

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

20

Main points	204
Introduction	205
Overview of Committee’s role and responsibilities.....	205
Responsibilities specific to the Committee	205
Committee activities: 2010-11	206
Status of Committee recommendations	207

Main points

Through its work and recommendations, the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies helps the Assembly hold the Government accountable for its management of the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC) and its subsidiaries. It asks our Office to assess and report on the status of the recommendations it makes as a result of our audit work.

The Government has implemented almost all of the Committee's recommendations related to the work of our Office. At March 31, 2011, the Committee had six recommendations outstanding.

The Assembly permanently refers portions of reports related to CIC and its subsidiaries and annual reports within its subject area to the Committee for its review.

The Committee needs to review the chapters about CIC and its subsidiary corporations and annual reports within its subject area that remain outstanding.

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Also, it describes the overall status of the Committee's recommendations as they relate to the work of our Office.

Overview of Committee's role and responsibilities

The Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies (Committee) is one of the Legislative Assembly's four policy field committees. The Assembly has made policy field committees responsible for examining certain documents within their assigned subject area. These documents include bills and regulations (proposed laws), annual budget estimates, and annual reports. During their reviews, these committees can inquire about issues of current concern, future objectives, and past performance.

These committees can also conduct inquiries into matters within their mandated subject area. They provide the Assembly with reports on their activities and can make recommendations to the Assembly for its consideration.

Meetings of policy field committees are open to the public. The Assembly's website (www.legassembly.sk.ca/committees/) contains information about the composition of the committees and records of their meetings (i.e., Hansard verbatim, minutes, videos, and reports).

Responsibilities specific to the Committee

The Committee's subject area is Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC) and its subsidiary corporations, supply and services (e.g., Ministry of Government Services), central government agencies (e.g., Ministry of Finance, Public Service Commission), liquor, gaming, and all other revenue-related agencies and entities.

The Assembly has given the Committee the following additional responsibilities. The Assembly permanently refers to the Committee our

reports or portions thereof related to CIC and its subsidiaries.¹ It also requires the Minister responsible for CIC to notify the Committee, in writing, about significant transactions² made by CIC or any of its subsidiaries within 90 days of the transaction having occurred. The notification must outline the objectives of the transaction, the financial implications, a statement of any changed liabilities and the authority under which such a transaction was made.³

When the Committee reviews our reports, it typically does so in conjunction with its review of the related corporation's annual report. For these meetings, our Office and the corporation's appointed auditor, if any, attend to help the Committee with its review.

Because of the magnitude of financial activity that the Government manages through CIC and its corporations, the Committee has an important role. It helps the Assembly hold the Government accountable for its management of these corporations.

Also, as with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, this Committee's discussions and recommendations to the Assembly result in a more open and accountable government and 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.

Committee activities: 2010-11

During 2010-11, the Committee met 12 times (2009-10: 30 times). It gave the Assembly three reports on the results of its reviews of estimates and bills within its subject area, and the results of its inquiry into Saskatchewan's energy needs. It did not receive any significant transaction reports.

¹ Rule 143(3) of *The Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* and section 14.1(8) of *The Provincial Auditor Act*.

² Significant transactions are defined by the Committee as those that are material in amount and outside the ordinary course of business, or are judged to be sensitive and likely of interest to legislators and the public.

³ Rule 143(4) of *The Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*.

The Committee’s consideration of the chapters about CIC and its subsidiary corporations noted in Exhibit 1 remains outstanding. Also, the Committee’s review of annual reports of agencies within its subject area for the years 2008, 2009, and 2010 remains outstanding.

Exhibit 1—Portions of Provincial Auditor Reports referred to the Committee

Name of related report	Chapter number/name	Number of recommendations to be considered
2009 Report – Volume 1	13 – Saskatchewan Telecommunication Holding Corporation	7
2010 Report – Volume 1	15 – Saskatchewan Government Insurance	3
	16 – Saskatchewan Power Corporation	3 of which 2 were initially reported in our 2007 Report – Volume 3 (Chapter 23)
	17 – Saskatchewan Telecommunication Holding Corporation	1 which was initially reported in our 2009 Report – Volume 1 (Chapter 13)
	18 – Saskatchewan Water Corporation	6
2010 Report – Volume 2	25 – Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan	2

Status of Committee recommendations

Some of the Committee’s reports to the Assembly contain recommendations as a result of our audit work. Each year, we follow up the status of the Committee’s outstanding recommendations and report their status.

At March 31, 2011, the Committee had six (nine – at March 31, 2010) recommendations outstanding—that is, recommendations that the Government has not yet fully implemented.⁴ See Chapter 13 – Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, Chapter 14 – Saskatchewan Power Corporation and Chapter 17 – Saskatchewan Water Corporation for a listing and the status of the outstanding recommendations.

⁴ This includes three recommendations related to Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed with prior to Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation becoming a subsidiary of CIC.

Exhibit 2 sets out key terms we use when reporting the status of the Committee's recommendations.

Exhibit 2—Key terms

Committee concurs – These are our Office's recommendations that the Committee supports, agrees, or concurs with. The Committee does not expect a formal response from the Government but does expect the Government to comply with the recommendations. In the Exhibit, these recommendations are identified by a non-bold number (e.g., 4.1) preceding them. The non-bold numbers reflect the chapter and recommendation number of our related report.

Committee recommends – These are the Committee's recommendations. The Committee expects an official response or action by the Government. In the Exhibit, these recommendations are identified by a bold number (e.g., 1.) preceding them.

Committee considered – These are our Office's recommendations. The Committee has deferred them for future consideration (e.g., pending the presentation of additional information) or has made its own recommendation on the matter.

Not implemented – Based on the last time that we audited the area or agency, the Government has not taken action on this recommendation.

Partially implemented – Based on the last time that we audited the area or agency, the Government has taken some action on this recommendation.