

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
REVIEW THE ESTIMATES OF THE
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Committee Room 1

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE ESTIMATES
OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

Hon. Gordon Gosse (Chairman)
Hon. Frank Corbett
Ms. Pam Birdsall
Mr. Maurice Smith
Ms. Becky Kent
Hon. Michel Samson
Mr. Andrew Younger
Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

In Attendance:

Mr. Neil Ferguson
Chief Clerk
House of Assembly

Mr. Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel

Ms. Annette Boucher
Assistant Clerk
House of Assembly

Ms. Deborah Lusby
Director of Administration
Office of the Speaker

Mr. Jacques Lapointe
Auditor General

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2012

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE ESTIMATES
OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

9:08 A.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Gordon Gosse

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we will go to the meeting of the Special Committee of the House of Assembly. On that agenda under Regular Business is the Review of the 2012-13 Estimates of the Office of the Auditor General. Mr. Ferguson.

MR. NEIL FERGUSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm in a bit of a strange position because I'm not really a member of this committee. The committee was appointed to mirror the Management Commission and I'm not a member of the House, so I can't really be a member. I just want to say that the Estimates of the Auditor General have been circulated, and at this point it's probably appropriate for you to recognize the Auditor General. I understand you also have a letter regarding the estimates that were circulated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, so everybody has a copy of the estimates that were circulated, which reads the Office of the Auditor General, 2012-13 Budget Estimates for Consideration by the Special Committee to Review the Estimates of the Auditor General, February 2012. First, before I do that, I would like to read a letter that I received from the honourable Finance Minister. It's to the chairman of the Special Committee to Review the Estimates of the Auditor General:

"Dear Mr. Gosse,

Thank you for providing me with a copy of the Auditor General's report on the 2012-13 estimates for the Office of the Auditor General. We would recommend Budget Option 3, as outlined in the report, within the 2012-2013 budget, in the event that the committee recommends such option.

The report of the Auditor General is coming very late in the budget process. I understand this is a new process this year” - which it was - “and would suggest that the process be moved up by at least two months next year in order to ensure a more timely review and decision.

Yours sincerely,
Graham Steele.”

I will now ask the Auditor General for his comments.

MR. JACQUES LAPOINTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know, the report that I gave to the committee presents my estimates of the funds required to maintain our audit services to the House at the same level that they are today, with the same number of audits. That is the Option 3 that Minister Steele refers to.

It does provide some other comparative options for increases or decreases, but that is my recommendation as well. I certainly agree that yes, we are late in the process and we have given some thought to just dealing with this whole issue. This is a transition year for us in getting this into play, just as the audit of the House is also a transition, so it is taking longer, this is as well, so we’ll be on top of it next year and we’ll discuss with the committee when is a good time to be meeting when we do this again in the future.

In the meantime, I guess it’s fairly straightforward, and Alan Horgan and I are here to answer any questions that you may have on my proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Can I get a resolution from the committee approving Option 3?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I move that we accept Option 3, reflective of the Auditor General’s budget proposal and recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Be recommended?

MR. CORBETT: Yes, to the Treasury Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it’s a resolution by the Honourable Frank Corbett, seconded by Ms. Birdsall.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

That concludes business for today.

MR. CORBETT: Move to adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye.
Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We are now adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 9:13 a.m.]