

PROCEDURES AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

A REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEES (2001)

AND

A REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEES IN 2002

TABLED ON THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 2003

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

In accordance with Standing Order 277(1), the following is the Government's response to the recommendations contained in the above report.

Recommendation 1

Committee Recommendation No. 1

Your Committee recommends the following Sessional Order be adopted by the Legislative Assembly prior to the Estimates Committees hearings in 2003 -

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That for the present Session Standing Orders 222, 223, and 230 are suspended and replaced by the following Sessional Order -

Bills referred to estimates committees

222. (1) After the second reading of the Appropriation bill or bills which provide for the main recurrent and capital appropriations, the consideration in detail stage will be replaced by Estimates Committees A and B.

(2) The estimates committees will examine the bills and proposed expenditure contained in the Estimates and report on proposed expenditure by the Parliament and government departments and agencies funded from the Consolidated Fund.

(3) The estimates committees may also examine a maximum of five off-budget public corporations, as determined by the management committee, and ask questions regarding their budgets and operations.

Management committee

223. (1) There will be a management committee which will comprise the Leader of the House, one member nominated in writing to the Speaker by the Premier, and two members similarly nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

(2) Before the estimates committees first meet, the Leader of the House will present to the Assembly the report of the management committee, which report will prescribe —

- (a) which parts of the Estimates are to be considered by each committee; ~~and~~
- (b) the time allotted for consideration of each part or any division or program of the Estimates and the budgets of those agencies referred to in Standing Order 222 (2) and (3); ~~and~~
- (c) following consultation with Assembly members, which five off-budget public corporations will attend estimates committee's hearings for a minimum of 30 minutes per corporation.

Ministerial advisers

230. (1) Advisers who are present at an estimates committee to assist Ministers will not directly answer questions or otherwise address the committee except with the approval of and in the presence of a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.

(2) Representatives of off-budget public corporations are treated as Ministerial advisers for the purposes of this standing order.

The Government supports the proposed Sessional Order that will provide for up to a maximum of five off-budget authorities being subject to examination during the budget estimate committee process, with a minimum of thirty minutes being allocated to each off-budget agency incorporated into the estimates schedule.

The time allocated for the relevant Ministers' estimates will be reduced to accommodate those off-budget agencies being incorporated into the schedule.

Recommendation 2

Recommendation No. 2

Your Committee reaffirms its recommendation -

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That audio- or tele-conferencing for Estimates Committees only be used in exceptional circumstances. ”.

The Government supports this recommendation.