

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

November 27, 2001

MINUTE NO. 22

9:00 a.m. - Room 10

1. **PRESENT:** Mr. Krawetz in the Chair and Members Atkinson*, Gantefer, Goulet*, Harper, Jones, Kwiatkowski, McCall*, Stewart and Wakefield.

Substituting Members

Ms. Atkinson for Ms. Higgins

Mr. Goulet for Ms. Junor

Mr. McCall for Mr. Wartman

Provincial Auditor's Office

Fred Wendel, Acting Provincial Auditor

Brian Atkinson, Acting Assistant Provincial Auditor

Bashar Ahmad, Executive Director

Mike Heffernan, Executive Director

Ed Montgomery, Executive Director

Jane Knox, Principal

Corrine Rybchuk, Principal

Rosemarie Volk, Principal

Victor Schwab, Manager

Leslie Wendel, Manager

Provincial Comptroller's Office

Terry Paton, Provincial Comptroller

Chris Bayda, Executive Director, Financial Management Branch

Jane Borland, Manager

Tamara Stocker, Analyst

Cindy Nim, Analyst

2. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 9 (Finance) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Ahmad of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Department of Finance officials appeared before the Committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ron Styles, Deputy Minister

Glen Veikle, Assistant Deputy Minister, Treasury Board Branch

Brian Smith, Executive Director, Public Employees Benefits Agency

Joanne Brockman, Executive Director, Economic and Fiscal Policy Branch

Terry Paton, Provincial Comptroller

3. The Committee concurred with recommendation 9-1 made at page 160 of Chapter 9 (Finance) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor* that the Department should seek change to the provisions of *The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979* to make them consistent with Canada's *Income Tax Act*.

4. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 8 (Pensions) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Ahmad of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.
5. The Committee concurred with recommendation 8-1 made at page 146 of Chapter 8 (Pensions) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor* that the Pension Plans should establish rules and procedures to ensure all retired members receiving a pension, who have returned to work for the Government, are paid in accordance with the law; or alternatively, the Pension Plans should seek changes to the law.
6. The Committee disagreed with recommendation 8-2 made at page 147 of Chapter 8 (Pensions) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor* that the Government should establish an oversight body to provide advice to the Government about its pension plans, and to provide guidance and direction to its pension plans. The Committee noted that the Government does have systems in place to manage its public sector pension plans.
7. The Committee proceeded to consider the *Fall 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)* (Understanding the Finances of Government). Mr. Montgomery of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.
8. The Committee next considered recommendation 1 made at page 23 of the *Fall 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)* (Understanding the Finances of Government) that the Government should publish a financial plan for the entire Government. It was agreed that a decision on this recommendation would be deferred until the Committee had received a presentation from officials of the Provincial Auditor and the Department of Finance on how other governments had approached the issue.
9. The Committee recessed from 10:50 a.m. until 11:20 a.m.
10. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 3 (Rate regulation in the public sector) of the *Spring 2000 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Montgomery of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Crown Investment Corporation of Saskatchewan official appeared before the Committee and answered questions:

Witness

Nancy Croll, Senior Project Manager, Crown Corporation Services Division

11. The Committee recessed from 11:35 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
12. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 1A (Improving public sector planning and reporting: Key processes to plan) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Heffernan of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Department of Finance officials appeared before the Committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ron Styles, Deputy Minister

Naomi Mellor, Executive Director, Performance Management Branch

13. The Committee concurred with recommendation 1A-1 made at page 15 of Chapter 1A (Improving public sector planning and reporting: Key processes to plan) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor* that the Government and its agencies should consider the processes to plan outlined in this chapter when they develop or revise their long-term plans. The Committee noted that the Department is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
14. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 1B (Improving public sector planning and reporting: Capital asset plans) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Ms. Knox of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.
15. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 1C (Improving public sector planning and reporting: Principles for performance reporting) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Heffernan of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.
16. The Committee concurred with recommendation 1C-1 made at page 42 of Chapter 1C (Improving public sector planning and reporting: Principles for performance reporting) of the *Spring 2001 Report of the Provincial Auditor* that the Government should consider the reporting principles outlined in this chapter as it continues to develop public reporting guidelines for its agencies. The Committee noted that the Department is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
17. It was moved by Mr. Gantefer:

That this Committee do now adjourn.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.
18. The Committee adjourned at 2:02 p.m. until 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2001.

Margaret A. Woods
Committee Clerk

Ken Krawetz
Committee Chair