
House of Assembly
Excess Constituency Allowance Claims by Mr. Randy Collins, M.H.A.
(Supplementary Report)

Introduction

Section 15(1) of the *Auditor General Act* requires the Auditor General to report to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council instances the Auditor General becomes aware of during the course of an audit which may involve improper retention or misappropriation of public money or another activity that may constitute an offence under the *Criminal Code* or another Act.

A matter of this nature came to my attention during my audit of the House of Assembly relating to constituency allowance claims by Members of the House of Assembly.

As outlined by the Commission of Internal Economy, “*Each Member [of the House of Assembly] is entitled to an accountable constituency allowance. This allowance is for the payment of expenditures incurred in the performance of constituency business and may cover such items as office rental, equipment, supplies, secretarial and other support services, information material such as newspapers, advertising, purchase of flags, pins, etc..*”

The maximum amount which may be paid to each Member of the House of Assembly varies by district and is set by the Commission of Internal Economy.

Findings

On 4 July 2006, I reported through the Minister of Finance, to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, that a review of expenditures at the House of Assembly identified excess constituency allowance claims by Mr. Randy Collins, M.H.A. totalling \$295,418 relating to fiscal years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. This matter is currently being investigated by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

I am in the process of completing the additional work requested by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council through OC2006-295 with respect to identifying any further excess constituency allowance amounts claimed by Members. My review relating to Mr. Collins is now completed and I have identified further excess constituency allowance claims totalling \$63,180 relating to fiscal years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

These additional excess claims were made by Mr. Collins on either Members Constituency Expense Claim forms or Travel Expense Claim forms signed and filed by him with the Office of the Clerk of the House of Assembly. For this three-year period the Commission of Internal Economy approved a total of \$173,900 (\$56,100 for 2000, \$58,900 for 2001, and \$58,900 for 2002) for his constituency allowance while

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Mr. Collins submitted claims totalling \$237,080, resulting in the excess claims of \$63,180. Details on the additional excess claims made by Mr. Collins are provided in the attached schedules..

Together with the excess amounts reported on 4 July 2006, this represents total excess claims by Mr. Collins of \$358,598 for the years 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. As Figure 1 shows, for this seven-year period the Commission of Internal Economy approved a total of \$403,500 for his constituency allowance while Mr. Collins submitted claims totalling \$762,098, resulting in the excess claims of \$358,598.

Figure 1

Excess Constituency Allowance Claims

| Fiscal Year | IEC Approved Limit | Amount Claimed | Excess |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 2000 | \$ 56,100 | \$ 67,566 | \$ 11,466 |
| 2001 | 58,900 | 73,287 | 14,387 |
| 2002 | 58,900 | 96,227 | 37,327 |
| Subtotal - Supplementary Report | 173,900 | 237,080 | 63,180 |
| 2003 | 58,900 | 147,862 | 88,962 |
| 2004 | 58,900 | 166,199 | 107,299 |
| 2005 | 55,900 | 99,471 | 43,571 |
| 2006 | 55,900 | 111,486 | 55,586 |
| Subtotal - Initial Report | 229,600 | 525,018 | 295,418 |
| Total | \$403,500 | \$762,098 | \$358,598 |

Recommendation

I recommended that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council also refer the matter of Mr. Collins' additional excess constituency allowance claims for fiscal years 2000, 2001 and 2002 to the Department of Justice.