

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 5 December 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. Percy Barrett, M.H.A. totalling \$117,286 relating to fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. These excess claims were made by Mr. Barrett 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. As Figure 1 shows, for this seven-year period the Commission of Internal Economy approved a total of \$268,300 for his constituency allowance while Mr. Barrett submitted claims totalling \$385,586, resulting in the excess claims of \$117,286.

House of Assembly
Excess Constituency Allowance Claims by Mr. Percy Barrett, M.H.A.

Figure 1

Excess Constituency Allowance Claims

Fiscal Year	IEC Approved Limit	Amount Claimed	Excess
1998	\$ 33,500	\$ 40,056	\$ 6,556
1999	37,200	51,336	14,136
2000	38,000	65,010	27,010
2001	39,900	65,325	25,425
2002	39,900	57,426	17,526
2003	39,900	50,394	10,494
2004	39,900	56,039	16,139
Total	\$268,300	\$385,586	\$117,286

Details on the excess claims made by Mr. Barrett are provided in the attached schedules.

Recommendation

I recommended that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council refer the matter of Mr. Barrett's excess constituency allowance claims for fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 to the Department of Justice.