

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

October 22, 2002

MINUTE NO. 30

9:00 a.m. - Room 10

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

Other Members

Ms. Draude, Mr. Weekes

Provincial Auditor's Office

Fred Wendel, Provincial Auditor

Brian Atkinson, Assistant Provincial Auditor

Mobashar Ahmad, Deputy Provincial Auditor

Judy Ferguson, Deputy Provincial Auditor

Kelly Deis, Principal

Rodd Jersak, Principal

Mark Anderson, Manager

Bill Harasymchuk, Manager

Provincial Comptroller's Office

Chris Bayda, Executive Director, Financial Management Branch

Larry Boys, Manager, Financial Management Branch

Frank Garrett, Analyst, Financial Management Branch

2. The committee proceeded to consider Chapter 16 (Standing Committee on Public Accounts) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Jersak of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.
3. The following documents were tabled:

PAC 25/24 – Department of Finance: Government's response to the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, dated October 17, 2002.

PAC 26/24 – Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board: Strategic and Operational Plan 2002-2004.

4. The committee next proceeded to consider Chapter 16 (Energy and Mines) of the *2001 Fall Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 2)*. Mr. Ahmad of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Department of Industry and Resources officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Larry Spanier, Deputy Minister

Hal Sanders, Acting Executive Director, Mineral Revenue and Investment Services Division

5. It was moved by Ms. Atkinson that:

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts reaffirms the position taken by the committee on September 28, 2001.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

6. The committee recessed from 9:55 a.m. until 10:35 a.m.
7. The committee proceeded to consider Chapter 9 (Office of the Chief Electoral Officer) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Ms. Ferguson of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Office of the Chief Electoral Officer official appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Jan Baker, Chief Electoral Officer

8. The committee disagreed with recommendation 9-1 made at page 89 of Chapter 9 (Office of the Chief Electoral Officer) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor* that *The Election Act, 1996* should be changed to require auditors of returns to report whether the returns of the candidates and of the registered political parties present fairly the contributions received and expenses incurred.
9. The committee next considered recommendation 9-2 made at page 89 of Chapter 9 (Office of the Chief Electoral Officer) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor* that *The Election Act, 1996* should be changed to require auditors of political parties and candidates to report on compliance with the Electoral Office's rules to ensure completeness of returns.

It was moved by Mr. Gantefoer that:

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts does not concur with the recommendation 9-2 in light of the guidelines that have been issued by the Chief Electoral Officer.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

10. The committee concurred with recommendation 9-3 made at page 89 of Chapter 9 (Office of the Chief Electoral Officer) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor* that the Electoral Office should prepare and submit to the Speaker its annual report as required by *The Election Act, 1996*. The committee noted that the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is making progress towards complying with the recommendation and strongly recommends that an annual report be tabled in the Assembly by March 2003.
11. The committee recessed from 11:35 a.m. until 1:15 p.m.

12. The committee proceeded to consider Chapter 14 (Education) of the *2001 Fall Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 2)*. Ms. Ferguson of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Department of Learning officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Dr. Craig Dotson, Deputy Minister
Lily Stonehouse, Assistant Deputy Minister
John McLaughlin, Executive Director, Teachers' Superannuation Commission
George Meredith, Acting Executive Director, Financial Policy and Program Support

13. The committee concurred with recommendation 14-1 made at page 341 of Chapter 12 (Education) of the *2001 Fall Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 2)* that Department of Learning should follow the rates set out in the School Grant Regulations when determining its share of the costs of capital projects.
14. The committee proceeded to consider Chapter 12 (Labour) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Anderson of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.

The following Department of Labour officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Christine Tanner, Deputy Minister
Allan Walker, Executive Director, Occupational Health and Safety Division
Glennis Bihun, Manager Responsible for Occupational Health and Safety Committees

15. The committee concurred with recommendation 12-1 made at page 121 of Chapter 12 (Labour) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor* that Department of Labour should improve its processes to respond consistently to occupational health committees that request assistance, and to identify occupational health committees that do not conduct workplace safety inspections regularly.
16. The committee concurred with recommendation 12-2 made at page 122 of Chapter 12 (Labour) of the *2002 Spring Report of the Provincial Auditor* that Department of Labour should take consistent action when occupational health committees in high-risk work places do not submit timely minutes or do not respond to repeated requests from the Department
17. The Chair advised the committee that a letter had been sent to the Department of Justice to inquire whether their recommendation of November 21, 2002 regarding the status of investigations into the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority and the committee's review of the Provincial Auditor's Reports was still current. To date, a response had not been received.
18. The committee adjourned at 2:10 p.m. until 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 23rd.

Margaret A. Woods
Committee Clerk

Ken Krawetz
Committee Chair