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# Standing Committee on Public Accounts

EVIDENCE

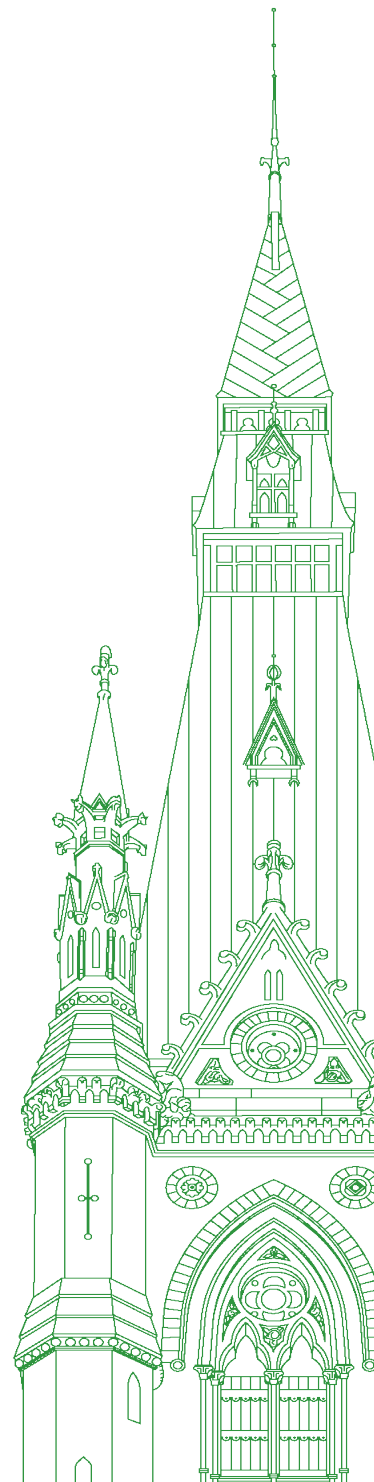
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Tuesday, September 16, 2025

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Chair: John Williamson





## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

• (1530)

[Translation]

**The Chair (John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC)):** I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome to meeting number 3 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

[English]

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room. I don't believe any are attending remotely, but they're certainly welcome to do so.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask all in-person participants to read the guidelines written on the updated cards on the table. These are the measures to help prevent audio and feedback incidents and protect the health and safety of all participants, especially our interpreters. You'll also note a QR code on the card, which links to a short awareness video.

We've all had hard-working summers in our constituencies, so I'll just remind you again of the procedures we go through here. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair, as they are in the chamber.

[Translation]

Today the committee begins consideration of matters related to committee business.

[English]

What I'm proposing is we informally go in rounds. I'm curious to hear priorities from members. A couple of key dates are coming up. The Auditor General is expected to table her autumn reports probably sometime in October. That notice has not been sent to the Speaker yet, but that probably means five to six meetings before those additional investigations are tabled.

The public accounts for 2025 will come out, again, probably in October or November. As a public accounts committee, it's automatic that we will look at those public accounts. The question up for debate is how many meetings we will have. You're all familiar with the calendar. There's no meeting on Tuesday, September 30.

I'm really here to listen and try to find out if there's a divide. I'm proposing we try to settle on a couple of reports or studies just to get us going and then reconsider, when the auditor delivers her next

batch of investigations, how we will proceed for the remainder of the year and probably early into the new year.

I don't have the speaking order. I will begin with Ms. Kusie, and then I'll go to someone on the government bench. I do want to hear from everyone, so everyone will get a turn. The first round will be for six minutes for all three parties, as it is in a regular round, and then I'll go to a second round of five minutes for the official opposition and five minutes for the government.

[Translation]

Next, the Bloc Québécois will have the floor for two and a half minutes.

[English]

I'm going to be generous with time here. If you feel there's something you need to say, I'll come back around to you. This is just meant to give everyone an opportunity to speak.

• (1535)

**Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** I'm surprised we're doing rounds. I thought we were just going to have a general discussion.

**The Chair:** We are, but I want to hear from every member, and to me, it's just going to go back and forth like a ping-pong ball. I'm open to alternatives. I thought that was a way to make sure I hear from everyone and to wrap things up, as I know there are some members who have a couple of things they want to say, certainly from one side. I indicated that if someone feels they've not had an opportunity, I'd come back to them as well. It's just a way for me to regulate it and get things going.

Without further ado, Ms. Kusie, you have the floor on your priorities for this session.

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Certainly, we want to start this conciliatorily and we want to move forward in a collaborative fashion, which I know this government has set out to do and as the Prime Minister has given you the mandate to do.

Chair, I do not want to draw attention to your absence, but I'm so sorry you couldn't be at the conference in Regina. It was absolutely outstanding in terms of the camaraderie and the lessons that we learned about best practices from across the country.

As a committee, we definitely came out of the conference with a renewed sense of collaboration and wanting to do what is in the interest of the Canadian people. Obviously, given that we're all from different political parties, all of us will approach this with a different lens in terms of our values, our principles, the positions that we come from and what we think is most valuable for the average Canadian citizen we hope to serve through this committee.

You have asked for our preferences for studies going forward. As the Auditor General has said herself, there is no shortage of topics to choose from. The reports run the gamut, and every single report, as we learned in Regina, is something of significant consideration when she and her team decide to execute it. Both in the decision and in the completion of the report, these are not picked without due consideration.

With that, Mr. Chair, we are very interested in Report 3, which was just released in June, about current and future use of office space. With a projected deficit of probably \$84 billion, even though it currently sits at \$61.9 billion, this government and this country need revenue right now. In the report, it was determined that there was going to be savings of \$3.9 billion over 10 years, and that's really a drop in the bucket in terms of what we need.

One finding that stands out to me in particular is that the revenues from sold assets aren't even currently documented. To me, it's astounding that we're not even keeping track of what we are disposing of from a balance book perspective. This pairs very nicely with the housing initiative of the government. There is a lot to learn both in terms of cost savings and efficient use of assets, and it also, as I said, goes hand in hand with the housing strategy of the government.

The second one that we're interested in is the Auditor General's 2024 Report 5 about McKinsey, and the broader study of professional services. I'm specifically pointing the study on professional services. Again, we have had trouble finding value for money, time and time again.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Auditor General and the procurement ombud have stated over and over again that there is a lack of oversight and there is a lack of follow-through in terms of the rules, the regulations, their application and the value for money.

Another theme at the time this report was undertaken was the actors involved. This, of course, was under the previous Trudeau administration, but there was concern about the implication of McKinsey and key players like Dominic Barton and their influence on the government throughout all ministries and departments. Given the current Prime Minister's past positions, in addition to the conflicts of interest that have been reported, we must always keep our guard up about these things.

The third one, I'm sure will come as no surprise, is GC Strategies. The AG's report shows more of the same; the Liberal government still needs to tighten up its procurement. We learned from the Auditor General that in her samples, 21% of the samples lack security clearances.

● (1540)

In 33% of contracts examined, federal organizations could not show that contract resources had the experience and qualifications needed to complete the work. In 58% of the non-competitive contracts examined, federal organizations failed to assess whether there would be benefits to calling for bids. Only 54% of contracts examined were situations where the federal departments could prove that their deliverables were even received. So we have a long way to go.

The final piece in regard to this report is that we never determined who chose GC Strategies. We never got to the bottom of that.

With that, I'll lay out our choices again: "Report 3: Current and Future Use of Federal Office Space"; professional services, highlighting McKinsey; and number three, from June of 2025, Report 4, which is on GC Strategies.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

I'll turn now to the government side.

Ms. Tesser Derksen, you have the floor for six minutes, please.

**Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.):** Great. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I don't think I'll take my full six minutes.

I do want to start by talking a little bit about the trip I had to Regina, Saskatchewan, with some of my colleagues to the CCPAC conference. That was September 7 to 9 in lovely Regina, Saskatchewan. I'd not been there before, so it was really nice to see the city. Hosted by the president, Saskatchewan MLA Trent Wotherspoon, we had a really great welcome and a good introduction to the city. I was joined by my colleagues Ms. Kusie and Mr. Stevenson; our analyst, Mr. Theckedath; our clerk, Ms. Jeanneault; and the Auditor General, of course, and her staff. We had a great time.

I was especially impressed by the provincial PACs that updated us on their work and by the panels that spoke about the best practices that made their committees highly functional. I learned more about this committee's function as well—its ideal function—and its purpose. Having been through just one committee meeting so far, it's been a little bit of baptism by fire, so it was nice to have this orientation with other PACs from across the country.

I did get a sense of some general themes. I understand that this committee and all PACs, ours in particular, have been asked by Parliament to provide financial oversight of the government through the Auditor General's reports and the government's financial statements, which is obvious, and that we're not meant to critique policy. This might be a nuance that's lost on some folks, but I've come to understand it quite critically. We're tasked with determining whether the implementation of policies has been properly executed. We're to determine the effectiveness of public programs.

To sum it up in a phrase that Ms. Kusie used, we have to find value for money and bang for our buck—bang for the taxpayer buck.

Another recurring theme of the sessions was the inherent and necessary non-partisan nature of public accounts committees. I know it's easier said than done sometimes, but this was really impressed upon us by one panel in particular. It was led by a former chair of this committee, former MP Kevin Sorenson. He discussed his time chairing this committee. I got to chat with him afterwards. We had a good discussion about the purpose and the work that this committee is tasked to do by Parliament.

I understand that there is a backlog of reports that we need to review. I'd really like to get some work done. I'm sure everyone around this table would agree with that.

Overall, it was a very good introduction to the world of public accounts for me as a new MP and a new committee member. I'd encourage anyone else to attend next year. It will be toward the end of August in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

With regard to reports that I would take a special interest in, I would take a special interest in the environmental reports. It's been quite some time, I believe, since this committee has looked at any environmental reports. I understand that the environment committee has not been looking at them. I think that might be an opportunity for us to review something that we haven't looked at in a long time.

That's all for me, Mr. Chair.

● (1545)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That was a great summary, I think, for everyone as to the role of public accounts that came out of the conference in Regina.

[Translation]

We'll now go to our Bloc Québécois colleague.

Mr. Lemire, you have about six minutes.

**Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very pleased to be back with the committee members in a role that, I remind you, I see as temporary.

I will begin by formally introducing and moving the motions that were emailed to you on Monday, June 16, 2025. They have to do with studies that I would like this committee to undertake. The first is as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g) of the House of Commons, the committee undertake a study of the federal government's financial commitments related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup as they appear in the Public Accounts of Canada;

That this study examine:

(a) the budgeted, committed and actual expenditures by federal departments and agencies in connection with hosting the World Cup;

(b) infrastructure investments, including temporary or permanent developments in host cities such as stadiums, transportation networks and hospitality facilities;

(c) costs related to event security, including coordination among the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or RCMP, provincial and municipal police forces and private security providers;

(d) federal financial contributions to provinces and municipalities, including the terms and conditions of transfer agreements;

(e) compliance of expenditures with federal policies on financial management, procurement and transparency;

(f) the anticipated economic benefits for Canada and the accountability mechanisms in place for such expenditures; and

(g) agreements with FIFA and their legal and financial implications for the federal government.

That the committee draft a report and, pursuant to Standing Order 109, request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

In my opinion, Mr. Chair, these are pieces of information that the government can provide and that can be verified. I clearly believe that there will be a huge financial hole. Is it possible to prevent that despite this government's spending and the commitments it has made? That's the intent of the motion.

Do you want to respond to that now, or do you want me to read the second motion first?

**The Chair:** For the moment, please continue.

**Sébastien Lemire:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The second motion is on a different topic. It has to do with indigenous people.

One of the challenges I see is that some indigenous people enjoy the privileges of reserve status under the Indian Act while others don't. That disparity seems pretty significant to me. It seems to me that for the process for getting status, everyone is passing the buck and nothing is moving forward. I would like the process to be clearer. This is the notice of motion that I tabled on June 16. The motion reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g) of the House of Commons, the committee recommend that the Auditor General of Canada conduct a performance audit of the federal Additions to Reserve, or ATR, process, as administered by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, or CIRNAC, in order to assess:

- (a) the effectiveness and efficiency of ATR application processing;
  - (b) the average processing times at each stage of the process as well as the causes of persistent delays;
  - (c) the transparency, predictability and clarity of the assessment criteria applicable to First Nations;
  - (d) the coordination among CIRNAC, Indigenous Services Canada, provinces, municipalities and affected First Nations;
  - (e) compliance with the commitments outlined in the Policy on Additions to Reserve and Designated Lands; and
  - (f) the outcomes achieved in terms of self-determination, community development and equitable access to public services following the addition of land to a reserve;
- and that this audit contribute to the responsible, transparent and effective management of public funds consistent with the Government of Canada's commitments to First Nations and in support of the reconciliation process.

In my opinion, this is a fundamental issue, and the hurdles involved serve no one: neither Canadians, Quebecers nor first nations. The rules should be clarified.

I'll go back to point (c), the importance of clarifying the rules, which would be a path forward.

As for the other discussion items, first, we should be open to including at least one of the environmental reports. I think they are highly relevant. I'm going to use the somewhat more exhaustive list of reports selected for consideration by the committee.

I would like to indicate the Bloc Québécois's interest in professional services contracts, from the 2024 report 5 of the Auditor General, in industrial and technological benefits, from the 2024 report 10 of the Auditor General, and in the 2024 report 12 on the Canada summer jobs program.

I also agree with the Conservatives' proposal regarding the studies that were submitted last spring by the Auditor General. I think there's something very interesting in those. The issue of professional services is an important one. Obviously, there's also the issue of Indian Act registration. We know there have been huge cost slip-pages. I find it ironic that Canada will meet its NATO-requested 2% military spending target because of the cost overruns of purchasing those fighter jets. All kidding aside, we have a job to do there. I think that needs to be prioritized. I would also add my riding's priorities. It might be worthwhile to discuss connectivity in the regions.

That's my point of view for now. Later on, I think we'll have to make proposals and everyone will have to make compromises. However, if I had to choose right now, my priority would be the study on the FIFA World Cup.

Thank you.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will take a few seconds to respond to your two motions.

The second motion calls on the Auditor General to conduct a study. That's straightforward. It's up to the committee to decide whether it wants to support the motion and send a request to the Office of the Auditor General for that purpose. We can debate that another day, at a later meeting.

Your first motion is a little trickier. According to committee rules, for a study to be done, it usually has to be related to a report from the Auditor General of Canada, Ms. Hogan. We did some research to see if it was possible in this case, but we really didn't find anything.

We have a solution to offer you. During our Public Accounts studies in 2024 or 2025, we gave members of all political parties the opportunity to invite the heads of certain programs to appear before the committee and answer our questions. There is no report stemming from those appearances. Members are given an opportunity to ask questions. For example, for a few years now, the official opposition has been asking Bank of Canada officials to come and testify before the committee to talk about public accounts expenditures.

That's what I suggest for this motion. Otherwise, I think it goes beyond the committee's jurisdiction.

Based on responses provided to committee members by certain departments, the heads of the programs concerned may appear before other committees for investigation. We can then raise certain points and ask questions in the House of Commons. However, our committee can't really proceed with this study, because it isn't related to any report from the Auditor General.

**Sébastien Lemire:** First of all, thank you for answering me in French, and in excellent French at that. I very much appreciate your sensitivity.

I understand the essentials of what you are saying, but let me ask a related question.

I don't know if this is done, but could the committee submit a topic to the Auditor General for study if it finds it to be a topic of interest?

We all have concerns, and many of us have been following with interest the debate on the moral aspects of FIFA overruns. I want to acknowledge Mr. Housefather, with whom we worked on these issues at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Here, we're looking at the financial aspects.

In the same spirit, could we propose a study to the Auditor General and get a report, which we could then study? Would that be allowed or not?

• (1555)

**The Chair:** The committee can ask anything of the Auditor General, but there is no guarantee that she will agree.

The committee must therefore decide whether it wants to send a proposal to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. That said, the committee must decide whether this subject is really a priority. Personally, I can't say, but if you want to continue along these lines, Mr. Lemire, I would suggest that you talk to your committee colleagues in the corridors, outside this process. Your idea could be backed by the committee, but I think you need to talk a bit about it first.

If I can speak on behalf of the members, we try to make requests to the Auditor General when it's a real priority of the committee, but we don't want to submit one request after another. In this particular case, we may agree that the request is acceptable, but I just wanted to make that point.

**Sébastien Lemire:** I gather you're asking me to change the wording of my second motion, in which the committee would recommend that the Auditor General undertake a study on the federal ATR process based on available evidence, propose it to members and then formally move it again.

**The Chair:** That's right, and I'm also asking whether you want officials to come and answer your questions.

**Sébastien Lemire:** Great. That's how I'll proceed.

**Dillan Theckedath (Committee Researcher):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to everyone else for being here.

I gave my opinion to the chair just to assist him in his work, which is my role.

Indeed, from time to time, the committee's power is used to gently suggest to the auditor that she undertake a study. When you do that, you may be more likely to be successful when the proposed motion is more specific or the suggestions proposed in the study are better defined.

The Auditor General and the Office of the Auditor General, or OAG, have occasionally conducted policy studies, but this type of study takes a long time, 12 to 18 months. When a study focuses on a specific program, such as the responsibilities of a member of the military, it can be easier to understand its essence and the resources and risk management it entails. You need to keep all factors in mind before recommending that the OAG undertake a study. This information could be useful as part of the process.

**Sébastien Lemire:** Absolutely.

I felt that my motion was well worded and clear, but I understand that the recipient will depend on your decision, Mr. Chair.

However, I remain convinced that, as a topical issue that the committee may wish to study, the federal ATR process will certainly be a priority in two years, if not now. We could certainly spend an enormous amount of time on it, which is why we need to find out where things stand now.

I will go back to the drawing board and get in touch with you, if I may, to make sure that my motion is valid. I will contact my colleagues around the table, and then I will quickly come back to the matter by next week.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

In a few minutes, you will still have two minutes to discuss the topic if you need it.

• (1600)

**Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We'll now go to Mr. Deltell for about five minutes.

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, fellow members. I am very happy to see all of you again to discuss the sound management of public funds. I also want to acknowledge the people who support us. We are very grateful for the essential work they do for us.

At the beginning of a new parliamentary session, we are all smiling and willing to work together. I hope we maintain that positive attitude over the coming weeks.

There is something that unites us all as parliamentarians, whether on the side of the government, the official opposition, the second opposition party or independent members. In our constituency offices over the past few months, I am sure that each and every one of us has had to answer dozens, if not hundreds, of calls for assistance from taxpayers concerning the Canada Revenue Agency.

We know that the Office of the Auditor General of Canada is expected to table a report on this subject in a few weeks, on October 7, if I'm not mistaken. I think we can all agree that this is an issue that affects all regions of Canada, from coast to coast. It's nothing to celebrate.

We know that it's never easy to manage the agency because of new tax measures that are introduced. We recognize that. We are also aware that taxpayers are the ones who suffer the consequences of inadequate service.

Media surveys conducted over the past few weeks show that 95% of people who try to contact someone at the agency over the phone are unsuccessful. We can understand that there may be issues over the summer. However, 95% is huge. Only 5% of people manage to talk to someone on the phone. This is not a lottery; it is a public service to which Canadians are entitled and that they pay for.

An article in *La Presse* mentioned cases where the agency wasn't even able to provide specific information to Canadians who wanted to invest in a tax-free savings account, or TFSA. If they can't get their facts straight on how much someone can invest in a TFSA, the very basis of Canadians' savings is at stake. The very basis of a TFSA investor's future is at stake here.

The media has also reported cases where mistakes were made. You'll see the common thread.

Le Journal de Québec and Le Journal de Montréal reported that 78-year-old Mr. Roujeon had to pay interest on an amount he had already paid to the Canada Revenue Agency. We know how it works. When you receive a notice from the agency, it says that you have to pay immediately or else you will be charged interest. If you've already paid, why would you pay interest? While someone is trying to prove that they've paid, the interest is accumulating. In this case, the agency finally realized that it was absurd and it had made a mistake.

Canadians in general are honest, hard-working people, apart from a few scofflaws. Hard-working people of good faith don't expect the Canadian government to treat them like thieves. However, that is what happened.

Another case involves 83-year-old Mr. Derome. The CRA claimed that he had phantom revenue that, as it turned out, was non-existent.

These examples are cited in Le Journal de Québec and Le Journal de Montréal. Aside from the fact that they were mistreated by the agency, the common thread between these two is that they are an 83-year-old man and a 78-year-old man.

That brings me to a very important issue. Our seniors are the ones who built Canada and the wealth Canadians now enjoy. The least we can do is treat them with dignity. They shouldn't be taken for crooks, thieves or anything of the sort. We must not forget that these people, who were born in the 1930s and 1940s, are not digital natives. As a result, we need to respect their wishes. What they want is to have direct phone contact, to speak directly to a person.

Younger people have a natural skill with computers, but not everyone does. We have to respect that fact, particularly in the case of seniors.

I think the Canada Revenue Agency needs to be accountable. We look forward to seeing what the Auditor General says in her report. We are eager to see the findings of the report.

Whatever our political party, whatever region of Canada we live in, all of us parliamentarians have been approached in recent weeks or months by quite a lot of people who want access to the Canada Revenue Agency.

I think that, as parliamentarians, we should all work together on this.

• (1605)

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

[English]

Is there a member of government who would like to address priorities in general?

I thought this was the fairest way to do it. It gives members a chance to express themselves.

Mr. Housefather, go ahead. If you're prepared to defer to the chair, just say so as well, but I suspect you'll have a few ideas yourself.

**Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** I won't defer to the chair, but I will not take five minutes—that I promise.

It's a pleasure to be here with everybody.

[Translation]

It's a great pleasure to work with Mr. Lemire, the Conservative Party members, my Liberal colleagues and, of course, you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I would like to suggest the study of the F-35s. Having worked on that with Ms. Kusie at the OGGO committee before, I do believe the F-35s are a very pressing issue, in terms of decisions we're going to make, a very important relationship with the United States and the need to have fighter jets. For me, that would be the one item I would suggest looking at.

[Translation]

I also want to mention that I fully support what Mr. Lemire is proposing on the FIFA issue.

Mr. Chair, I imagine you mean that the motion is out of order because the custom in committee is to study only things that the Auditor General has already looked into.

[English]

I would suggest working with Sébastien to rewrite it so that it would be, then, conforming. I would totally support that.

That's all I have to say.

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

[Translation]

Mr. Lemire, you have support.

[English]

We'll keep working on this.

[Translation]

**Sébastien Lemire:** I have it from both sides, it seems.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Kuruc would like to go for a couple of minutes here as well. You have five minutes.

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Thank you. I'm glad to be here, and I am honoured to represent the taxpayer at this committee.

I'm going to go through some reports and touch on some things and then talk about the two that I think we should focus on the most.



First and foremost is “Report 3: Current and Future Use of Federal Office Space”. I found some interesting quotes in there. First, “the CMHC’s reporting of the number of housing units built lacked clarity. In addition, the initiative did not maximize access to affordable housing for those with the greatest need.”

The Auditor General confirmed what Canadians already know: The government is failing on housing. Nearly half of the units promised through CMHC programs won’t be ready on time. The so-called affordable housing doesn’t even target the lowest-income families, who are struggling, and that is a big concern, so I would put forth that we look at Report 3 specifically.

The second one I’d like to touch on, and I’ll go through them, is “Report 4: Professional Service Contracts with GCStrategies Inc.” Specifically, here the value for money did not meet the Auditor General’s standards. Security requirements were not enforced. The study states that federal organizations were not able to show that all contract resources had the appropriate security clearance prior to the contract being given. “In 46% of contracts examined”—almost half—the study found that “federal organizations had little to no evidence to support that deliverables were received. Despite this, federal government officials consistently authorized payments.”

We have to look at Report 4, and we have to tackle three things: value for dollars, security issues and payment without proof of work being completed. I would like to put forth that we take a closer look at Report 4.

Those will be my two main suggestions.

Some other interesting things I found in the other reports include a report on the COVID-19 pandemic’s CEBA, the Canada Emergency Business Account. First, we have \$8.5 million remaining in loans to collect, and in this report, there is clearly no plan for how they are collecting on these defaulted loans, and collecting on loans could last until 2032. Over half of these ineligible loans have still not been paid off, and that’s a very big concern to me and, I think, the Canadian taxpayer. As a result, now we have \$3.5 billion in COVID-19 business loans that were given to ineligible recipients. That is very concerning. In this report, it’s clear that the government likes to move fast with no control and no plan.

In “Report 7: Combatting Cybercrime”, I found that the CRTC received about 75,000 reports of cybercrime-linked incidents and only investigated six. This is extremely concerning, because the government is failing to protect Canadians.

Something that hits home to me is I have an 84-year-old father, and these exact crimes target seniors, and they could be the most affected. I found that very concerning.

Next is “Report 8: The Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program”. “A 2024 report by Dunskey Energy + Climate Advisors identified the need for approximately 240,000 public charging ports by 2030. The current ZEVIP target is to support 78,500 public and private chargers by 2029.” That’s only 33% of what we would need to support the government’s EV mandate.

I’d like to touch on “Report 2: Delivering Canada’s Future Fighter Jet Capability”. This audit shows that we’re more than three years behind on the infrastructure, and six years later we still have a

shortage of pilots. Simply put, at the end of the day, we will have planes with no pilots and no runways.

In “Report 11—Programs To Assist Seniors”, StatsCan says that the population of seniors could almost double over the next two decades. The audit found that the government programs were out of touch on the wants and needs of seniors. They also couldn’t determine if the programs were effective or show how many seniors benefited.

• (1610)

I will spend my time on this committee to represent the taxpayer. That’s my job. To reiterate, I’d like to focus on reports 3 and 4.

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

Ms. Yip, it looks like you’re preparing to take a round. You have the floor for five minutes, please.

**Jean Yip:** Thank you, Chair.

It’s great to see all the new members of this committee. I know that Ms. Kusie and Ms. Tesser Derksen attended the conference on public accounts. I think it’s a great introduction, especially to what this committee is supposed to be about: non-partisan value for the taxpayer and really looking at the Auditor General’s report to make a difference.

There are so many reports that we haven’t seen from the Auditor General, not just the ones that are listed here. I want to make a point of saying that I wish we could have reviewed more of those reports in the past. However, it would be good if, in the spirit of what was stressed at the public accounts conference—being non-partisan and collaborative—every party could choose one report. Then it would be fair: three reports for the three parties here. I think we would be able to cover a number of interests.

I also note—and I know, Mr. Chair, you will know what I’m saying—that we have a number of draft reports, dating from 2022, that also need to be incorporated.

Mr. Lemire, I’m sure that we can have a chance to discuss your motion a little more, maybe off-line.

I would like to look at some of the reports from the environment commissioner. There are four reports here, and I think all of them would be good to look at. In particular, "Lessons Learned from Canada's Record on Sustainable Development", which is number four from the commissioner, looks at three decades to foster sustainable development. I think that, given where we are going with the environment, my concern for future generations, like my children.... In thinking about the wildfires, I was in Edmonton last week, and I was surprised at how hazy it was, and even in Toronto we've had days when it's been hazy, so I think it's important to see what lessons have been learned and to apply them to the future.

I would recommend that one, as well as "Current and Future Use of Federal Office Space", which is report number three from the Auditor General, because housing is, of course, a big concern.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Yip.

Mr. Stevenson, go ahead.

**William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC):** Thank you. I'll be pretty brief.

I too made the trip to Regina, and it was very informative as to some of the procedures in other jurisdictions and how, hopefully, we can co-operate. It sounds like we're starting to have a bit of consensus already with a couple of them, including the report on the housing. That would be one of the issues we'd look at.

Another one I would want to support would be the professional services contracts.

The third one for me, one that has a little more priority, is the CEBA loans my colleague Mr. Kuruc mentioned. As somebody who was in public practice during the process, I did find there were a lot of issues with how it proceeded. I'd be interested to see how the follow-up was determined. I think there are a lot of issues we need to look at with regard to how the loans will be collected, but also, for those people whose loans were forgiven, whether or not it was actually reported as income and tying it back to CRA. It wasn't just the program itself and giving the money; it was also in taxing the portions that were forgiven in the first and second phases. That would be interesting to see. I didn't read any details on any of that.

The other part, which kind of ties into it, is the modernization of implementation. Mr. Deltell discussed how the modernizing of CRA was making it difficult and was becoming somewhat ageist or discriminatory toward those who are technically challenged in dealing with CRA.

Those are the reports I've looked at that would be of interest to me.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Stevenson.

Mr. Osborne, would you like to share your thoughts with us, please?

**Tom Osborne (Cape Spear, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm certainly looking forward to working with all of you around the table. It does seem like we're building some consensus. I'm

quite excited for consensus at public accounts. I was on the agenda for Regina and I missed it. As we all know around this table, the most certainty we have in our positions as members of Parliament is the uncertainty of our schedule sometimes, and something came up. I would like to have gotten there as a new member of public accounts at the federal level.

I'd say that we are reaching some level of consensus. From my perspective, looking at Canada's record on sustainable development is important. I do agree that if we can have one report from each of the parties represented here, and perhaps within our own caucuses reach a consensus on what that report is, I would see that as being fair and equal in terms of the consensus we are trying to build.

MP Lemire, I'm determined to learn French so that I can speak to you in your language as well as you listening to me in English. I am taking French lessons. I will get there. Maybe I will get some lessons on the side from you to help get me there.

In terms of your motion, I think we can work together and find some sort of solution in bringing your motion forward. I look forward to discussions with you on that as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1620)

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

Are there any other comments anyone would like to make?

I'm sensing some broad agreements. I'm not going to attempt to repeat it now, in case I get it wrong, but a few of us are taking notes. We'll report back to you on that.

I have just a couple of other housekeeping points. Then I'll move us in camera, because we have some departmental requests that we need to consider as well as requests for some committee time.

The Auditor General would like to come and brief us at some point in the coming weeks on her office's role. This is a good oversight for new members, and there are many here. That happens in camera.

I'm just looking for a signal. I'm seeing yeses. I know that the OAG team is watching this, and they'll see that as an acceptance. We'll find some time.

Unless there are any other points, I'll suspend the meeting. We'll come back in camera and we'll pick things up.

[Translation]

Mr. Lemire, do you have anything to add?

**Sébastien Lemire:** Yes. While the meeting is still public, I would like to say that I support what Mr. Deltell on the Conservative side said about the timeliness of the services provided to people, particularly seniors. In my riding, I too have seen people having problems at the Canada Revenue Agency. I even travelled around talking to seniors, and we wrote a report about it. This is a

real problem. I think it would be particularly interesting to take a look at it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

*[Proceedings continue in camera ]*

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