but we appreciate it. Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, just in context of the disaster recovery plan referred to in chapter 15, I think what I heard you

say earlier is that there is a plan that is in place but it doesn't meet the test of written plan that . . . or written to the extent that the auditor was considering to be appropriate.

Can you just very briefly explain to me who . . . And I'm not sure if I'm one of the masses but I'm certainly no techno geek, that's for sure. But I do appreciate that increasingly information that is important for government to serve the citizens is collected by computer and stored. And can you just give me some assurance as to what is the plan to minimize or eliminate loss of, or potential loss of information if something happens. I don't know . . . maybe as simple as today where the power goes, power goes out for a short period of time, or if there should be something that I don't, as far as I know we've never experienced, but there should be a quite conscious attack on a, you know, on a source of information in a government department office.

What is it that would enable the province to retain information? What's the backup that enables that to be done so that service may be inconvenienced slightly but continues to be made available to citizens as appropriate?

**Mr. Clayton:** — Mr. Chair, subsequent to the writing of the *Report of the Provincial Auditor*, the organization has completed a written plan. It is written. It's well . . . it's documented. It's in the form of a manual. And so all of these different types of contingencies are dealt with in that manual.

You've mentioned a couple of specific ones and I wonder if, Phil, if you could address those, please.

**Mr. Lambert:** — Certainly. Some of the precautions that we've taken is we have key card access into the building so that only authorized employees are within the building. And once you're in the building, we do have a computer room that is secured with key card access so it again prevents unauthorized access into the facility where we store all of our computer equipment.

We also have environmental protection where we've got smoke and heat and water sensors in there to monitor that room to ensure that, you know, those things don't violate some of the information that we do store on there.

All of our computer equipment in the server rooms are, have redundancy for hard drives as well as power supplies. So if we should have one of those things fail, then there's a backup procedure there.

All of our information is backed up daily and is stored off site so that if we need to retrieve that information, that we can go ahead and get that information. And then we have a test plan where we test all of these things to ensure that they are functional and are working.

**Mr. Hagel:** — And that's just a random test plan that you'll occasionally touch on, on each of the departments over a period of time?

**Mr. Lambert:** — No. The test plan is certain tests that we do throughout the year to validate those things and make sure that, you know, our . . . you know, as an example, our power supply,

we have an uninterrupted power supply that backs up our computer room. So in the event that SaskPower, if we lose the power from SaskPower, that our computer rooms are still up and running. And so we test those things at a minimum once a year, but more frequently in some of the other tests.

**Mr. Hagel:** — So if for example if Saskatchewan experienced a blackout like that was experienced in Eastern Canada last summer, that that wouldn't cause a loss of information is what you're saying?

**Mr. Lambert:** — That's correct. We do have the battery backup that will give us an amount of time that we can run these computers if SaskPower wasn't providing us power.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. The Chair will indulge with a couple of questions. First of all, this issue has come before the Public Accounts Committee more than once, and so I would guess from that that this is a fairly substantial project and it's taking some time. I would like to know two things: what is the cost of putting together a disaster plan; and at what point do you project that the plan will be complete to the point where it's just maintenance and what everyone that has an adequate disaster plan would have to spend to keep it in place?

**Mr. Lambert:** — Regarding the cost to put together the plan, I don't have that number at my fingertips. It's a number of folks within our IT area, as well as we receive some help from some outside folks to put together the plan.

But at the point that it is now, it is complete and we will review it from time to time to ensure that it is up to date. You know, in the event that we do change one of our systems, then obviously we would go back to the plan and update it accordingly. But at this point, it's all up to date and pretty much on a maintenance point of view as we go forward.

**The Chair:** — So you're saying then there are no special budget items, no lines in the budget to put this plan together. The costing is out of existing operational funds. You know, has something been not done because this has been done? I'm just trying to get a sense of how pervasive this exercise is in the, you know, in the organization and how much resources have had to be expended to get it in place.

**Mr. Lambert:** — We used the majority of our internal IT folks. We do have six major systems that we do run within our organization. And there are folks from each one of those systems that were put together, a team that we've used to put this plan together. And as well, we went back to our business areas. And once we put a draft plan together we went back to our business areas to ensure that this was meeting their business needs. So we involved a lot of IT folks across our organization to put together the plan. And there was no specific line item for the budget.

**The Chair:** — So you have no idea what this exercise cost, then?

**Mr. Clayton:** — Mr. Chairman, because of the fact that this project was undertaken as part of the ongoing responsibilities of

the organization, we didn't undertake a separate accounting for this particular project any more than we would other functions.

If we were to attempt to do that, I'm sure an estimate could be put together, just in terms of the amount of time our various staff members put into it. But it's considered to be part of the ongoing responsibility of the people involved. And for that reason, we didn't try to separately identify the specific costs of this particular responsibility.

**The Chair:** — Okay, I understand that then. And then just in my concluding question, you feel that now this issue has been addressed and when it's reviewed again by the Provincial Auditor there will be no need for further recommendation that you spruce this up some more?

**Mr. Clayton:** — We feel we have a fully functioning, viable plan with us at this point. Our experience over the years in working with our auditors has been that there are always areas where improvements can be made and so we'll be looking forward to their comments. And if they identify any particular areas of weakness, or where we can improve, we'll be happy to receive those comments.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thank you. I notice Mr. Brkich has requested to speak. He's welcome to be on our . . . to ask on our . . . in our committee but is not a regular member. So first of all are there any regular members of the standing committee that have any other questions before I recognize Mr. Brkich? None on this side? On this side? Mr. Brkich.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good morning. Just one quick question on your disaster recovery plan there. You'd mentioned quite a bit of . . . was done in-house. Did you hire any companies outside of your . . . of organization to help you with this plan?

**Mr. Lambert:** — Yes, we did. We did have the assistance of an outside individual that assisted us with the plan.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Could you provide the name and the cost to the company to this committee or to myself?

**Mr. Lambert:** — The individual was Don Schettler and he helped us with our disaster recovery plan as well as our security policy. So I don't have the number at my fingertips, but I can certainly provide that to you at a later date.

**Mr. Brkich:** — I thank you. That's all.

**The Chair:** — All right. Are there any further questions at all? Is there any desire to concur with the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* or to take further action in this regard?

**Mr. Krawetz:** — There are no recommendations.

**The Chair:** — There are no recommendations that need concurring in?

**Mr. Krawetz:** — The seeming co-operation by SPMC and the fact that the next Provincial Auditor's report will indicate whether or not the recommendation that was put forward has been met — that's when we'll deal with it, is my understanding.

**The Chair:** — Well thank you Mr. Clayton, and your team, for successfully answering the questions asked by the committee. You've touched on all the issues that you were asked plus a few extras, and we appreciate that. And we wish you well and look forward to the next time you are able to appear before this committee. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Clayton:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** — The next item on our agenda is a continuation of issues we discussed at our initial meeting and it regards the Audit Committee. We have asked Dr. Morina Rennie, the former Chair of the Audit Committee of the twenty-fourth legislature, to join us. And we welcome you, Dr. Rennie, to this committee. The Clerk, Ms. Woods, has provided a backgrounder for the Audit Committee. Have all of the members of the committee had an opportunity to review that report? You've seen it; you're aware of it?

As you know from the reports and the discussion that we had last week, there was some concern, Dr. Rennie, that perhaps we hadn't employed the services of your committee extensively as should have occurred. Therefore I think that unless there are some preliminary comments by any of the members specific to the report, before we hear from Dr. Rennie, I would thank you, Dr. Rennie, for coming before us and ask us . . . ask you to share with us the responsibilities that you and your committee undertook for the legislature in the . . . for the past legislature, and then the committee will be, I expect, wanting to ask you some questions.

**Ms. Rennie:** — Okay, thank you. Thanks for inviting me here. I'd like to begin with a short statement just about some background information and the experiences of the Audit Committee.

First a little history. During the 1980s and early 1990s, there was a different government committee that was also called the Audit Committee. This previous committee's function at that time was to review draft financial or draft Provincial Auditor's reports and help resolve issues relating to these reports prior to their being tabled. And at this time the Audit Committee was appointed by cabinet so it wasn't independent of the government. It was in fact an advocate of the government's position on accountability issues. This previous committee ran into some difficulties and ultimately it became dormant.

In 2001 the Provincial Auditor's Act or Provincial Auditor Act was amended and a new type of committee was constituted. The idea here was that this committee . . . different kind of audit committee would be independent. It would no longer be a committee of the government; this new Audit Committee would be responsible to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

To ensure independence, members of the Legislative Assembly, appointed auditors, employees of governments, Crowns, or Provincial Auditor's office would not be on the committee. Whereas the previous version of the Audit Committee reviewed Provincial Auditor's reports as a matter of course, this new type of audit committee would not perform any activity unless it was requested to do so, which was a very different approach.

The new Audit Committee, according to The Provincial Auditor Act, could at the request of the Public Accounts Committee assist the Public Accounts Committee in recommending a Provincial Auditor, reviewing the estimates of the annual report on operations of the Provincial Auditor, review Provincial Auditor's reports, or any other matter. This committee could also be requested to provide assistance to the Provincial Auditor, the Minister of Finance, the minister of Crown Investments Corporation, or Standing Committee on Crown Corporations on any matter that they saw fit.

The first members appointed to this new style of audit committee were appointed by the Speaker at the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee early in 2002, about two years ago, just over two years ago. These members were Rob Jaspar, Ray Hueser, Ralph Ottenbreit, Terry Alm, and myself. The Speaker designated me as Chair on the unanimous consent of the Public Accounts Committee.

On April 3, 2002, the committee had its first meeting. The purpose of that meeting was to clarify our roles and responsibilities to sort of fully understand who we were accountable to and sort of what it was our best use, how we could best add value. I invited some people to come and speak to us at that time. Fred and Terry and Chris were there, Margaret, and we also . . . and Ken. So they gave us a lot of insight into how we could best be used. And then understanding that, we turned to developing our rules of procedure, which was the one thing we were able to do without being asked by somebody else.

And so we did that, and so we developed our rules relating to such things as initiations of meetings, processes for responding to requests, quorum, decision-making processes, reporting. And then I sent a letter to each of the parties who could make requests for assistance from the Audit Committee. The letter introduced the Audit Committee members, outlined what requests could be made under The Provincial Auditor Act, and indicated how such requests could be made.

So far we have received and responded to one request for assistance in September of 2002. Our appointment ceased with the dissolution of the legislature last year. There were some particular issues that I was asked to address so I'm just going to go through those now.

First, my view of the appointment process. From what I know of the appointment process it seemed reasonable. I mean a lot of the process happened before I got on the committee so . . . but it didn't seem unreasonable, let's put it that way.

Second, whether the membership of the Audit Committee reflected all necessary backgrounds. I believe it did. We were to have one member in good standing from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan; that'll be Rob Jaspar. We were to have one member from the Society of Management Accountants of Saskatchewan. That would be Raymond Hueser. We were to have one academic with an accounting background. That would be me, although I'm also a member of good standing in both the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Society of Management Accountants. And then we needed a member of the Law Society; that'll be Ralph Ottenbreit. And we needed somebody experienced in operation of a business in

the private sector and that would be Terry Alm. So, I mean, the bases were covered as far as I could tell.

Another question that I was to address was our interest in being reappointed. I have contacted all the members of the committee, and all indicated an interest in carrying over the appointment if that's the wish of the Public Accounts Committee. Although I think the enthusiasm would be somewhat dampened if we thought that we were, if the situation would continue where we were somewhat underutilized. I think that we did this because we wanted to add value and so we, I think would feel, have more enthusiasm if we thought that we'd get that chance.

And I guess the last question, whether and how often the Audit Committee was used. As I indicated earlier, the Audit Committee has been used once so far. I think it would be a good thing if the Audit Committee were used a little more frequently. There is a considerable amount of talent in this group, and we would like to make a useful contribution to the financial reporting process of government.

However, that being said, there are obviously limits to our availability as we all have demanding careers of our own as well. So there's kind of a balance that needs to be struck there. And perhaps the balance could go a little more towards more use.

I think maybe the cause of this underutilization has something to do with the newness of the concept and the process. I expect that eventually what will happen is the parties that can request our assistance will develop processes and procedures that will define when a request to the Audit Committee should be triggered. And I guess if I had any authority to do so, I would recommend that these parties — that the Public Accounts Committee and the others that can request assistance from us — develop such a mechanism to just address the issue because it's very easy to just continue on with practices that are the norm and not to think about this other group that could be of some help on some issues. So if these groups kind of identified issues that might be, that we could help on, you know maybe they could build that into some procedures, would be perhaps one thing that might help with this.

And I guess another comment that a couple of the committee members had was this. The name Audit Committee probably isn't quite the right name. Really I think an audit committee is a group that oversees the financial reporting process and that's you, the Public Accounts Committee. And so we're more of an advisory committee. And I don't know if the name has sort of intimidated any of the potential users of this group or not, but we do . . . the functions as described in The Provincial Auditor Act are more of an advisory capacity.

From my perspective, working on this committee has been an interesting and enjoyable experience so far, and I look forward to possibly continuing to serve in this capacity. I will take any questions that you have.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thank you, Dr. Rennie, for a very thorough and concise report; we appreciate that. Are there any questions? Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — No, no real questions. And I guess we have new members on the Public Accounts Committee. And I think our initial goal was to be able to use the Audit Committee as structured under the auditor's Act. And while I guess our intentions maybe were good, I, as past Chair, you know, have to take some responsibility for the fact that we didn't utilize that committee as much as maybe could have been. And I think it's up to us as members on the committee to look at the projects.

You know, the auditor's Act is very clear as to what role the committee will play. And you know, I'm . . . The first one, you know, when we start to look at the selection of a new Provincial Auditor, that may not take place for years and years, so you won't be assisting us with that for a while.

But there are other things there that I think we can utilize that independent role. And I know that the auditor's Act, in its writing, was deemed to create a committee that would be independent of government and independent of this committee and be able to give a provincial perspective to an issue that this committee needed help.

And I don't know, you know, what those issues will be, Mr. Chairman. But I think, as a committee, with the assistance of the Clerk's office and the auditor's office, maybe there are things that we can utilize your committee more so. But I guess that's something we'll just have to have on our reminder list, to say is this an issue that we can turn over to Audit Committee for some help.

But that was its intentions. And I'm glad to hear that the members are willing to sit again because, as you said, dramatically underutilized. And we want to give those committee members the opportunity, since they were willing to put their names forward from the respective associations that they have come from. I'm glad to hear that they are willing to sit again and, hopefully, we can utilize them more. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Krawetz. Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Dr. Rennie, for your summary and comments. This is new to me as a member of the committee and I appreciate having a chance to just get a few minutes with you.

I think of probably off . . . On the grand scheme of things, probably the only thing worse than a committee being underutilized would be the committee being over-utilized. So one should always be careful what one wishes for, I suppose.

But it has always struck me that if one believes, as we do, that the auditor brings significant value to the public trust and the public confidence of the provision of government services to the citizens, then there is the obvious question about who audits the auditor. And this is obviously you.

And it would seem that if somebody's going to do that task . . . No? Doesn't.

**The Chair:** — I think we audit the auditor, but we could ask the Audit Committee to help us.



**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes. Yes, to provide advice in that task and I understand that.

And so my question is whether . . . I don't know what your one request has been. Have you been . . . has the committee ever been asked to provide advice regarding the estimates of the auditor's office?

**Ms. Rennie:** — No, we haven't.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Okay. But I presume would be happy to do so.

**Ms. Rennie:** — We would, we would . . . It's in the Act so . . .

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Hagel, are you completed?

**Mr. Hagel:** — That's it for now.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Chairman, for again benefit of new members, the auditor's office itself, there is a auditing firm that actually audits the work of the auditor's office. And that firm deals with the chairperson and there is a signing-off and this committee actually gets to see that report of that auditor.

The committee, this committee also receives the business plan and the financial plan and all of the working documents of the Provincial Auditor's office, which we then approve and put forward, or change, whatever's necessary.

And you're right, Mr. Hagel. I think that that's an opportunity that when something significant would be put forward by the auditor's office, I mean we'd have to rely on someone else to give us the advice. And you're right. I think in the last two years there has been very little change to the auditor's business plan as far as, you know, significant changes, either reducing of size or increasing of size.

So I think it has been easy for our committee members to understand that, that business plan put forward and the financial plan put forward. But if there are significant changes, that might be one that this committee would be able to utilize Dr. Rennie and her committee's assistance.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Rennie, you were . . . your committee was called upon at one occasion, I believe by the Provincial Auditor, to fulfill your function.

Could you just explain to us how that process worked, how difficult it was actually for your committee to come together, what type of an issue you dealt with, what kind of input you were able to provide the auditor with, and whether that reaffirmed your faith that this Audit Committee does have a role to play.

**Ms. Rennie:** — We were asked to help in the strategic planning process of the Provincial Auditor's office. They were going through another round of that planning process. And so we were just asked to provide input as I guess a broad group of knowledgeable people that could speak to some of the issues

that they were looking at in terms of their objectives, their processes, that sort of thing. And I thought it was a good use of the committee.

**The Chair:** — So did it require one face-to-face meeting or was it a . . .

**Ms. Rennie:** — Yes. Just one face-to-face meeting. And maybe Fred can speak more to this as to whether it was useful or not.

**The Chair:** — And then you presented recommendations to the Provincial Auditor or you answered his questions or . . .

**Ms. Rennie:** — In that context it was more of a discussion that was recorded by a member of the Provincial Auditor's office.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Wendel, did you have any comments on how the process worked?

**Mr. Wendel:** — Yes, Mr. Chair. I think the process worked fine, helping us establish a strategic plan that takes us up till 2007, and we'll be looking at that again soon to see whether it needs any changes.

We got good advice from the committee. There's a lot of knowledgeable people on there, and I plan to use them again when we go to strategic planning.

Now the business and financial plan that we provide you each year is based on that strategic plan. It's in fact included in the business and financial plan, so you can see what it is we're doing. And we shared that with the committee afterwards and found it useful.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes, a couple of quick questions. If the Public Accounts Committee were to ask the Audit Committee to do a review of the estimates of the auditor's office, how much advance notice would you need of that?

**Ms. Rennie:** — That would depend on a few things, just in terms of the availability of the other committee members. And so I think I might want to talk to the committee about something like that but I better not even guess.

We would need some time to get together. We come from different parts of the province, so we have to find the time that we can all get together as well and look at these things.

**Mr. Hagel:** — I guess I'm following up on your plea to be not underutilized . . .

**Ms. Rennie:** — Yes, that's right.

**Mr. Hagel:** — So my question is, so if we are utilized, then what's a timeline that makes sense in order, you know, to be reasonable. And I guess that's something you're not able to answer today, but I appreciate being able to understand that.

**Ms. Rennie:** — Just don't want to . . . I mean, I would think, you know, at least a couple of weeks.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Okay. And what is the cost to the province of Saskatchewan of the Audit Committee, and on what basis are remunerations taken?

**Ms. Rennie:** — The cost, I'm not . . . Let's see. Margaret should know the total cost, but the remuneration is a per diem which is, I believe, \$255.00 a day for the Chair and . . . Is that something . . . it's something in that ballpark. And maybe one hundred and something per day for a regular committee member. This is quite significantly less than any other audit committee that you'd see, actually. This is very modest.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Is there an annual fee or it's strictly a per diem.

**Ms. Rennie:** — No, no, there's no annual fee. It's just on a per diem. So I'd say it was dead cheap, particularly last year.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes, so that your committee members could quite justifiably be pointing to the work that they would be doing as a contribution to the public good as a significant part of what you're providing?

**Ms. Rennie:** — Well I think, yes, and I think that's the way we see it. It is a contribution to the public good. It's not . . . yes, it's not a money-maker.

**Mr. Hagel:** — You don't think you're going to break us.

**Ms. Rennie:** — No, no. Margaret might . . . do you have the budget number? It's quite small, isn't it?

**Ms. Woods:** — I think what we did in the last session was we budgeted, I think, around \$4,000. And that was because we really didn't have any great feel for how much the committee would be utilized. And so we just took a figure that we thought was reasonable for the initial period, and then we were going to base it upon what the actual usage was. In that case, because there wasn't much of a usage the first year, I think we maintained that same amount in the following year.

But one of the tricky parts about the Audit Committee is that the Assembly does include the funds for it under the heading of the Public Accounts Committee budget, although it's other individuals that would then call upon it to carry out the work. So if, for example, the auditor's office requested the Audit Committee to carry out a particular task, their per diems are actually paid for by the Assembly, not the auditor's office.

**Mr. Hagel:** — That would also be true if it was . . . if the request came from Executive Council.

**Ms. Woods:** — That's right, yes.

**The Chair:** — Just a question — being a new Chair, new on this committee — was there . . . was this service . . . information about this service made readily available to . . . I guess we've had, what, three ministers of Finance since the committee was struck and the Crown Corporations Committee, which is now under a different name — are they aware of this service? Has there been adequate communication so that it's not just the PAC (Public Accounts Committee) that knows about the service of your committee?

**Ms. Rennie:** — Well we didn't have a billboard or anything, but we . . . I sent letters to the existing Chairs of the various committees that were . . . or the minister of Finance at the time. And then when I was aware of a change, for example when Mr. Melenchuk became . . . Dr. Melenchuk became minister of Finance, then I sent him a letter. And so I tried to keep on top of who was . . . the changes to the, to the various parties that can use the services of the Audit Committee.

**The Chair:** — All right, I believe Ms. Woods has a comment as well.

**Ms. Woods:** — At the point when the committee was initially appointed by the Speaker, the Speaker did correspond with each of the five entities that could call upon the Audit Committee to make them aware of who had been appointed and the background to it. So that would have been done in 2002 when the first appointments were made.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Chair, a procedural question. Is it our . . . is it this committee's responsibility to either appoint or reappoint and forward that by way of recommendation to the Speaker?

**Ms. Woods:** — We would go through a similar process to the last time either to request nominations from those five groupings, if that's the way the committee wished to approach it. Or if they wanted to recommend the same individuals be appointed, what would happen is the committee would have to agree to that and then we would correspond and pass that recommendation on to the Speaker, similar to what we did the last time. I think we had a letter from you as the Chair to the Speaker.

But prior to that point we also have to consult with the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, which is what was set out in the Act. I would suspect because that committee no longer is in existence but the work has been basically carried on by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies, that that would be the entity that we would correspond with before forwarding the recommendations to the Speaker.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Is it the intentions of the committee to arrive at a decision today as to whether or not we're going to go into a formal procedure or whether we're going to go into recommendations? Or are members wanting to wait on this and make a decision later on?

**The Chair:** — I'm prepared to entertain that discussion for about 10 minutes if there are no other questions for Dr. Rennie. Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Perhaps just on that, I think it probably would be most appropriate to have that discussion after we've addressed our questions to Dr. Rennie. But I think just as a procedure it would be my suggestion that we may want to put this on our next meeting's agenda, just time-wise. And I'm not sure what we need to do by way of correspondence with the other committee as well.

And I guess I'm also assuming that because the committee officially doesn't exist right now — that's the status of the Public Accounts Committee; it has no status at the moment — that things like advising the new Finance minister of the availability hasn't been done because there's been . . .

**The Chair:** — There's no committee. There's no Audit Committee.

**Mr. Hagel:** — . . . there isn't something in existence to be able to do that. So I think we'll want to deal with that as a high priority and get on.

**The Chair:** — Are there any further questions for Dr. Rennie?

Thank you very much. We now have a better understanding of what you did do and what you didn't do but would have liked to have done. Thank you very much for appearing before our committee.

**Ms. Rennie:** — Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — I'm gathering, Mr. Hagel, from your comments, you would like to see this as an issue on the agenda of the next meeting — is that correct? — with the potential of either deciding to operate in some other way or else to renew the process to appoint a committee to succeed the past Audit Committee? Is that what you were saying?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes, I think so, Mr. Chair. It's my hunch this won't take long. I just haven't had a chance to deal with colleagues on the question, and I suspect it's pretty straightforward, as where we'll end up being. But I also wasn't sure. Do we have to get . . . What do we have to get from the Crown or the city . . . sorry, the Committee on Crown and Central Agencies — what do we have to get from them?

**Ms. Woods:** — What happened the last time was that this committee arrived at its list of five individuals. And then we had a letter drafted that went from the Chair of this committee to the Chair of that committee advising them that we had come up with these five names and asking that Chair to raise it with their committee for their comments or if they had any concerns that they could raise it.

He then corresponded back with the Chair. And once we had that, we forwarded . . .

**Mr. Hagel:** — . . . had to make a recommendation to them.

**Ms. Woods:** — Right.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Not a request of them, but a recommendation to them.

**Ms. Woods:** — Basically I think the way the Act is written is that we have to consult with them.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes. Well can we just take a recess maybe for a minute or two now to . . . because maybe we can deal with this right away and get the process rolling. Do we have time?

**The Chair:** — Do you need five minutes?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Oh, I don't think we even need that much time.

**The Chair:** — Okay, we will have a recess of no more than five minutes.

**The committee recessed for a period of time.**

**The Chair:** — Thank you, I will call the meeting back to order. I believe that there has been some discussions about the Audit Committee and whether or not it should continue, and what role that Public Accounts Committee should play in that process. Who is prepared to speak first? Mr. Borgerson.

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Yes, we were just trying to work out the wording for this motion, but we'll start with this, that I move:

That we make a recommendation to the Speaker that the past members of the Audit Committee be reappointed with the Chair who was in place at that time.

**The Chair:** — Okay, there will be discussion of that motion, and I guess I would have a question. Under the Act, are we allowed to reappoint, or do we have to again go to the stakeholder groups — the chartered accountants, the academics — and ask them to again submit names for this committee?

**Ms. Woods:** — If I could address that, I think it's essentially in the hands of the Public Accounts Committee how it wants to approach the coming up with a recommendation, so I think there's no restrictions on how they wish to go about it. So if they do want to simply reappoint the ones that were appointed before or if they want to go back and consult with different stakeholder groups or even a different set of stakeholder groups, that's within the purview of the committee to do.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Well then your motion would be in order, Mr. Borgerson. I guess if one of the committee members didn't agree, then we would have to go back to the stakeholder group that that person represented and ask them to resubmit a name. But if they all agreed, then the former committee could be reinstated as the committee that would serve the twenty-fifth legislature. Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — And I agree with Mr. Borgerson's motion.

What happened previous though is that the auditor's Act doesn't say what process is followed in, in this committee choosing its appointees. So what happened was that the Audit Committee then put in place that structure that Ms. Woods has provided that said, we contacted those five agencies; we felt we had to have a person from those five areas. And I think Dr. Rennie indicated to you that, you know, that was a fairly good procedure; she felt it represented a broad range of sectors.

So those are not the guidelines of the auditor's Act. Those are actually the guidelines that was created by the Public Accounts Committee that said, this is a good way of how we could get people to put their names forward. And that's how we . . . That's the process that we followed.

If we were hearing from Dr. Rennie that the people who have been on the committee would remain on the committee, then it's just a matter of saying according to the auditor's Act here

that we now submit to the Speaker a recommendation of the five names. Prior to that of course, consultation has to occur with the new committee on, as you called it, Crowns, agencies, and . . .

**Ms. Woods:** — Crown and Central Agencies.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Crown and Central Agencies, which will then either reject or approve of our five.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — I think the wording of the motion has to reflect the fact that the . . . are prepared to recommend these five names to the Speaker upon . . . or after consultation with the . . . so that the other committee is consulted prior to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, she takes care of the details.

**The Chair:** — We're busily drafting here, as you speak, and we will have the motion read back before we vote on it.

My concern of course is that — and from the information I have, there's no problem — is that whatever we do, we don't contravene the Act. And it's my understanding that this motion would not contravene the Act and is probably the quickest route to re-establishing the committee. Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, just in terms of expediting our objective and following appropriate procedure, it wasn't clear to me whether we want to designate our unanimous recommendation for Chair in this motion or we wanted to defer that until we'd gotten the endorsement or otherwise of the other committee and then, and then at that point determining who we recommend as Chair.

The thing that concerns me is that we need, I think procedurally we need to leave open the possibility that, that the central . . . the Committee on Crown and Central Agencies may not endorse the recommendation, and therefore it seemed to me that we may be a little premature at this point in time in recommending our Chair without being confident that we've got the final list.

**The Chair:** — Well the motion as it now stands would not, does not speak to the establishment of a Chair. It just speaks to the re-establishment of the existing committee without mentioning any positions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Did you? Okay, I apologize.

**Mr. Borgerson:** — But since it was missed, maybe we should just, just keep it out. I'm in total agreement.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Trew, and then Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question, it's a question of procedure. Who appoints the Chair? Is that the job of Public Accounts Committee, or is it the job of the Audit Committee? It's the job of . . . I see Mr. Krawetz indicating it's the job of the Public Accounts Committee. Okay, then that . . . Now I'm satisfied and I know what stream we're flowing.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Yes, just I concur with Mr. Hagel. I think we have to have the opportunity for the central agency committee

to maybe reject one of the names and that might be a name that we are considering for chairperson.

So I think procedurally we now have decided that these would be the five names that we're putting forward in the way of a recommendation. First of all it has to be concurred upon by the central agency. If it's then concurred upon, it goes to the Speaker. At that point then, once those five people are in place as the committee, this committee then makes a recommendation, unanimous recommendation that does say to the Speaker that we appoint person from that committee to be the Chair.

**The Chair:** — Actually, that's correct, Mr. Krawetz, except actually the Speaker makes the appointment upon a recommendation. Right, right. Do we have motion to read back?

We'll try this and see if this sounds right:

That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommend the reappointment of the five original members of the Audit Committee, appointed during the twenty-fourth legislature, to the Speaker after consultation with the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Moved by Mr. Borgerson.

**Mr. Hagel:** — On this one, do we want to as part of the motion specifically name those individuals? Does that matter?

**Ms. Woods:** — I could add that into it certainly, yes.

**The Chair:** — Would you prefer to have those names?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Just in terms of the motion being as informative as it could.

**The Chair:** — All right. Consider that done. Any other discussion on the motion? All in favour? No, I don't get to vote unless there's a tie, and it's unanimous. My hand was up.

**Mr. Hagel:** — What happens if we're all unanimous and you're not?

**The Chair:** — Yes, I was concerned about that; that's why I put my hand up. I'm starting to see where the Chair can be the bad guy in this committee through no fault of his own.

Thank you. We will now move to the final item on our agenda, and we are pretty much on time. We have 15 minutes so that Mr. Trew can get to his responsibilities on time.

Report on the broadcasting of committee proceedings and I would ask the witness . . . We have Gary Ward with us, director of broadcast services.

And Gary, we had a bit of a discussion at our establishment meeting a week ago about the mechanics of broadcasting these committee hearings to the province of Saskatchewan, and we would like first of all to thank you for coming to answer those questions and ask you to make a presentation at this time.

**Mr. Ward:** — Thank you. Good morning, everyone. First of all I'd like to give you just a little background on how — when we're broadcasting in Regina — how it goes out here.

Since we began broadcasting, we've been carried on what's called an analog channel in Regina, channel 2. Now unfortunately that is also the shopping network, which is in fact a revenue-producing channel for Access Communications. So when they give up time to carry the legislative proceedings and committee proceedings, it's actually costing them money.

But the good news is that they have agreed to carry the proceedings of this particular committee on Tuesday mornings from 10:30 until 11:55 — at the latest Mr. Trew at your request. So that's the good news. And the bad news is that when I finally did get the agreement to have them carry this, the president said, well, don't sneak any more committees in on me. I just can't give up any more.

**The Chair:** — We're the last ones.

**Mr. Ward:** — This is it; that's right.

**The Chair:** — Do you have any more to report to us?

**Mr. Ward:** — Well I do have another item that I would like to discuss briefly which I discussed with you.

**The Chair:** — Right. I think you should just present everything, and then we'll open up for questions.

**Mr. Ward:** — Okay. Well the other item was, and I spoke with the Chair, Mr. Hermanson, on this before I spoke to you guys. And I want to just say that the way the system works upstairs in the House, the audio system is tied into the video system. And so when the audio system turns on a microphone the camera goes automatically to that shot.

But upstairs you can only have one microphone on at a time and I've noticed down here there's often four or five microphones on at a time so we cannot have it tied to the audio system. Plus it's a much more expensive system to use.

So I would ask, whenever possible, that you be recognized before you speak because we have to actually find you physically with the camera. And we'd like to maintain our excellence in broadcasting, which exceeds all of our sister jurisdictions and make sure that we're the best as usual. So if we could have your co-operation on that.

Just, you know, to clarify it, when two people are exchanging back and forth, that's okay because we already have the shots. But if someone else jumps in from another position, we have to find that person and, you know, we just don't, we just don't have the ability to do that that quickly.

So anyway, that's just a request.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Well thank you. Thank you very much for that advice. I'm not sure we're very good actors, but we'll try to take our cues appropriately.

So then, just to reiterate, this committee will be shown live . . .

**Mr. Ward:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — . . . as we proceed every morning at 10:30. So I suppose it's quite critical then that we start our meetings on time, at 10:30?

**Mr. Ward:** — Yes. Beginning times are important.

**The Chair:** — Right. Right. And of course, it's also important that you all look very well when you come to committee.

Mr. Trew.

**Mr. Trew:** — Yes. Thank you. Is that the way I'm supposed to do it, Mr. Ward? Wait for the mike?

Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is respecting, do we have an agreement with SaskTel and the *Max*?

The reason I ask that is that's the system I use at home and we have the legislative channel. So will this committee be broadcast through SaskTel's *Max* system as well?

**Mr. Ward:** — Yes. Everything that we televise goes out to SaskTel. I assume that they have a dedicated channel in every location. I'm not really familiar with what their network is. But we have been clear there, from the beginning, that they have total access to everything we do here and that that is on that fibre line that we ran out of here before we started using satellite.

We have a fibre line that goes direct to SaskTel so they have . . . that's their line and they're paying for it now, instead of us and they have total access to it.

**Mr. Trew:** — Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Three quick questions, Mr. Chair, even before the microphone comes on here. I'm assuming from what you said, Gary, that there is no additional cost to the public broadcasting of the committee.

**Mr. Ward:** — That's right, yes. That is assuming that it is within our monthly allotment. We pay \$30,000 a month, but that gives us 24 hours a day.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Okay.

**Mr. Ward:** — But out of session, if you were to come back for one day, I would be paying \$500 an hour.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Out of session.

**Mr. Ward:** — That's correct. Like, intersessionally. I mean, say if you came back in August or something or September and I had to call . . . You know, if you said, well we want to meet next week. I mean, I do need some lead time as well because we have to arrange it with the ExpressVu, with the satellite company.

**Mr. Hagel:** — And that would be true for any and all

committees that meet intersessionally — \$500 an hour?

**Mr. Ward:** — That's correct. Unless of course you worked up 60 hours in a month, in which case it would automatically go to the \$30,000 rule which gives us the unlimited time for that month.

But as it stands now — and I don't know whether there's going to be fall sittings or not — but as it stands now, we have arranged for four months of the year that we paid, we budgeted for. So we would get four full months, 24 hours a day. And outside of that, we actually have to pay \$500 an hour. We wouldn't get the special rate after the four months either; it would be \$500 an hour.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Okay. Just, Mr. Chair, because I think we're going to get to a conclusion here at some point in terms of decision to broadcast, so we may want to make an interim decision related to sessional and then deal with the other questions separately at another time, just in light of that information. Because I wasn't sure; I did have a notion that there was some kind of blanket coverage and then special.

Then in terms of the camera usage then — because you were referring to that — are the rules the same in committee as they are in the House, that you wouldn't . . . To what degree would you use the camera backed up and panning the committee? Or will the use here be as it is in the House, that it's full frontal here? Maybe that's not the term I want to be using here.

**A Member:** — Are we on live now?

**Mr. Hagel:** — It may be a good thing we're not broadcasting at the moment here.

But that it's just the individual shot, is that what will be used?

**Mr. Ward:** — That's what we're doing; yes; we're taking the tight shots of the members. But there is a wide shot of the committee meeting, and that is this camera directly behind me, and that's the same as in the House — that's a shot of the whole House. And that's our safe shot because when you are . . . when we're trying to find another shot, we go to that one.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Until you can pull the close one.

**Mr. Ward:** — That's correct, yes. So there's always something on and this is our safe shot. So we see everybody, except of course the witnesses which are . . . you just see their heads you know when you have a full wide.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Right, but then the . . . (inaudible) . . . pick them up from there?

And thirdly then, with the . . . as we're going to a more publicly unpredictable system of committee meetings because we don't have . . . we have not adopted a predetermined schedule for the policy field committees at this stage, and you know when they're meetings simultaneously, one from here will be live — I think is what we've agreed — from the House, will be delayed. But there may be days, for example, when there is no committee meeting that could happen, or committees could be meeting in the morning you know outside of the normal House,

regularly scheduled House times, and that could certainly happen by committee decision. What's the legislative channel's way then of communicating to the public of the upcoming schedule? Do we have a system in place?

**Mr. Ward:** — We have nothing because we very seldom know . . . well we don't know until you tell us. And that's . . .

**Mr. Hagel:** — Right. But I think we do know for example that Public Accounts is going to meet every Tuesday from 10:30 to 11:45. We know that.

**Mr. Ward:** — Yes.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Are you working on a way, even though it may not be largely in advance? If I go to the legislative channel and nothing's on, then what do I get?

**A Member:** — The shopping channel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well in Regina I get the shopping channel. But outside of Regina what do I see on the screen?

**Mr. Ward:** — Well in the mornings we play . . . replay the question period and then some educational videos. And normally by this time we would be playing mini-biographies of the members. But that's on . . .

**Mr. Hagel:** — So it wouldn't be a difficult thing to put into that rotation just the known schedule of broadcasts coming later this day or over the course of the week?

**Mr. Ward:** — That's correct; we'd be happy to do that. It may require another piece of equipment, but it's certainly something we'd like to be able to do. If you can provide us with a calendar, we'd be glad to provide any information that we can because it's important to the viewing public.

**The Chair:** — If the Chair could interject because I am conscious of time; I did make a commitment. I believe that we do need a bit more information about particularly how this committee and others might be televised when the House is not in session, that will happen in some cases.

Perhaps an agreement could be made with carriers that . . . and I don't know, you know, I don't know what the deal is now, but there may be so many hours a month that we aren't charged. If there was a certain slot where we taped various committees, we could always the plug the committees into that slot, I know that federally they do that.

So we may have to look with the new system at some new options that might work out well — better actually for the carriers, because there would be some continuity and they're not having broadcasts all hours of the day particularly when the House is in sitting. Perhaps would it be appropriate to ask Mr. Ward to review that a little bit farther as to what options may be available, particularly out of session.

And, Mr. Borgerson, you had your hand up. Do you still have a question? I don't want to cut you off.

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Mr. Chair, just as an item of curiosity.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a technical question: the monitors here are amplified and it's a very small room. Do you think there's a need for that?

**Mr. Ward:** — On your microphone?

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Yes.

**Mr. Ward:** — Yes there is, at least from any meetings I've had in here, I mean it's really helpful. I have trouble hearing across the room — and mind you I'm probably older than a lot of people here — but I have trouble hearing. And back there of course it's amplified as well for the gallery.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. Would it be appropriate at this point to have a motion to broadcast this committee when the House is in session? And if so, would someone be prepared to make that motion? Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — Yes, Mr. Chair, I would move:

That we broadcast committee proceedings during session.

**The Chair:** — Is there any discussion to the motion?

**A Member:** — Effective next week?

**Mr. Yates:** — Effective our next meeting. Yes.

**The Chair:** — It will be the first Tuesday in May, whatever day that is. Fourth of May.

**Mr. Yates:** — Effective May 4.

**The Chair:** — Any questions or comments? Ready for the question? All in favour? That is unanimously carried.

Thank you, Mr. Ward. We would like to get, I think, a bit more information about what our options are out of session. And it will probably be impactful to other committees as well. So I thank you for bringing this to our attention. If we misbehave and if we aren't good TV if you'd also inform us, I'm sure we'd be most grateful for that help.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, I assume then to given the standards for broadcasting that we're going to consider the committee dress code is the same as the House.

**The Chair:** — That I think decision that can be made by this committee. I've been watching the House of Commons committees and they seem to be quite free to pull their jackets off. But you know that's something that we would determine as a committee.

Given some of your earlier comments, I was thinking you were talking about reality television here or something. I wasn't sure what you had in mind, Mr. Hagel. So perhaps we may need an in-camera discussion on this one.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Some kind of a survivor approach to this thing.

**Mr. Ward:** — If I could just say one more thing before I leave. I'm assured that down the road within the next five years — five to eight years, I couldn't be specific — they'll be fully digital at Access Communications and that encompasses a fair amount of large area . . . cities. So when it's digital we will have our own channel; it will be no problem at all because they have hundreds of channels then. So at least it's something to look forward to.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. We'll discuss dress at a subsequent meeting if it's required. I declare the meeting adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 11:53.





