



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
First Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Public Accounts

Wednesday, September 30, 2015  
2:38 p.m.

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The 29th Legislature  
First Session**

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W), Chair  
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND), Deputy Chair

Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)  
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)  
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)  
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)  
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)  
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)  
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)  
Payne, Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND)  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)  
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)  
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND)

**Office of the Auditor General Participants**

Merwan Saher	Auditor General
Rob Driesen	Assistant Auditor General
Eric Leonty	Assistant Auditor General
Doug Wylie	Assistant Auditor General
Sergei Pekh	Principal
Mary Gibson	Business Leader, Systems Audit Practice

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Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

**2:38 p.m. Wednesday, September 30, 2015**

[Mr. Fildebrandt in the chair]

**The Chair:** I will call this meeting to order. Most of the housekeeping was covered during the informal parts of our meeting, so I won't repeat myself.

For the record we will introduce ourselves around the table. I am Derek Fildebrandt, chair. We'll go to my right.

**Ms Gray:** Hi, everyone. I'm Christina Gray. I'm the deputy chair and the MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

**Ms Renaud:** Hello. I'm Marie Renaud, the MLA for St. Albert.

**Mr. Westhead:** Cameron Westhead, MLA for Banff-Cochrane.

**Ms Payne:** Good afternoon. Brandy Payne, MLA for Calgary-Acadia.

**Mr. Loyola:** Rod Loyola, MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Dr. Turner:** Bob Turner, MLA, Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Good afternoon. Brian Malkinson, MLA for Calgary-Currie.

**Mr. Dach:** Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Wylie:** Doug Wylie, office of the Auditor General.

**Mr. Leonty:** Eric Leonty, Assistant Auditor General.

**Mr. Saher:** Merwan Saher, Auditor General.

**Mr. Driesen:** Rob Driesen, Assistant Auditor General.

**Ms Gibson:** Mary Gibson, business leader, systems audit practice.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Richard Gotfried, MLA, Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. Hunter:** Grant Hunter, Cardston-Taber-Warner.

**Dr. Massolin:** Good afternoon. Philip Massolin, manager of research services.

**Ms Bianchi:** Hello. I'm Giovana Bianchi, committee clerk.

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** I'm Corinne Dacyshyn, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** We've had a few people sit down at the table who could introduce themselves.

**Mr. Cyr:** Scott Cyr, MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

**Ms Miller:** Barb Miller, Red Deer-South.

**The Chair:** Individuals on the phone.

**Mr. Barnes:** Drew Barnes, MLA, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Bhullar:** Manmeet Bhullar, Calgary-Greenway.

**The Chair:** Actually, since we're no longer doing a presentation, if you could just turn your name tags a little bit more in so we can all just see each other here.

All right. We have a few potential amendments to the agenda as is. Is there a motion to accept the agenda for September 30, 2015, as presented, with the following amendments: that we would discuss the Auditor General's investigation into the Kananaskis

golf course before his review of the report from the Auditor General, July 2015, and discuss annual reports and Measuring Up reports under item 5(b), 2015 meetings? Is there a motion to that effect, to approve the agenda as amended?

**Ms Payne:** So moved.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Seconded.

**The Chair:** Ms Payne, seconded by Mr. Gotfried. [interjection] No seconders. We're all learning. Okay. Any discussion? All in favour? Any opposed? On the phone? All right. Carried.

All right. Minutes. Would a member like to move that the minutes of the June 25, 2015, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? Any amendments?

**Mr. Loyola:** I so move, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Moved by Mr. Loyola. Any discussion? All in favour? All opposed? On the phone? Carried.

All right. Before we get to the substance of our meeting, I'll just remind members of the discussion that we had around procedures for questions and lines of inquiry, that we've discussed at our previous meeting. We are going to as much as possible do things informally, allowing us not just to have a block of time and use it up just because we want to use it up so someone else doesn't take it, but instead, as the Auditor General mentioned in the informal part of the meeting, to be able to continue a line of inquiry as is necessary. So we're going to see how this goes. This is our first time using this, so it might be a little rough at first. But we'll see if we can do this, the basic idea being that you're not going to have a time allocation, but I will just be mean and cut you off if you're rambling or if questions become rather redundant or if you're just eating up an unreasonable amount of time.

We will have two categories of questions. To get my attention, put your hand up, and do one of two things. If you have a new question, a new line of inquiry, put your hand up with your fingers wide open. If you want to interject on something very specific or follow up on what is being discussed at that specific time and you absolutely must follow up, pinch your fingers together. So there'll be two speaking lists. We'll see how well this works or not. If you are abusing interjections, you might not get recognized as much, perhaps making me unpopular, but we'll see how well we can do this. I believe that if we can all use this correctly, this will be the most effective way of conducting our meetings and doing our questioning.

We will move on. We will give the floor to the Auditor General before formal item 4 to discuss the status of – many of you watching the news today know that there has been recent news on the Kananaskis golf course. I'll just hand the floor over to the Auditor General to discuss where his office is at in regard to it.

**2:45**

**Mr. Saher:** Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. What I can tell you, if I just trace a little bit of the history, is that I don't have the exact date, but at some point after the 2013 flood and decisions that the government of the day was making with respect to the Kananaskis Country Golf Course, a member of the opposition – it was Mr. Brian Mason, a member of the NDP – wrote to our office and requested that we as an independent audit office look in at the processes and systems that were at play to make decisions with respect to that golf course. We responded that we would do this work but that first we would wait to have sight of any work done by others. In particular, the government of the day commissioned a report from a public accounting firm, and we felt

that we would use our resources in the best possible way if we were to wait and see what that report concluded. We got access to that report recently, considerably before today, I would say at least six weeks ago, and based on access to that, then, we believed that we were ready to in fact start an audit.

I will just read into the record what the objective of that audit is. At this moment the audit has started. We have engaged in the planning process that I described to members this morning. We have met with the Department of Environment and Parks to inform them that we are doing the following audit. The objective of our audit is to determine whether the Department of Environment and Parks used adequate processes in 2014 when it recommended to cabinet that the government should rebuild the golf course, extend the operating agreement with Canalta, provide flood compensation to Canalta, and lease land for housing for Canalta staff. In other words, we will be examining systems to ensure compliance with department contracting policies and practices such as identifying alternatives; assessing the costs, benefits, and risks associated with each alternative; seeking expert advice; and then the department making a recommendation to cabinet. That's the audit that we've started.

As is our practice, we're unlikely to discuss the audit in any greater depth while it's ongoing. As with all work that we do, once an audit has started, we will report publicly. I can inform everyone, because I'm absolutely certain of this fact, that the results of this audit will not be in our next public report, which is scheduled to be released in October.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Saher.

We will try to keep it brief respecting the context of what's happened. We want to get on to most of the rest of our agenda, but I will briefly open up the floor to questions to the Auditor General.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Is it normal for the government to use an external auditor?

**Mr. Saher:** This is my understanding. I think your question is posed using the word "auditor" because the external party is a public accounting firm, or so generally it would be seen looking in as an audit firm. In this instance I don't believe that the government was employing that firm in an auditing capacity. To the best of my knowledge – and this is what, you know, part of the audit process will verify as we look in at the work done – my understanding is that the work done was to use the resources of that organization to their expertise in matters such as financial modeling, examining alternatives from a financial perspective. So the government was using that firm to provide it with advice, not to bring in another auditor to look in and, if you will, provide an audit opinion on what the government was doing.

**Mr. Malkinson:** My follow-up question, I guess, would be: would it be normal for the government to ask an external accounting firm for that sort of advice? I guess that's my slightly better question.

**Mr. Saher:** It is normal for the government to use outside experts to help in decision-making. I don't know enough about this particular project to know whether, you know, I can say that, yes, in a situation of this nature it would be absolutely normal to bring in expert advice from a public accounting firm with skills in the particular topic area. All I know is that the government of the day chose to do this, and we made a decision that we wouldn't do any work until we'd seen what the output of that exercise was. I think the point I'm trying to stress is that, yes, in my opinion, it's not abnormal.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Cyr:** Were you guys told the scope of this advice that the external accountant is using? Obviously, now that you're involved, you've broadened the scope. How have you broadened that?

**Mr. Saher:** Okay. I can just say that as a matter of auditing practice in looking in at the work of the external expert, any conclusions we would draw from it would be in connection with what they were asked to do, and I can't tell you what they were asked to do. I don't have that information, but certainly as part of our audit process our views on the quality of that advice will be made in relation to: what was the organization asked to do? I mean, that would just be part of a normal process in our assessment, if you will. The quality of the advice, the credibility of that advice would be in relation to: what was the expert asked to do?

Our broadening, in the sense of the audit objective that I read into the record a little while ago: that objective is broader than our understanding of what it was that the outside expert was asked to do. The outside expert was not asked to look in, to the best of my knowledge, at government processes and practices and systems, which is what we think we should do.

**Mr. Dach:** Mr. Chair, briefly, might I ask that you insist that members here address people in this audience by either their first name or by their title so that we know to whom their questions are addressed rather than by terms such as "you guys"? Thank you.

**The Chair:** I think that's appropriate.

All right. Ms Renaud.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you. I just had a question. You mentioned, when you talked about the scope of the work that you would be undertaking going forward, that you would look at the flood compensation, the leased housing, and the extension of the agreement. Was that something that the other company – I'm not sure what the word was that you used – or the other auditors looked at? Was that contained in their report?

**Mr. Saher:** I'm afraid I can't talk to that. I personally have not seen it, and even if I had intimate knowledge of the work of the external expert – that's the language I'm choosing to use because I believe that's why they were employed, to bring a certain expertise – even if I was intimately familiar with that, I would not disclose it or discuss it publicly until our audit is complete and our thoughts on it, views on it are part of, you know, a public document.

**Mr. Cyr:** You said that this wasn't going to be ready for our October meeting. Do you have a projected time for when it will be ready?

**Mr. Saher:** No. At this time I cannot tell you when that work will be complete. I can assure you, you know, that like any project we do, we will proceed expeditiously, following all of our processes. Yeah, I can tell you when it won't, but I can't tell you when it will. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Cyr:** Fair enough.

2:55

**The Chair:** In the interest of time – this is an added agenda item, and we are quite pressed – are there any other pressing questions? Mr. Barnes, go ahead.

**Mr. Barnes:** Thank you, Derek. If I could ask the Auditor General, Mr. Saher, sir: how historical do you think the scope of your review, of your audit may be? You know, there has been a long history with this contract and this golf course, and I wonder if your office has

ever audited it, looked at it before and how in depth into the past you may go. Thank you.

**Mr. Saher:** For today I can't do any better than this objective, which is to the processes that were used in 2014, when a recommendation was made. We're not going back to day one and examining every contract, every interaction between government and the operators of the golf course. We have deliberately within our scope said that what we will do is look at the processes used in 2014, in the situation that existed then, and at the options that were available to the government. Were proper processes used to deal with the situation at that time? Of course, that is all influenced by the past, but I think you're asking me to inform you on whether or not we're going way into the past and examining previous contracts. The answer will be no. But the previous contracts will all inform and play a part in the decisions that were made in 2014.

**Mr. Barnes:** Okay. Thank you for your answer.

**The Chair:** All right. If there is nothing else, we will move on to our next item with the Auditor General. The Auditor General released his July 2015 report this summer. Today this committee has an opportunity to receive a briefing from the Auditor General on this report and to ask him and his staff any questions that we have as it regards that. Again I will turn over the floor to Mr. Saher, and after his briefing we'll open it up to questions.

**Mr. Saher:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just so that this goes smoothly, perhaps we could have a general decision now. My colleagues are going to talk to each of the systems audits that were in that July report. Do you think it would be better if we stopped after each one and asked for questions or whether we went through the whole presentation and then dealt with questions? We'll be dealing with five separate audits.

**The Chair:** We're going to be quite pressed for time. After this discussion, we have to discuss meeting schedules, a presentation from the CCAF on effective questioning, research requirements, and a few other items. I'll let you decide how you want to do that, but I think we should cut it off by a quarter to 4 so that we don't go too far over time. Is there agreement that we would just end this section of the agenda at a quarter to 4?

**Mr. Saher:** We think it will take 30 minutes of us talking to present this report. That leaves, you know, 15 minutes for questions. I'd maybe just leave it to the membership if you feel that you want to ask your question after we've presented on one item or whether you just want to hold it to the end.

**The Chair:** Do we prefer just to go through the entire presentation, take notes as we go, and keep the questions together at the end so that we can keep this as compact as possible? Is there agreement for this? Very well.

**Mr. Saher:** Okay. Thank you. As the chair has said, we are giving you a briefing on our July 2015 Auditor General report. Eric Leonty, who is my colleague on my left, will have the biggest job today as a good deal of the report concentrated on Environment and Parks, and he has oversight of the audit work in that ministry. Eric is going to start with systems to manage grazing leases, and then he'll move on and introduce two other topics.

**Mr. Leonty:** All right. Thank you. The first of three audits we completed at Environment and Parks that are contained within the July report was the systems to manage grazing leases. The Department of Environment and Parks on behalf of all Albertans

manages approximately 5,700 grazing leases on more than 5 million acres of public land. Public land is set aside for the benefit of Albertans, and to protect these benefits and the land itself, the department must set clear objectives and have systems to manage the use of public lands such as grazing cattle. That was the underlying principle of our audit. Our objective was to determine whether the department has systems to define objectives, ensure that grazing leases provide the best mix of benefits to Albertans, and that measures exist to demonstrate whether results are meeting objectives.

What we found was that the department had not clearly identified what its environmental, social, and economic objectives for grazing leases were. The department often used the term "optimum mix of benefits to Albertans" but was unable to define or quantify that any further. There were many ideas of what this meant such as promoting agriculture, ensuring environmental sustainability, revenues, protecting native grasslands, or protecting species at risk, but this was not defined any further or measured. We also identified that the department did not have performance metrics or other indicators to show that grazing leases were providing the best mix for all Albertans. Because of all of this, we recommended that the department define and communicate the environmental, social, and economic objectives it expects grazing leases should provide Albertans as well as relevant metrics to monitor and ensure that those objectives are being met.

We also found that the department did not have all of the information it may require or could use to determine what the optimum mix should be and what it expected to provide from grazing leases. For example, the department does not have information on the extent of net financial benefits received by the grazing leaseholder beyond those from grazing activities. The department presently does not have access to that type of information.

To try to put this net financial benefit into some context, we were able to obtain annual financial statements for most agricultural societies that had grazing leases. We found the majority of those grazing associations received compensation from electrical and oil and gas industry operators to access their lease. In many cases the compensation paid to these agricultural societies from industry operators exceeded the rent on the lease paid to the province. Using that sample of information that we had, we prepared an estimate that the province may be forgoing up to \$25 million in additional revenue. We do acknowledge in our report that this is not necessarily a precise figure as the department itself does not have all the necessary information, but it does provide an estimate based on available information. The department also does not receive information on the amount that leaseholders may assign or sell their leases for. We believe that understanding the value of public lands is potentially an important piece of information when assessing whether objectives are met.

Overall, we did find that the department does have adequate processes to ensure that leases are in good health. However, the department cannot demonstrate that the grazing lease program is meeting desired objectives.

Before I move on to the next audit, one consideration that I would like to leave with the committee is that in the event that the Department of Environment and Parks is invited to discuss this particular audit, it might be worth while considering inviting other interested parties. Just by way of example, one may be the AGLA, the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association.

Moving on to the next audit, financial security for land disturbances, the focus of this audit was on the mine financial security program and whether it resulted in an approach that provides adequate financial security to the Crown and Albertans.

The objective of this program includes ensuring that financial resources will be available to reclaim disturbed land if an operator is unable to do so. The program calculates the amount of security required, taking into account the value of the underlying asset, the mine itself, the life of the mine, and the reclamation work that's being planned and actually completed. In effect, the mine financial security program is intended to encourage reclamation activity as well as protect the Crown from financial loss. The department is responsible for the design of the program, and the Alberta Energy Regulator is responsible for administering the program. Our examination of the program design and function identified some areas that do need attention and improvement.

### 3:05

Our first recommendation was directed at Environment and Parks. We are recommending that the department evaluate the mine financial security calculation due to the risk of overestimated asset values and the risk of mine life being inappropriately extended within the calculation. Specifically, we found that the asset calculation is likely overstating asset values by treating different reserves as equally valuable, by applying forecasted prices in a way that incorrectly assumes that prices and operating costs move proportionally, and by not discounting risks when calculating the asset value, risks such as price fluctuation, foreign exchange, those types of things. We also found that through the potential addition of in situ reserves to open-pit reserves in the mine life calculation, the mine life might be inappropriately extended, pushing off the need for security.

Our second recommendation was made to the Alberta Energy Regulator as the administrator of the program. We are recommending that the AER develop and execute a risk-based plan to ensure it is carrying out an appropriate amount of verification activities on operator-submitted information. Because operators self-report information that's needed to calculate the necessary security, verification is an important part of the overall process. We found that more detailed verification activities are carried out infrequently. Considering the magnitude of security and reclamation liabilities in the province, we concluded that the work done was not commensurate with the risk. Recognizing that all operator submissions can't be audited all the time, the Energy Regulator needs a risk-based plan to focus its efforts.

Overall, implementing the mine financial security program was a very critical step in having a system to ensure sufficient financial security. However, for the objectives of the program to be fully met, a number of aforementioned improvements are still needed.

The next piece was a follow-up audit that we did on the specified gas emitter regulation and the systems to manage that regulation. This regulation has been one of the most impactful actions to date in Alberta's present climate change strategy, representing over 80 per cent of emissions reductions. Our follow-up audit was on five outstanding recommendations related to the management of this regulation. Overall, we did find that progress had been made, with three of the recommendations being assessed as implemented. However, there still remain areas that require improvement as we did repeat two recommendations.

We repeated our recommendation for the department to clarify guidance to those impacted by the regulation to ensure that requirements are being consistently followed. We repeated it because we found a number of issues that still need to be resolved. The department had not determined whether oil sands operators met the new requirements for estimating tailings ponds emissions and mine face emissions, there is still a lack of supporting evidence from project developers that offsets related to no-till farming are valid, and the department still needs to improve its processes to

ensure that offsets are not claimed more than once in the Alberta registry or registries in other jurisdictions.

We also repeated our recommendation that the department implement a process to ensure that all approved protocols adhere to its protocol development standard. What a protocol does is allow project developers to sell emission reductions from their projects, which regulated facilities can purchase and claim against their emissions. What we found was that only one-third of the approved protocols were reviewed to determine that they met the current protocol standard. The department does not consider noncompliance with the protocol standard when it is risk rating its protocols for review, and for three of the protocols there is insufficient evidence that the adoption levels of these activities still made them eligible for offsets. As such, we did conclude that the department still needs to do more to ensure that protocol development standards are adhered to.

Thank you.

**Mr. Saher:** I'm now going to ask Doug Wylie to brief you on the follow-up audit we did on the systems to manage the delivery of mental health services.

**Mr. Wylie:** Thank you. Mr. Chair, in the few minutes I have, I'll provide some context around our audit of the delivery of mental health services, and then I'll highlight the key findings and recommendations resulting from our work.

Let me start with context. This is a follow-up audit of an audit originally completed in 2008. While the scope of our audit was the same as the original audit, we did consider changes that occurred within the health sector since making our original recommendations. At the time of our original audit we had nine regional health authorities, with different management and oversight groups. In addition, we had the Alberta Mental Health Board and the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. Today we have one regional health authority responsible for the delivery of health services across the entire province. Our reporting approach reflects the current organizational structure and service delivery model.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to change gears here for just a moment. Visualize, if you would, a hospital emergency room. It's full. Every seat is occupied by someone waiting to be seen. Now remove 27 per cent of those patients from that waiting room. This is something that may be achievable with effective chronic disease management. In our September 2014 audit report on chronic disease management we indicate that for the 2013 fiscal year alone 27 per cent of all emergency room visits related to the treatment of chronic diseases. Our audit of the delivery of mental health services was influenced by our report on chronic disease management. Severe and persistent mental illness is a chronic disease, a long-lasting condition that many patients live with for the rest of their lives. The purpose of chronic disease management is to provide care that helps people manage their condition and maintain their quality of life.

We applied the chronic disease management model to examine how well the health system meets the care needs of people with serious and persistent mental illness. The key feature of this model is patient-centred care organized around the needs of patients. At its core is the concept that every patient should have a care plan and a care team who has access to the information necessary to deliver on that care plan. What did we find? In our 2011 progress update we noted that the Department of Health and Alberta Health Services were starting to take important action in key areas. By 2014 that momentum was lost. The Department of Health did not properly execute its 2011 addiction and mental health strategy. Like the 2000 provincial mental health plan before it, the current strategy

identified all the right things that needed to be done. In 2011 we noted that the department had a detailed action plan, complete with deliverables, timelines, and performance measures. However, the plan has not been followed. For the most part the delivery of front-line addiction and mental health services remains unintegrated, and there are still gaps in service delivery.

We noted a number of good practices and improvements, and we report those in appendix C of our report.

Mr. Chairman, care planning and delivery remain disjointed. As patients move through the health care system, providers continue to treat them in isolation, often not knowing what services the patient is receiving from someone else. Patients may have multiple care plans from different care providers. This information is generally not shared. Alberta Health Services does not have an operational model for integrating case management for its community and hospital mental health and addiction programs.

Further, Alberta Health Services' mental health information systems remain incompatible, are outdated, and do not support integrated care delivery. Most of them are legacy systems that Alberta Health Services inherited from previous health regions. The delivery of housing support services for mental health and addiction patients remains unco-ordinated. In many parts of the province patients, their families, and individual care providers must navigate the system on their own. Alberta Health Services has not completed its work on assessing the gap between supply and demand for mental health and addiction housing supports, and there is no formal assessment tool to determine the housing support needs of individuals with mental illness and addictions.

What needs to be done? The Department of Health needs to provide the leadership and resources for fulfilling its goal of providing patient-centred care for Albertans who have mental illness or addictions. To provide patient-centred care, Alberta Health Services needs to better integrate its services and eliminate gaps in the services it provides to individual patients. Under patient-centred care patients with severe and persistent mental health and addictions issues would benefit from a single comprehensive care plan, a single health record available to health care providers at the point of care; teamwork among providers of different services to guide the patient along a single, clear, optimum care path; active contributions by patients and their families to the care plan and the health record; community housing support services, that are an integral part of treatment.

3:15

Mr. Chairman, we made four recommendations, one to the Department of Health and three to Alberta Health Services. In the interests of time I am not going to go through those, but I'll just indicate that they're included on page 57 of our report.

One final note, Mr. Chair. In July of this year Minister Hoffman announced the establishment of a committee to review Alberta's addiction and mental health system. We will certainly co-operate with the work of this committee and assist as we can. This is such an important initiative.

That concludes my presentation. Thank you.

**Mr. Saher:** Thank you, Doug.

And now for something completely different. Rob Driesen, on my right, will talk to you about a follow-up audit on systems to manage the structural safety of bridges.

**Mr. Driesen:** Thank you. Our 2012 audit of the Department of Transportation's processes to assess the structural safety of bridges concluded that, overall, processes were effective, but significant findings were still identified, resulting in nine recommendations being made to the department. Based on our follow-up audit this

year, the department implemented seven of the recommendations as a result of making significant improvements to inspection quality, frequency, and, if necessary, remediation; ensuring that all inspectors are qualified; ensuring information from inspectors is being utilized and reported more effectively to plan future inspections and in capital planning decisions.

We concluded that two recommendations have not been implemented. First, a cost-effectiveness assessment of contracting out inspections rather than conducting them internally has still not been completed. Second, when selecting contractors, the department's decisions on how they reach their conclusions still lack clarity. We will perform a second follow-up audit of these two outstanding recommendations, which we've repeated, when the department implements them, which, they have indicated, should be completed within the next nine months.

Like our original audit, we identified no evidence of unsafe bridges in completing our follow-up audit procedures.

**Mr. Saher:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, that's our presentation on the July 2015 report. We did it a little faster than I thought.

**The Chair:** Well, I certainly appreciate the quickness with which you did it because that leaves us time for questions.

We'll begin with Mr. Hunter, followed by Mr. Cyr.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is for Mr. Driesen. On page 100 of that report did you find very close relationships between the bridge contractors and the department staff? In other words, is there any risk that Alberta Transportation has been practising nepotism in the awarding of the bridge inspection contracts?

**Mr. Driesen:** Based on the work that we've completed and the sampling that we did, what we noticed was that a lot of the qualified inspectors that would submit a proposal to do the work tended to be some of the inspectors that had been used in the past, but they all were external, independent inspectors. As we highlight in our report, they made sure, with their processes of contracting these contracts out, that there was a good process not to limit who had the ability to bid on these inspections. But what was generally found, you know, was that the people that had a lot of experience in doing these would tend to be the more qualified people and would tend to be selected in terms of doing these inspections going forward as well.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you.

**Mr. Cyr:** So to be clear, there was no undue influence from PC MLAs or PC ministers?

**Mr. Driesen:** There was nothing of that nature that we had identified within our audit in doing our procedures.

**The Chair:** The question may have been in order, but I'll just remind us to be careful in terms of the political nature of questions, to steer towards policy, and to be mindful as well that these are not department officials. I would just be mindful of the questions we're asking.

**Mr. Saher:** I think that if I could just have a follow-up, there is something important in terms of the improvement, and that is on page 100 of the report. I'll just read it. This was the improvement. The department ensured candidates were not limited for the round of allocations that we were looking at. This was important:

- removing the requirement that inspectors perform a minimum of 50 inspections in the previous three years.

If you have a system where you've got a limited number of people involved, then they're the only people who could get to that number of inspections. I think "nepotism" is not necessarily the right word, but it's a system that had a sort of self-perpetuating result. Our work identified that in the original audit, and we can give Albertans assurance now that that condition, which really narrowed the field and simply excluded certain people from consideration, had been removed, and thus the system was improved. Is that right?

**Mr. Driesen:** Yes. That's correct.

**Ms Renaud:** I just had a question to Doug, I guess, about your image of, you know, imagining a waiting room and then removing a large percentage of people who are folks that I think are struggling with a chronic illness, which is mental illness. You talked about creating a patient-centred plan that allowed all parties or a multidisciplinary team, I guess, to establish a care plan, but I also noticed in the information that we got earlier that the responses to the Auditor General around chronic disease management were accepted in principle, which isn't a positive response. They're talking about not pursuing sort of integrated technology to share information. I'm just wondering: is it possible to pursue better mental health supports without these things happening that were identified earlier by the Auditor General's report?

**Mr. Wylie:** I'll start, and then we have Sergei Pekh, who is the engagement lead on this project, and he might want to supplement with some more detail.

You know, a key characteristic of moving to this patient-centred model and having the right information to the care providers, obviously, is information. We've identified that as a need. The department and Alberta Health Services understand this as well. They do have an information management initiative under way. It's very comprehensive and spans a number of years into the future. In the meantime, however, we continue to have these gaps. We recognize the importance of the significant initiative that's ongoing. However, at the same time we still have patients that are interacting today with the system. We are bringing it forward in the context of: what stopgap measures do we have, and how best can we facilitate the care teams?

3:25

Comprehensive care. What I cited earlier was that the ability to remove patients from the emergency room changes the model of delivery from an acute-care setting, which is very expensive, to the primary care setting, and that's what this is all about. That's what chronic disease and a patient-centred model is about: providing the right care team that has the right disciplines to deal with these individuals with chronic disease. They are, in fact, in a lot of cases lifelong conditions that require treatment over multiple years. It isn't just the physician, and it isn't just the acute-care team. It's dietitians, exercise therapists, et cetera, et cetera. So it is really about having the right information to the care team and having that patient being able to move through the continuum of care very, very effectively, and right now it's the difficulty of navigating through the system.

But to your specific point on information management, I would suggest that the management of both the department and Alberta Health Services recognize the need for that. The solution right now is a multiyear, long-term solution, but we're highlighting this and saying that patients are still interacting today.

Sergei, did you want to supplement?

**Mr. Pekh:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, just to supplement, perhaps, with an example. As Doug has mentioned, AHS and the Department of Health are working on the large solution to clinical IT management, that goes beyond mental health, but it includes mental health. I mean, that solution can take anywhere from five to 10 years. In the meantime we have glaring gaps in service delivery that cannot be filled without better use of clinical information.

Just to give you an example, the formation of AHS created a huge opportunity to integrate treatment of people with mental illness and addictions. AADAC and mental health used to be two separate organizations. Now they're all under one roof, under a single management structure. But what we have is that there's still an information system for managing addictions and an information system for managing mental health. These two groups of service providers are under one organization, but they don't have access to each other's information system. They could be sitting in offices next to one another, but they do not have access to each other's system even though about 50 per cent of the patients have both addiction and a mental health issue.

Another example I can offer you is that when a patient shows up in crisis in the ER, the emergency room, at the most critical point in their care, the health care system knows virtually nothing about them. This is not the time when the patient can provide comprehensive information about themselves. Their physician may have a care plan for them, their mental health therapist may have a care plan for them, and other providers would have care plans for them in their own information systems. Those plans would have contact information for people who would come out and help out in an emergency, take this person by the hand, talk to them, and walk them out of the emergency room. In absence of that information, the physician may be forced to the decision to admit this patient into the hospital because there is no plan for them. They don't know what to do. To Doug's point, if that information was available to providers at point of care, that hospitalization may not be necessary.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Dr. Turner.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's to Eric. I had a question about the audit of the grazing leases. I apologize if you covered it and I didn't hear it. You did mention that when you looked at the co-operative groups that have some of the grazing leases, there was perhaps \$23 million in forgone income to the government for access rights, et cetera. I was wondering if your office had looked at what the increase would be to the market value of the private landowners that have grazing rights from the government.

**Mr. Leonty:** We didn't specifically look at values for private holders because that information wasn't actually available. The reason why we were able to access the agricultural societies or the grazing co-operatives, the grazing associations, is that we could access that financial information through registries whereas private operator information is not available, neither to us nor to the department.

**Dr. Turner:** Is there a way that you could suggest that it could become available that this committee might help you with?

**Mr. Leonty:** No. I mean, I think that's something the department could provide more context around. Our understanding was that there wasn't the ability for the department to collect that information.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'll just point out that we should attempt to bring this part to a close when we feel comfortable doing so so that we can get through the other items on our agenda.

Mr. Hunter.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to get back to the mental health services issue. Mr. Wylie, the AHS estimates a six-year rollout of a unified, central health record system at a cost of \$1.5 billion. The question is: what progress, if any, has occurred since 2008, when it was first presented, how much money has already been spent on implementing such a system, and what barriers are standing in the way after seven years?

**Mr. Wylie:** Well, those are excellent questions. I would suggest that Alberta Health Services is in the best position to answer the questions relating to the exact amounts spent and what some of the hindrances are in moving it forward. I don't have – Sergei, do you have anything that you can shed on that with respect to progress since 2008 and costs to date?

**Mr. Pekh:** In 2011 in our progress update on the implementation of mental health recommendations we did highlight information systems management as an area of concern, where we did not see the extent of the progress we were expecting. Specifically, one of the issues that we identified in 2008, when we started the audit with multiple health regions, is that there were numerous health care systems, information management systems, for mental illness under development. Some of them had been developed in parallel and, in fact, in competition for resources with one another. In 2011 we still saw some of this happening. That parallel development right now has stopped, but we did not see a comprehensive plan for how AHS is going to better use existing information while they're waiting for this solution 10 years down the road from their main information system. In other words, there is so much more that can be done with the systems they have, that already capture a lot of the clinical information.

Thank you.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right. Mr. Cyr is next, and unless there is something very pressing that members feel they must follow up on, we'll try to make that our last speaker.

**Mr. Cyr:** The planned system audits that you've got for '15-16: is that a follow-up item that you're tracking? It seems like it's a really big amount of money that should be on our radar. Is it under medical waste management? Is that the one?

**Mr. Saher:** You're looking in at our business plan at the moment, are you?

**Mr. Cyr:** I am. Am I allowed to look at it?

**Mr. Saher:** Absolutely. It's a public document. I'd just like to be able to access it just to be sure that I give you the right answer. You're on page 8 of the business plan. Could you just direct me to . . .

**Mr. Cyr:** Page 9.

**Mr. Saher:** Page 9? Under Health?

**Mr. Cyr:** Under Health. Now, would it be in there, or should it be in there?

**Mr. Saher:** Okay. Let me speak to the two items that are mentioned there and were put there when this plan was put together in

November 2014. Okay? Under Primary Care Networks was the plan to follow up on that particular audit. Primary care networks are at the heart of, if you will, a shift from primary care to acute care. We had done work in the past, and we intended to follow up on that. Under Medical Waste Management is an audit that we have followed up on, and you will receive the results of that in our next public reports, shortly to be released. If you're referring to information technology in the health sector, we do have a project that we're working on at the moment that we believe will inform Albertans about how the integration of health care delivery is progressing through tools such as integrated information management and the ways in which physicians are compensated.

So that's some work that we're doing now. In the new work, I've just talked about two projects that are on page 8, physician services and IT governance in health and clinical IT integration. I can confirm for you that those two topics are currently under audit in our office.

3:35

**Mr. Cyr:** Okay. But this isn't a follow-up.

**Mr. Saher:** No. The work on page 8 is new.

**Mr. Cyr:** How is this new? I'm sorry. I'm trying to understand. This sounds like this is an ongoing problem from 2008. You went back to 2011. Now we're at 2015, and it's a new project?

**Mr. Saher:** Going back to 2008 and the follow-up in 2011 and what my colleagues Doug and Sergei talked about was specifically focused on mental health.

**Mr. Cyr:** Mental health. Okay.

**Mr. Saher:** The work that we talk about here is broader and would include mental health.

**Mr. Cyr:** Okay.

**Mr. Saher:** But I do perhaps understand your confusion. I mean, we will follow up on the mental health recommendations that we made in July 2015, that we discussed today. That work was follow-up work, but as my colleague said, because of the passage of time between the original recommendations being made and us doing the follow-up work, you know, the changes in the structure, we decided to look at it afresh. So in a way those are fresh recommendations that we've put into the system with respect to mental health. This new work is broader and would encompass all aspects of the health system, including primary care delivery, mental health, chronic disease management, acute care.

**Mr. Cyr:** Okay. Well, thank you. I obviously needed some clarification. You did a great job. Thank you.

**Mr. Saher:** Well, to be honest, I'm reprocessing my answer in my head, and I'm not sure if I have added greater clarity. If I can just try and summarize again. You know, we've done projects in particular areas: primary care networks, mental health, infection prevention and control. I think what we've seen in many cases is that at the heart of the problem are the integration of IT information and perhaps the systems that are currently used with respect to physician compensation. Thus, we've decided to step back and look at those two aspects because we think that if we can provide some advice, we might be able to help the government and the public service with moving ahead with those individual things that we looked at. So we sort of stepped back and said: "In these individual audits, what are the root causes? What recommendations do we

seem to be repeating? Let's step back and see if we can tackle two areas which seem to be at the heart of why those areas are individually difficult to deal with." Certainly, at the heart of it is information technology. It's not so much the technology; it's how it's shared.

**Mr. Cyr:** Is there a department that's working on this specifically? Is it just AHS?

**Mr. Saher:** AHS together with the Department of Health. In fact, you know, at the heart of some of our work – you'll see, if you go down into our recommendations, that roles and responsibilities is always at the centre of this. Does Alberta Health Services have a clearly defined mandate and responsibility separate from that of the Department of Health? Is it truly the agent in control of health care service delivery in this province? Yes or no?

**The Chair:** All right. I will thank the Auditor General and his staff for coming today. I suppose that was our first kick at the can as a committee getting into questions. I think that actually went pretty well, and hopefully we can continue to move on that format. I thought that was the best way to go.

**Mr. Barnes:** Derek, before you go, I'm still hoping for a quick question if you don't mind. Is there time?

**The Chair:** We are out of time for questions, unfortunately.

**Mr. Barnes:** Okay. I'll just put it in writing. Can I do that and send it to them for an answer later? Is that okay?

**The Chair:** Send it through me, and we'll process it that way if that's okay, Mr. Barnes.

**Mr. Barnes:** That works for me. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Ms Gray:** Just a comment that your system for questions seems to work quite well.

**The Chair:** I was quite happy with how it went. [interjections] That took up an answer.

All right. We're going to try and burn through this so we can try to get out of here by 4 o'clock, which is when we are supposed to end in theory.

Item 5. At our June 25 meeting the committee discussed the possibility of inviting CCAF officials back to facilitate an effective-questioning seminar in October. Our working group met in the summer and discussed the proposals as well. Given what we've seen today, I think most of us agree that this was quite useful for us to better do our jobs. The deputy chair and I would propose that we invite CCAF officials back to give the committee a two-hour session on effective questioning – as that was explained, it's beyond just actually asking questions, but we've already heard that presentation – on Tuesday, October 20, for two hours in the morning. We further propose that the committee invite the Department of Environment and Parks and the Department of Municipal Affairs that afternoon on the issues identified in the Auditor General's March 2015 report regarding flood mitigation systems and systems to regulate dam safety. Lastly, we would propose that we invite the Auditor General that day to give the committee a briefing on his latest report, expected in early October.

Could someone move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite CCAF officials for an effective-questioning session, invite Alberta Environment and Parks and Alberta

Municipal Affairs to meet with respect to the Auditor General's March 2015 report, and invite the Auditor General for a briefing on his October 2015 report on October 20, 2015?

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Chair, there's a lot in that motion. Can we break it down? I'd like to move that we invite CCAF to present an effective-questioning session at our next meeting. Do we have a date on that?

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** We did, yeah.

**The Chair:** Ms Gray moves to break it down into a single motion.

**Ms Gray:** That we invite CCAF, my thinking being, the reason that I'm doing this, so that we can then have a discussion about our fall 2015 meetings.

**The Chair:** Very well.

Ms Gray moves that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite CCAF officials for an effective-questioning session on the 20th of October 2015.

Discussion?

**Mr. Malkinson:** Is there any cost associated with that educational session?

**Mr. Saher:** There will be a cost to Albertans, but the cost will be borne by the office of the Auditor General as part of our arrangements with the CCAF.

**The Chair:** Other discussion?

All in favour of the motion? All opposed? Carried.

All right. Then we'll try to break this out into bite-sized pieces. We have a motion

to invite Alberta Environment and Parks and Alberta Municipal Affairs to meet with respect to the Auditor General's March 2015 report on October 20, 2015.

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Chair, if we could do a quick review of the topics on that. Environment and Parks is flood mitigation and dam safety.

**The Chair:** Yeah. The grazing leases would be discussed at a later meeting. We're trying to catch up, as I think we've discussed here. But this would be around dam safety.

**Ms Gray:** This is just my own lack of understanding. You'd mentioned Municipal Affairs. They would need to attend this meeting because of – which of those two topics do they need to speak to?

3:45

**Mr. Saher:** It would be the flood mitigation.

**Ms Gray:** Okay. Thank you for clarifying.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Just another quick clarification. Since this would be coming up close to the sitting of the Legislature, what's the normal warning that we would give the relevant ministries? I just want to make sure that we give them reasonable time, as per what the normal procedure would be, so that they could be fully prepared to answer our questions.

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** Can I answer that?

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** Three weeks to a month. That's generally acceptable.

**Mr. Malkinson:** All right.

**The Chair:** As much as possible I think we should strive to give three weeks to a month. In later cases that the working group is proposing, we will be giving more notice for later meetings. Some departments will have two months, and depending on if the estimates process puts the committee's work on ice for some time, they could have quite a while. As much as possible we're going to give quite a bit of notice.

Further discussion?

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** I don't know that anybody actually moved it.

**Ms Payne:** So moved.

**The Chair:** Moved by Ms Payne. Further discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The third part of this. Is there a motion

to invite the Auditor General for a briefing on his October 2015 report on the same date of October 20, 2015?

Moved by Ms Renaud. Discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

All right. The deputy chair and I are suggesting that the committee meet with the Department of Education on Tuesday, October 27, focusing on recommendations made in the Auditor General's March 2015 report on systems to improve student attendance in Northland school division. Would a member like to move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Education to meet on October 27, with a focus on recommendations made in the Auditor General's March 2015 report on systems to improve student attendance at Northland school division.

Ms Miller. Discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

**Mr. Saher:** Mr. Chairman, could I just make a point, please?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Saher:** Thank you.

With respect to your invitation to the Department of Education, I think it would be helpful, and I'd be pleased to work outside of the meeting here now in providing some advice to you through the clerk, that your invitation be specific enough to send a clear message that you would want as witnesses at that meeting representatives of the Northland school division itself. At the moment there is an administrator in Northland. The board had been suspended, and there is an administrator plus the superintendent of the Northland school division.

**The Chair:** The administrator and the superintendent.

**Mr. Saher:** I'm sure that the department would come to that conclusion, but just to be absolutely safe, I think it would be useful for you to indicate your desire that that happen.

**The Chair:** Discussion on the matter? We will convey that, then.

All right. Pending the estimates process, we propose that the invitees for the meeting following that, on November 3 or later, be the departments of Executive Council, International and Intergovernmental Relations, Infrastructure, and Treasury Board and Finance to address the recommendations included in the Auditor General's August 2014 Special Duty Report on the Expenses of the Office of Premier Redford and Alberta's Air Transportation Service Program. Would someone like to move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the departments of Executive Council, International and Intergovernmental Relations, Infrastructure, and Treasury Board and Finance to address the recommendations in the August 2014 special duty report, subject to the proviso that the chair may propose an alternative date should the schedule for committee's consideration of main estimates conflict with that date.

Discussion?

**Ms Gray:** My discussion on this is only as far as timing goes and the order in which we do things. The Auditor General had talked to us about potentially also reviewing the annual report. I think that for each of these reports we do want to have on our agenda. But in what order does it make sense?

**The Chair:** On our agenda we said that we will discuss reviewing annual reports and the Measuring Up report.

**Ms Gray:** After this?

**The Chair:** Yeah, after this. I think there's a consensus that we do want to touch on that but as a specific agenda item.

Does someone want to put this motion forward to discuss the special duty report? Moved by Mr. Cyr. Discussion? All in favour?

**Ms Payne:** Mr. Chairman, I have a question, this being new. We're kind of laying out the time frame, and I guess my thought is that it might be worth while for us to have the conversation about when we review Measuring Up before getting further into the conversation about timelines for subsequent meetings. I know that the working group of this committee has had a previous discussion, but I'm not sure – to me, this information from the recommendation of the Auditor General to review the Measuring Up one is something that hadn't come up previously, and I think that it bears a little bit of discussion about when we'd like to tackle that report. I think it's a valuable report for this committee to review.

I guess I'm speaking against the motion because I'd first like to have a conversation about when we review Measuring Up.

**Ms Renaud:** Well, just recalling the comments made by the Auditor General about the importance – this is a new group, a new committee – of beginning by looking at this report and particularly the Measuring Up report, I think it would really set a tone going forward. I'm not saying that looking at the other issues that you were talking about isn't important, but I see the value in doing this first, before that.

**Dr. Turner:** I, too, would like to speak against this motion for reasons, some of which have already been said. I think we have a lot of important issues to be dealing with on this Public Accounts Committee, and many of them relate to making sure that we're getting economy and efficiency and good ethics in government. There are topics that I think are more pressing than the review of what transpired in the past.

**Mr. Cyr:** I'll just withdraw the motion.

**The Chair:** Do you wish to withdraw or continue with further discussion? One alternative would be to link a discussion of the Measuring Up report with this as a single motion, to discuss both at two subsequent meetings, and we could schedule those as such.

3:55

**Ms Gray:** I think that sounds reasonable. The only comment I have is that the Measuring Up and the annual report just clearly need to be after estimates because it would be unfair to ask the departments

involved to try and prep for something if something happens before. Do you know what I mean?

**The Chair:** That's quite reasonable, I believe.

**Ms Gray:** Yeah. Based on our schedule, it would be after estimates.

**The Chair:** Well, I'm willing to bet that the main estimates will be around that period although the motion gives the chair the ability to schedule the meeting when estimates are likely to be concluded.

**Ms Gray:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Obviously, I don't think we would want to ask them to be preparing something to deal with Measuring Up or the annual report during that period.

Would we like to revise the motion to deal with the special duty report and the Measuring Up report subsequent to the main estimates completion?

**Ms Renaud:** Just for clarification, we would do the Auditor's report and Measuring Up first. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** Two separate meetings. We could do Measuring Up – I, frankly, do not have a preference for which is first, but we would schedule both at this time. We would give them dates but expecting that those dates would certainly be quite fluid.

**Ms Renaud:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Is that the consensus of the committee?

**Mr. Loyola:** Mr. Chair, I just believe that there's been sufficient opinions that we should do the Measuring Up first as that will help us get a broader sense of what's going on before we tackle the specific issues regarding Premier Redford and her governmental affairs.

**The Chair:** All right. So do we have a friendly amendment, then, to Mr. Cyr's motion?

**Mr. Cyr:** Absolutely I would accept a friendly amendment to the motion.

**The Chair:** Okay. A friendly amendment.

**Mr. Gotfried:** I just wanted to echo what's been said here. I think the Measuring Up document and looking back is going to create a lot of context for us at this committee, and I think that it's important that we go through it. It's a very robust document. It's looking a little bit backwards, but it gives us some great context to go forward, and I would also support that position.

**Mr. Hunter:** Now, wasn't that motion retracted?

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** Not yet. No. It could just be amended as a friendly amendment.

**Mr. Hunter:** Okay. I'm sorry.

**The Chair:** Okay. So if Mr. Cyr will entertain a friendly amendment, maybe the Auditor General would like to speak on the specific witnesses we would want to call to discuss Measuring Up and annual reports.

**Mr. Saher:** I think the invitation would go to the Department of Treasury Board and Finance, and I think that at this stage through the clerk there'd have to be some sort of discussions as to some

sense of whom they believe they would bring with them to answer those questions about Measuring Up. I mean, it could well be that the chief Deputy Minister of Executive Council, you know, with, if you will, oversight of the government as a whole, might well be a good person to come here. My advice is to have Treasury Board and Finance advise you on who should accompany them because you can't have 19 deputy ministers. I don't think you should have 19 here. I think Treasury Board and Finance would say: we think we should bring somebody else with us.

If I could make a suggestion, seeing, you know, what would connect with pressing issues, I mean, it could well be that to ask Treasury Board and Finance to ensure that the Deputy Minister of Health was part of the team here, one would be able to look into Health through Measuring Up at a very high level. I think that that might be useful.

**The Chair:** So perhaps we invite Treasury Board and Executive Council with the discretion that they would advise the working group of the three parties on specific witnesses to appear. Is that acceptable? Very good.

All right. Mr. Cyr, would you entertain a friendly amendment to your motion that on the 3rd of November, 2015, subject proviso, that

the chair may propose an alternative date, for the main estimates; that we schedule that Treasury Board and Finance and the Executive Council appear before the committee to discuss Measuring Up and the annual report, with further witnesses to be recommended to the working group; and, further, that at the subsequent meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, with this also subject to conflicts with the main estimates, Executive Council, International and Intergovernmental Relations, Infrastructure, and Treasury Board and Finance address the recommendations in the August 24 special duty report.

Will that be acceptable?

**Mr. Cyr:** Yes.

**The Chair:** That is a long mouthful. That will work. All right. Discussion on the friendly amendment? Yes.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That sounds very good. I just want to make sure the wording is that it will happen post estimates, that it's essentially what's happening. So it's November 3 or . . .

**The Chair:** Subject to estimates.

**Ms Gray:** Subject to estimates.

**The Chair:** In the impossible event that the budget does not come, it would happen beforehand, but the budget will come.

**Ms Gray:** Yes. Okay. Thank you.

**Dr. Massolin:** I would submit, Mr. Chair, that it takes care of itself because the committee can't meet during estimates.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms Gray:** Okay. Perfect. Thank you for clarifying.

**The Chair:** Yes. Is that sufficiently clear?

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** If the budget isn't tabled before November 3, it's still – but I think we're . . .

**The Chair:** That would leave us our November 3 meeting, but not the subsequent.

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** Correct.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** Right. I think you're okay. I'll look at it.

**The Chair:** Very good.

**Mrs. Dacyshyn:** We'll put it in the minutes the appropriate way.

**The Chair:** Further discussion? All in favour? Opposed? On the phone? Carried.

All right. We're through that. That I believe is it for our – and we did take care of our Measuring Up and annual reports item on there all in one.

Item 6, committee research requirements. Okay. We are now three minutes overtime, so let's try to be brief since we are now overtime. We've heard today that research is a very important part of what we do. I would remind members of the discussion of June 25 about the LAO research branch, briefing documents provided prior to each committee meeting, and that these would be posted on the internal committee website, also that there is a premeeting briefing with the Auditor General and research staff for 30 minutes prior to each meeting.

Does Philip have anything to add?

**Dr. Massolin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. All I would say, just to reiterate, is that research services is, of course, at the disposal of this committee to do research throughout the course of this committee's life and that we would entertain, of course, specific research requests. But I would submit to you that we have already started to look at some of the ministries that the committee has agreed now to meet with. In case there are any specific requests right now – I know time is pressing. If not, we'll just proceed, and I'm looking for

approval from the committee to proceed with these research reports that we'll present in a written form and also orally at that prebriefing.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** These reports are for the agenda items discussed today?

**Dr. Massolin:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Good. Any discussion on the issue? Any questions? Yes.

**Mr. Gottfried:** Sorry. You said at the prebriefing that if you have those reports in advance, they would be posted as well?

4:05

**Dr. Massolin:** That is correct; to the committee's internal site well in advance of the meeting. Then we are available along with the Auditor General's office in the oral portion, the briefing prior to the meeting, to answer questions.

**Mr. Gottfried:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other questions?

All right. Other business. As discussed earlier, our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2015.

Is there a motion to adjourn the meeting? Mr. Loyola. Am I pronouncing that correctly now?

**Mr. Loyola:** You're getting it great.

**The Chair:** Okay. All in favour? Opposed? That was an easy one. Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 4:05 p.m.]





