

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

6

Introduction57

Overview of Committee's role and responsibilities57

Members of the Committee58

The Committee’s key accomplishments59

Summary60

This page left blank intentionally.

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations (Committee). We briefly describe what the Committee does, how it is structured, and how it works. We discuss the importance of the Committee's deliberations and recommendations. We highlight some of its recent accomplishments.

Overview of Committee's role and responsibilities

At the beginning of each Legislature, the Legislative Assembly appoints members of the Committee. The Assembly refers to the Committee the annual reports and financial statements of Crown corporations and related agencies. The Committee uses these reports to review their operations.

Beginning in 2001, reports (or parts of reports) of our Office that relate to the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC) and its subsidiary corporations are referred to the Committee for review. Previously, they were referred to, and reviewed by, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Our Office attends meetings of the Committee to help it in its reviews. When a corporation has an appointed auditor, the Committee also invites the appointed auditor to help in its review.

The Committee focuses its review on corporations that generate revenues from sources other than the General Revenue Fund. During its review, the Committee can inquire about issues of current concern, future objectives, and past performance. Because of the magnitude of financial activity that the Government is managing through Crown corporations, the Committee plays an important role. It helps the Assembly hold the Government accountable for its management of these agencies.

The Committee also requires Crown corporations to submit reports of any significant transactions they enter into. These reports describe the transaction, the objectives of the transaction, its financial implications, and the authority for the transaction. Significant transactions are defined as those that are material in amount and outside the ordinary course of business, or are judged by the Crown corporation to be sensitive and

likely of interest to legislators and the public. As these reports must be submitted with 90 days of the transaction, a more timely review by the Committee is possible.

Ministers responsible for Crown corporations and Crown corporation officials attend the Committee's meetings. They answer questions about the financial results, plans and priorities, and significant transactions of their corporations. Periodically, the Committee formally reports its findings and recommendations to the Assembly.

The Committee's meetings are open to the public. Written records of the Committee's meetings (Hansard verbatims), minutes, and reports are available to the public on the Committee's web page (which is part of the Assembly's Internet web site –

<http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Committees/crcocomm.htm>).

As with the Public Accounts Committee, this Committee's discussions and recommendations to the Assembly result in a more open and accountable government and in better management of government operations. The Committee's work is crucial in a well-managed parliamentary system of government. The Committee provides a vital link in the chain of accountability over public resources. The work of the Committee also contributes to the public's confidence in our system of government.

Members of the Committee

The current members of the Committee are as follows:

- ◆ Harry Van Mulligen, Chair
- ◆ Pat Atkinson, Vice-Chair
- ◆ Greg Brkich
- ◆ David Forbes
- ◆ D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
- ◆ Carolyn Jones
- ◆ Don McMorris
- ◆ Peter Prebble
- ◆ Kim Trew
- ◆ Brad Wall

During 2001-02, the following members also served on the Committee: Graham Addley, Warren McCall, Andrew Thomson, and Kevin Yates.

The Committee's key accomplishments

In the last fiscal year, the Committee reviewed the annual reports and financial statements of several Crown corporations and related entities. In addition, it reviewed Chapters 11 to 14 of our 2001 Spring Report, and Chapter 1 of our 2001 Fall Report – Volume 2, which related to Crown corporations.

During 2001-2002, the Committee met 20 times. On June 21, 2001, it issued a report to the Assembly on its work to that date. The Committee has not yet reported on its work after that date. Some of the highlights of the Committee's work during the year are as follows.

During its review of CIC, the Committee discussed whether the law should be clarified to require CIC Crown corporations to obtain Order in Council approval before purchasing or selling real property through a subsidiary. The Committee asked CIC to review its procedures and to report to the Committee on the pros and cons of changing the legislation. CIC is in the process of preparing this report.

The Committee also discussed the reporting to the Assembly of payee information by Crown corporations. It considered the process that our Office provided for MLAs to use to decide what information government agencies should disclose and to whom. The Committee asked CIC and our Office to further discuss the suggested process and to report to the Committee in June 2002.

During its review of Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan (ISC), the Committee asked our Office to expand the scope of our 2001 audit of ISC. The Committee asked us to report on the costs, financing, and benefits of the Land Titles Automated Network Delivery (LAND) system. We agreed to do so. We will report to the Committee on these matters in May 2002.

Summary

Increasingly, the Committee's discussions relate to broader issues including strategic plans, key risks to achieving goals and objectives, and performance measurement. We congratulate the Committee on its efforts to foster a more open and accountable government and better management of government operations.

We intend to continue helping the Committee carry out its important responsibilities. We will encourage the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. In future reports, we will monitor the status of its recommendations.