

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



SECOND REPORT

May 15, 2002

3rd SESSION of the 24th LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Krawetz, Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presents the Committee's second report of the Twenty-fourth Legislature.

I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The responsibility of carrying out a competition to fill the position of Provincial Auditor was a novel one for your Committee. In approaching this task, your Committee sought the assistance of two individuals with recognized expertise. Your Committee wishes to extend its appreciation to Clare Isman, Executive Director, Human Resource Development, Public Service Commission and to G.N. (Arnie) Arnott, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, Saskatchewan Blue Cross for their valuable insight and effort while serving on the selection committee.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Office of the Clerk for administrative support and procedural advice, to the Hansard branch for preparing the verbatim record and to the other branches of the Assembly that contributed their own expertise that enabled the proceedings to operate smoothly.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The position of Provincial Auditor has been vacant since March 2000 when the incumbent, Wayne Strelloff, accepted the position of Auditor General of British Columbia.

During the 2001 Spring legislative Session, amendments were adopted to The Provincial Auditor Act that enhanced the independence of the Provincial Auditor by providing for an independent selection and appointment process. Under the new provisions, the task of developing a process for the selection of a new Provincial Auditor and overseeing the competition was delegated to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The Act specifies that it is the Standing Committee on Public Accounts who is charged with unanimously recommending an individual to the Legislative Assembly, which then makes the appointment by resolution.

In approaching this task last fall, your committee sought input from the Office of the Provincial Auditor and the Office of the Provincial Comptroller. In addition, the guidelines previously agreed to by the Committee in its First Report (May 2001) were reviewed. It was decided that the selection process outlined in this report would be followed.

III. THE SELECTION PROCESS

The first step undertaken by your Committee in developing a fair and open competition was to seek the assistance of individuals experienced in the selection of senior public sector executives and in the accounting field. It was agreed that a three person selection committee would be appointed and consist of a person designated by the Office of the Clerk, a senior staffing officer from the Public Service Commission, and an independent individual who is a member in good standing with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan, who holds a senior position within the private sector, the academic field or the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan, and who is not engaged in public practice.

Names for each of these positions were solicited from the Office of the Clerk, the Public Service Commission and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan respectively. After deliberating on the nominations, Clerk Assistant Margaret Woods, Clare Isman, Executive Director of Human Resource Development with the Public Service Commission and G.N. (Arnie) Arnott, Vice President of Finance and Administration with Saskatchewan Blue Cross, were chosen to fill these positions.

The selection committee was immediately tasked with drafting a recruitment process for the committee's consideration. They were also charged with the responsibility to draft an advertisement, position profile and selection criteria. In considering the most effective approach in reaching the intended audience, the Committee chose to place the advertisement in the two provincial dailies and in one national newspaper. In addition, the advertisement was distributed electronically and through professional mail-outs of the provincial Chartered Accountant Institutes. The advertisement and position profile were also posted on the Legislative Assembly website. A total of 17 resumés were received. Three Saskatchewan residents applied, ten from elsewhere in Canada and there were four international applicants.

The selection committee approved a preliminary shortlist of three candidates. A standard set of questions touching upon each of the competencies enumerated in the position profile was asked of each candidate to ensure consistency and fairness. These candidates were interviewed on April 12, 2002. Based upon the responses received, the shortlist was reduced to two candidates. The selection committee unanimously agreed to forward these two names for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

A second interview was scheduled with the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on April 30, 2002. A second set of questions was developed for this interview. By prior agreement, the members of selection committee were designated to pose the questions, while the members of the Public Accounts Committee observed and sought clarification from the candidates.

A final meeting took place on May 1, 2002 to deliberate on the Committee's recommendation. A unanimous decision was reached.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

After carefully reviewing the qualifications of each candidate and the results of the interviews, our committee unanimously makes the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to s. 3.1(1) of The Provincial Auditor Act, your Committee unanimously recommends to the Legislative Assembly the name of G. Fred Wendel, for appointment to the position of Provincial Auditor for the Province of Saskatchewan.

A biography of G. Fred Wendel appears in Appendix One.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Krawetz, Chair
Standing Committee on Public Accounts

APPENDIX ONE

Biography of G. Fred Wendel

Legislative auditors are a key link in the chain of public accountability in our parliamentary system of government. Mr. Wendel has extensive experience as a legislative auditor. He has worked as a professional auditor for more than 30 years in both the private and public sectors.

Mr Wendel has held progressively more senior positions in the public sector. He has served as the Acting Provincial Auditor for the past two years and for one year in 1990. He was the Assistant Provincial Auditor since 1983 and Deputy Provincial Auditor from 1976 to 1983. He has also served as the chief financial officer for companies in both the private and public sectors.

Mr. Wendel is a chartered accountant and a certified management accountant.

Mr Wendel was born and raised in Melville, Saskatchewan. He is a lifetime Saskatchewan resident and has lived in several communities in the province. He is married and has three children and six grandchildren.