

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

April 22, 1992

MINUTE NO. 11

1. **PRESENT:** Mr. Swenson in the Chair and Members Anguish, Harper, Johnson, Muirhead, Murray, Serby, Sonntag and Van Mulligen

**Officials:**

**Provincial Auditor's Office**

Wayne Strelloff, Provincial Auditor  
Fred Wendel, Assistant Provincial Auditor  
John Hunt, Deputy Provincial Auditor  
Brian Atkinson, Executive Director  
Garnet Rathgeber, Auditor

**Comptroller's Office**

Gerry Kraus, Provincial Comptroller

2. The Committee resumed its review of the documents entitled *Guidelines for Public Accounts Committees in Canada* and *Comparative Jurisdictional Implementation Survey*.

The Committee considered each Guideline and in each case, a debate arose.

3. No. 37 — carried.

**The Vice-Chairman shall be either a member of the official opposition party or the government party. The Vice-Chairman shall be elected by the Committee at the beginning of the first session of Parliament and serve for the life of the legislature or until replaced. If a vacancy occurs, a new Vice-Chairman shall be elected immediately.**

4. No. 38 — It was agreed that Guideline No. 38 be allowed to stand as it is an inadvertent repetition of Guideline No. 37.

5. No. 39 — carried as amended.

**The Steering Committee shall be established at the Public Accounts Committee's first meeting. Members of the Steering Committee shall include the Chairman and one member from each party caucus.**

It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee will act as Steering Committee for the Committee.

6. No. 40 — carried.

**The role of the Steering Committee is to review sensitive documents and to monitor the progress of Committee work.**

It was agreed that while one of the functions of the Steering Committee is to determine which witnesses the Committee will invite subject to approval by the Committee, the Committee will spend more time with the Provincial Auditor in identifying the issues and will play a larger role in setting the agenda.

7. No. 41 — carried

**The Steering Committee should meet at the call of the Chairman and hold all its meetings *in camera*.**

8. No. 42 — carried

**The Steering Committee meetings shall be held *in camera*. Minutes of these meetings may be kept at the discretion of the Chairman and if kept would be distributed only to Committee members.**

9. No. 43 — carried, as amended

**Meetings *in camera* shall be held by the whole committee to:**

- **brief members on the subjects the Committee will review;**
- **draft and approve the Committee's Reports;**
- **discuss personnel matters; and**
- **plan strategies regarding Committee relationships with other committees and key leaders in the Legislature.**

It was agreed that briefings by the Provincial Auditor and the Comptroller on subjects the Committee will review will be *in camera*; that discussion of the Committee's draft reports to the Assembly will be *in camera* but that final approval thereof will be in public.

10. No. 44 — carried, as amended

**Public Accounts Committee hearings for taking testimony should be open to the public and press, however *in camera* hearings shall be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman.**

It was agreed that *in camera* meetings shall be allowed at the discretion of the Committee.

11. No. 45 — carried

***In camera* hearings should only be held in instances when evidence of a particularly sensitive nature is given.**

12. No. 46 — carried

**The Auditor General or his representative shall attend all Committee hearings, except where the Committee or Auditor feel the circumstances do not require his presence.**

13. No. 47 — carried

**The Committee shall have made available meeting rooms in which to hold hearings and meetings, in or nearby the legislative buildings.**

It was agreed that the Committee may decide to meet outside the Legislative Building, subject to approval of the Assembly.

14. No. 48 — carried

**A quorum shall be required at Committee meetings and hearings only if a vote is to be taken.**

On motion of Mr. Harper, it was agreed that the Committee authorizes the Chairman, pursuant to Rule 93(2), to hold meetings to conduct hearings and receive evidence when a quorum is not present provided that a full quorum shall be required whenever a vote, resolution, or other decision is taken by the Committee.

15. No. 49 — carried, as amended

**Verbatim transcripts should be prepared for all public hearings and meetings. Verbatim transcripts should be prepared for *in camera* hearings and meetings at the discretion of the Chairman.**

It was agreed that the need for verbatim transcripts for *in camera* meetings would be at the discretion of the Committee.

16. No. 50 — carried

**Minutes shall be kept of all Committee meetings and hearings.**

17. No. 51 — carried

**All motions made at public hearings and meetings should be set aside and dealt with by the Committee later.**

It was agreed that motions for major items should be deferred to the next meeting to allow members time to prepare for debate.

18. No. 52 — carried

**Meetings of the Committee shall be held from time to time for professional development purposes.**

19. No. 53 — carried

**The Committee shall table a report at least annually in the Legislative Assembly.**

20. No. 54 — carried

**The Committee's Report should be detailed and comprehensive and able to stand on its own.**

21. No. 55 — carried

**The Committee may make references to any reviews of confidential evidence which it has conducted but shall not include the content of such evidence in its report.**

22. No. 56 — negative

**The Committee may include minority reports in its report to the Legislature.**

It was agreed that the Committee continue with its practice of not including minority reports, dissenting opinions or reservations in its reports to the Assembly.

23. No. 57 — carried

**The Committee should not include the names of individuals in its reports unless Committee members agree that the circumstances warrant it.**

24. No. 58.— carried

**The Chairman shall table all Committee reports in the Legislature.**

25. No. 59 — carried

**The Committee shall have effective follow-up procedures to determine if action has been taken to implement its recommendations.**

It was agreed that the Committee continue its practice of receiving follow-up reports from the Comptroller on the Committee's recommendations to the Assembly and that the Committee continue requesting a government response within 120 days of tabling its recommendations in the Assembly.

26. The Committee proceeded to the consideration of certain guidelines contained in the document entitled Improving Accountability: Canadian Public Accounts Committees and Legislative Auditors.

27. No. 6 — carried

**Chairmen of public accounts committees explain to witnesses their legal position in regard to future actions that may arise from testimony.**

28. No. 11 — carried

**Chairmen play a leading role in all aspects of committee work and participate in the questioning of witnesses and in other committee deliberations.**

29. No. 23 — carried

**Committees arrange for suitable briefing material to be available to members prior to hearings, and if necessary set time aside to review it.**

30. No. 27 — carried

**Public accounts committees schedule sufficient, regular meetings to discharge their responsibilities.**

31. No. 30 — carried

**Public accounts committees concentrate their attention on significant issues of management and financial administration other than on isolated, unimportant, individual transactions.**

32. At 11:45 a.m., the sitting was suspended.

At 1:30 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

33. The Committee proceeded to the consideration of the document entitled, *Mandate of the Public Accounts Committee*.

34. It was agreed that the document be amended at line 5 on page 1 by deleting the words "during the year under review".
35. It was agreed that the document be amended at line 5 from the bottom on page 1 by adding the words "Committee and/or the" immediately after the words, "issues that the".
36. It was agreed that the document be amended at line 17 on page 2 by deleting the word "privatization" and substituting the word "divestiture" therefore.
37. It was that the document entitled *Mandate of the Public Accounts Committee* be adopted as amended.
38. The Committee proceeded to the consideration of the document entitled *Operating Principles/Practices*.
39. It was agreed that the document be allowed to stand pending an update based on the discussions on the Guidelines.
40. The Committee proceeded to the consideration of the document entitled *Special Report by the Provincial Auditor, Saskatchewan*, dated April 21, 1992, tabled by the Clerk this day, further to a request by the Committee, on January 10, 1992, to the Provincial Auditor to undertake a specific assignment.
41. At 3:13 p.m., the Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair.

COMMITTEE CLERK  
Robert Vaive

CHAIRMAN  
R.J.Swenson