

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

February 19, 1998

MINUTE NO. 32

9:30 a.m. — Room 10

1. **PRESENT:** Ms. Draude in the Chair and Members, Gantefoer, Hillson, Jess, Koenker, Stanger, Tchorzewski, Thomson and Whitmore.

Provincial Auditor's Office

Wayne Strelloff, Provincial Auditor
Fred Wendel, Assistant Provincial Auditor
Mike Heffernan, Executive Director
Linda Kuntz, Executive Coordinator
Amy Kinvig, Auditor
Carey Robertson, Communications Intern

Provincial Comptroller's Office

Terry Paton, Provincial Comptroller
Chris Bayda, Director, Financial Management Branch

2. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 6 (Accountability Information Required) of the *Fall 1996 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Wendel of the Provincial Auditor's office provided an overview and update of the chapter and responded to questions put by Members.
3. The Committee recessed at 9:45 a.m. until 10:17 a.m. due to a technical problem with the Hansard recording system.
4. Consideration of Chapter 6 (Accountability Information Required) was resumed and the Provincial Comptroller was asked to comment on the chapter.
5. In consideration of the recommendation made at paragraphs 6.08, 6.16, and 6.21, concerning the general provision of financial statements, lists of payees and content of annual reports, it was moved by Mr. Tchorzewski:

That in regards to recommendations; .08, .16 and .21 in Chapter 6 of the Provincial Auditors 1996 Fall Report, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends to the Legislative Assembly the following; that while the committee agrees the spirit of accountability is an important fundamental of government, the committee has come to realize that circumstances for every government agency may be unique and may vary, and that broad sweeping recommendations that blanket all government agencies as

stated in recommendations .08, .16 and .21, are not appropriate; and further, that in regards to; agencies providing financial statements, agencies making public lists of persons who have received money from them and agencies assuring their annual reports include a comparison of their planned to their actual results, the committee recommends the following, that in present and future occasions; in regards to CIC agencies, the committee asks the Assembly to refer these agencies to the Crown Corporations Committee for their consideration of these issues and further, that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts deal with remaining agencies on an individual basis, as the Auditor raises these issues in his future reports.

A debate arising and the question being put, the motion was agreed to.

6. The Committee agreed to advance its agenda and proceed to consider Chapter 9 (How we are accountable).
7. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 9 (How we are Accountable) of the *Fall 1996 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. The Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter and responded to questions put by Members.
8. The Committee recessed at 11:54 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
9. The Committee proceeded to consider Chapter 5 (Department of Executive Council [including the Electoral Office]) of the *Fall 1996 Report of the Provincial Auditor*. Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the chapter and responded to questions put by Members.

The following officials appeared before the Committee and responded to questions put by Members:

Witnesses

Gregory Marchildon, Deputy Minister
Janice Baker, Acting Chief Electoral Officer
Bonita Heidt, Director of Administration

10. In consideration of paragraph 5.14, concerning the collection of anonymous donations under *The Elections Act*, it was moved by Mr. Hillson:

That we recommend the Chief Electoral Officer to enforce the law regarding collection of anonymous donations to be paid over to the General Revenue Fund.

A debate arising and the question being put, the motion was negatived on the following division: yeas 2; nays 4. It was then moved by Mr. Hillson:

That we request the opinion of the Department of Justice received by the Chief Electoral Officer regarding the possibility of prosecutions for anonymous political donations be filed with this Committee.

A debate arising and the question being put, the motion was negatived on the following division: yeas 2; nays 4.

11. In consideration of the recommendation made at paragraph 5.23, concerning rules and procedures for identification of anonymous donations, it was moved by Mr. Tchorzewski:

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts notes the Elections Act, 1996 came into force effective January 1, 1997, and that new rules and procedures are not in effect to ensure that all donations are disclosed in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

A debate arising and the question being put, the motion was agreed to on the following division: yeas 5; nays 0.

12. In consideration of the recommendation made at paragraph 5.29, concerning preparation of an annual report by the Department, it was moved by Mr. Hillson:

That we concur with recommendation 5.29.

The question being put, the motion was negatived.

13. The Committee considered a sessional meeting schedule and method of establishing a business agenda. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would meet and then canvass committee members on a future business agenda and meeting times.

14. It was moved by Mr. Thomson:

That this committee do now adjourn.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

15. The Committee adjourned at 2:40 p.m. to the call of the chair.