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OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Office of the Executive Council plays a key role in supporting government’s agenda and activities through central coordination and by providing professional, non-partisan support to the Premier and the other Cabinet Ministers.

The Office of the Executive Council is involved in a number of specific initiatives within government. This report documents the commitments, activities and accomplishments of the Cabinet Secretariat, Communications and Consultation Branch, and the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat in 2002-03, and the challenges they face for 2003-04.

The Office of the Executive Council includes the central agencies of government: Cabinet Secretariat, Communications and Consultation Branch, Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, Strategic Social Plan Office, Treasury Board Secretariat and the Women’s Policy Office. Treasury Board Secretariat, the Women’s Policy Office, and the Strategic Social Plan Office have provided separate annual reports for 2002-03 to independently inform the public about their respective agencies.

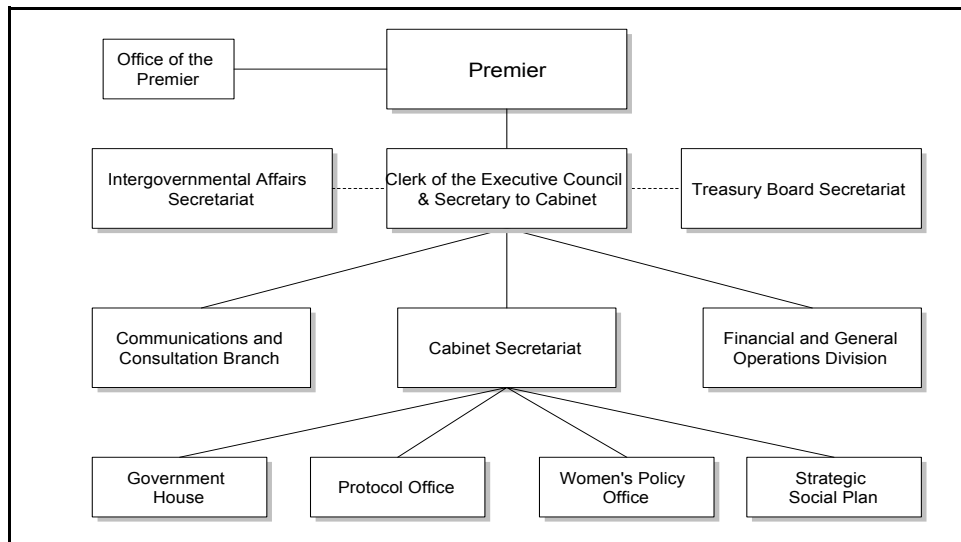


Figure 1: Office of the Executive Council

VISION

The Office of the Executive Council envisions a strong, prosperous and self-reliant province where the rights of men, women and children are respected and all share equally in the opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic and social development.

MISSION

The Mission of the Office of the Executive Council is to manage the overall operations of government through effective planning and policy development and coordination of program and service delivery.

VALUES

The Office of the Executive Council is guided by the following values:

- Respect for the public and the democratic process;
- Professional integrity in ensuring that the Premier, the Cabinet and its Committees are provided with timely, accurate and comprehensive policy advice and information;
- Respectful and supportive workplaces in which communication, teamwork, diversity, creativity and leadership are encouraged and supported; and,
- Accountability, both individually and collectively, for actions, decisions and performance.

CABINET SECRETARIAT

In line with the overall management responsibilities of the Office of the Executive Council, Cabinet Secretariat ensures the effective and efficient operation of the Cabinet process, provides support to Cabinet and its Committees in setting overall government policy and coordinates initiatives that involve all or several departments.

SHARED COMMITMENTS

Due to the nature of its role as a central agency, Cabinet Secretariat partners with all government departments and agencies to ensure that emerging issues are appropriately managed. It also works with departments and other agencies throughout government to ensure that the Cabinet process, and by association, the policy development process, runs smoothly.

KEY PRIORITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cabinet Secretariat has identified the following strategic issues, which were the focus of some of the activities undertaken in 2002-03.

SUPPORT OF CENTRAL DECISION-MAKING MECHANISMS

Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the management of the Cabinet process, including provision of administrative support to the Cabinet and its committees and the monitoring of emerging issues requiring the consideration of Cabinet. This includes arranging meetings;

preparing and circulating agendas, memoranda and other documents; recording, drafting, and circulating minutes of decisions; ensuring that any necessary actions are undertaken by the appropriate departments and agencies; and maintaining the official records of Cabinet. In 2002-03, Cabinet Secretariat provided support to more than 90 Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings.

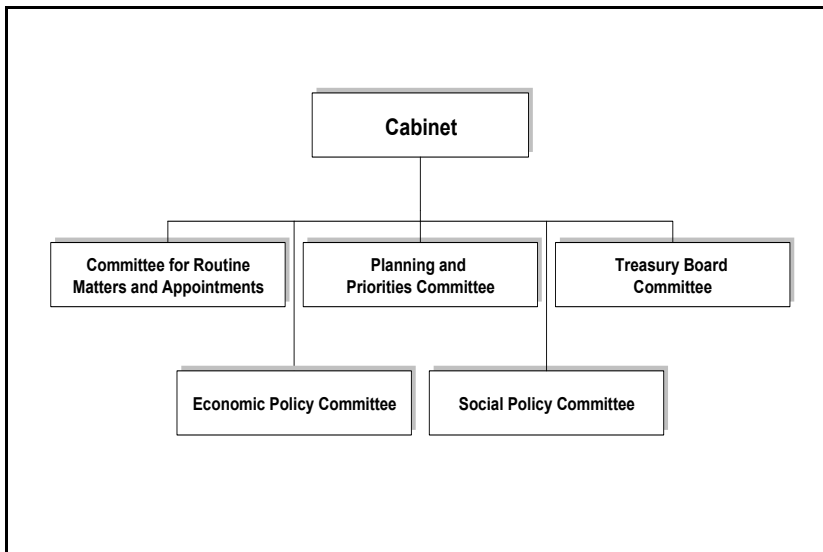


Figure 2: Committees of Cabinet

Cabinet met outside of the Confederation Complex twice in 2002-03. Cabinet Secretariat provided support to these regional visits by managing administrative processes and logistics, and by ensuring that Cabinet members had access to all necessary information to make informed recommendations and decisions.

SUPPORT TO THE HEAD OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Cabinet Secretariat supports the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council in its role as Head of the Public Service, through which it is responsible to the Premier for the overall effectiveness of the public service.

ENCOURAGING RECOGNITION

The Public Service Award of Excellence was launched in 2001. This award was established to recognize the outstanding contributions of public service employees in the areas of leadership, innovation, valuing people, and excellence in service delivery. In 2002, three teams and nine individuals were selected to receive the awards during the second annual ceremony, chosen from 73 individual and team nominations.



FACILITATING COMMUNICATION

The Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council hosts retreats for Deputy Ministers each year. The purpose of the retreats is to provide a forum for Deputy Ministers to plan and discuss government's most recent initiatives and policy decisions, as well as to set future priorities. In 2002-03, one Deputy Ministers' retreat was held.

Similarly, the Clerk holds weekly meetings for the Deputy Minister group for the purpose of information sharing and engaging in discussion of immediate matters that affect the public service and the people of the province.

Additionally, in 2002-03, the Clerk of the Executive Council released the first Report on the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador. This report outlined the progress that the public service had made to date and provided direction for the future.

SETTING PRIORITIES

In 2002-03, the Office of the Clerk continued the expanded focus of the committee of senior deputy ministers, who had been tasked to take on broader strategic human resource issues that affect the entire public service.

The mandate of the Strategic Human Resource Management Committee is to make recommendations on the development of a strategic human resource plan for the public service, including an examination of current practices and issues in the delivery of human resource services. It also makes recommendations on operational human resource issues for action by Treasury Board, the Public Service Commission and departmental human resource management units.

ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES

For a number of years, employees have been seconded from line departments to work in Cabinet Secretariat. The aim of this staffing approach was to enhance the policy development process throughout government by developing capacity in employees and increasing their understanding of and experience with the Cabinet decision-making process.

In 2001, the Office of the Clerk formalized the process whereby government employees with an interest or background in policy development may express their interest in secondment opportunities within the Office of the Executive Council. In 2002-03, two employees were seconded from other government departments to participate in work assignments with Cabinet Secretariat. This is an ongoing development opportunity, intended to encourage employees to gain experience with the Cabinet decision-making process and to provide them with a greater understanding of policy-making.

ENHANCING INTERNAL PROCESSES

Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for establishing, coordinating and communicating throughout government the standards and processes surrounding the Cabinet decision-making process, and for policy development and information management.

In 2002-03, Cabinet Secretariat launched the Senior Management Intranet, a secure Web site that facilitates communication between central agencies and line departments. Through this site, Cabinet Secretariat regularly provides updated information on appointments to Crown agencies, boards, and commissions, as well as ensuring that resources, templates, and policies are regularly accessible by departments.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

In 2002-03, Cabinet Secretariat continued to focus its efforts toward enhancing the effectiveness of its role in the Cabinet process. This was undertaken, in part, through the continued improvement of information management practices, including the development of an electronic correspondence policy, the development and set-up of a central document registry, and continued expansion and refinement of the electronic document management system. Cabinet Secretariat's document management team was nominated for the Institute of Public Administration's Innovation Management Award as a result of its success to date.

These efforts to improve the management of Cabinet Secretariat's information assets will ensure the security and availability of accurate, comprehensive and current information for the Premier, the Cabinet, Cabinet committees and government departments, now and in the future.

POLICY AND PLANNING CAPACITY BUILDING

Cabinet Secretariat continues an open dialogue with departmental planning coordinators to ensure that government's capacity to plan and develop effective policy continues to develop. In 2002-03, Cabinet Secretariat, Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Communications and Consultation Branch coordinated the preparation and tabling of departmental and public body annual reports for 2001-02.

COMMUNICATING THE PROCESS

The development and implementation of the "Decision-Making Process" learning series was intended to increase employee awareness of the Cabinet process, to improve the level of communication between government departments and Cabinet Secretariat and, thereby, to increase the effectiveness of our policy development and service delivery processes. In 2002-03, the course was received with great interest, and has been delivered to a number of government departments to date.

PROTOCOL ACTIVITIES

The Protocol division of Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for coordinating events and ceremonies, administering certain awards and recognition programs and advising on protocol matters. This division works closely with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, among other advisory committee members, to support the development and establishment of province-wide awards and recognition programs, such as the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador as announced in the March 2002 Speech from the Throne.

In 2002-03, the Protocol Office coordinated nineteen diplomatic and consular visits, including state visits from Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonya of Norway and Her Excellency Mrs. Geetha de Silva, High Commissioner, for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Protocol Office was responsible for the coordination of the Installation of the New Lieutenant Governor, Hon. Edward Roberts, QC, in November of 2002, and the subsequent Swearing of the Oath of Allegiance by the Provincial Cabinet to His Honour in December 2002.

The Protocol Office also coordinated the nomination process for the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, organizing the presentation ceremonies at which the Lieutenant Governor presented 200 medals.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

Cabinet Secretariat's opportunities and challenges for the future primarily involve further enhancing administrative processes and continually improving capacity in the areas of information management, policy and planning and communication.

- Cabinet Secretariat will continue to refine internal information management practices, and share lessons learned with other government departments.
- Cabinet Secretariat will continue to assist the Clerk celebrate the achievements of our employees through the Public Service Award of Excellence.
- Cabinet Secretariat will improve its ability to provide policy support and coordination to Cabinet, Cabinet committees and government departments through increased cooperation and communication.
- Cabinet Secretariat will continue to work with other government departments and Treasury Board Secretariat to enhance the policy and planning capacity in government.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATION BRANCH

The Communications and Consultation Branch is responsible for managing the communications function of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Branch provides communications support to the Premier and coordinates communications across government. The Branch also assumes overall responsibility for communications policy, planning, training and evaluation.

The Communications and Consultation Branch has a total staff complement of 13 employees, inclusive of co-op students.

SHARED COMMITMENTS

The Communications and Consultation Branch works with, and provides centralized support to communications professionals and senior officials in government line departments. Such support includes providing advice on communications planning, providing media monitoring, coordinating Web site development, coordinating the scheduling of events, facilitating public opinion research, providing multimedia communications support, managing government's news distribution system, providing support for stakeholder consultations and assisting with interdepartmental initiatives.

The Branch provides Cabinet Secretariat officials with professional communications advice and support in addressing interdepartmental issues, and on corporate initiatives such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Medal and the Public Service Award of Excellence. Also, Branch staff support Cabinet Secretariat's responsibility for the smooth operation of Cabinet through the analysis of communications plans and related communications materials.

To ensure that public servants understand the role of communications and are able to contribute to government's overall development in that area, the Branch partners with Treasury Board's Training Centre to develop and deliver training. The Branch helps to identify training needs, develop training programs and assists professional training staff in the delivery of such modules as writing briefing notes and dealing effectively with the media.

Seeing "The Big Picture"

The Big Picture - the first communications training module - was introduced in 1999 after much work and partnership between the Communications and Consultation Branch and the Training Division of Treasury Board. The goal was to implement a professional communications training program for public servants to provide them with basic, necessary skills for communicating effectively to senior officials and elected representatives.

From *The Big Picture*, the two partners in communications training continued to move forward with modules on writing briefing notes and developing interviewing skills in 2001-02. For the 2002-03 year, 212 public servants received hands-on training regarding government's communications protocols to improve their abilities to communicate and enhance their own professional development.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

The Communications and Consultation Branch identified the following key areas as priorities in 2002-03.

SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications and Consultation Branch's priorities for 2002-03 have been to continue to meet the objectives outlined in its mandate – to provide professional counsel and support to ensure communications and consultation is undertaken responsibly and effectively throughout government.

INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Following a strategic planning process undertaken in 2000, one of the Branch's top priorities has been to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of gathering, analyzing and storing information relative to the communications analysis function of the decision-making process. The Branch ensures that good information on what the people of the province think, based on research such as public opinion polling, is analyzed appropriately and incorporated in the decision-making process.

Interesting Facts

- The Communications and Consultation Branch edited and distributed 1,419 news releases between April 1, 2002 and March 31, 2003.
- Communications training for 212 individuals was offered in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander, Marystown and St. John's during 2002-03 -- almost double the number for 2001-02.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Another strategic priority for 2002-03 was the continued professional development of staff. This was achieved primarily through internal training and meetings. The Branch also plays a significant role in identifying and developing future communications professionals within government. To this end, the Branch participated in co-operative education programs and will look to see that government line departments benefit from the new perspectives that students, as future professionals, bring to an organization.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communications continued to be a priority in 2002-03. One significant achievement was the creation of a new Director of Internal Communications position. The Director works closely with the Human Resources division of Treasury Board on the development and implementation of a communications plan for a human resources strategy for government, and provides communications support for special events such as Public Service Week and Wellness Week.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Communications and Consultation Branch faces a number of challenges in the future, including improving internal communications, developing and enhancing staff capabilities and developing communications capacity throughout government.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications and Consultation Branch, as the lead agency responsible for government communications, will continue to strive to enhance internal communications within the Office of the Executive Council and throughout government as a whole.

To do this, the Branch will continue to build its relationship with Treasury Board's Training Division to develop training in this area. The Branch will also continue to build on the research done in the field of internal communication by co-operative education students.

With policy direction from the Branch, the Director of Internal Communications will analyze research already done, and continue research as necessary, to provide the basis for development of a corporate internal communications plan. A priority for 2003-04 will be continued communications support for government's human resource strategy.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Communications and Consultation Branch will be challenged by the continued growth in the volume and complexity of information it must manage and by the high demands placed upon staff because of the high standards the Branch has set for itself. Management of information will be a skill which professionals in the Branch must continue to refine to ensure important and relevant information is available in the decision-making process.

To meet this challenge, the Branch will build on existing efforts to improve operations and services, with a more strategic emphasis placed on document management. Related challenges are presented by changes in the technology used by staff. Training will be provided on an as-needed basis.

The Branch encourages communications professionals to participate in professional development seminars and workshops offered by organizations such as Canadian Public Relations Society and International Association of Business Communicators. Time and budget constraints can sometimes present challenges for this.

ENHANCING COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY

The Communications and Consultation Branch will be expected to respond to a greater number and variety of requests from government departments for communications support and guidance in advancing government's broad agenda. For complex and/or very technical issues, technical

briefings for news media and targeted stakeholders will be encouraged to help ensure broad understanding of government's policies and decisions.

The Branch plans to build on its existing communications training, and develop new modules to ensure that employees can learn or improve necessary skills. For example, the Branch intends to continue to work with the Training Division to introduce a new module on public consultation to help build capacity in that area across government departments, improving government's overall ability to consult more effectively with stakeholders. Work will also continue in the development of a module on the strategic use of communications in issues management.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat (IGA) is the central source of support and advice on intergovernmental relations through the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. This central-agency approach ensures that the Province's interests are presented and promoted in a consistent and strategic manner.

SHARED COMMITMENTS

The Secretariat acts as lead representative, advisor or coordinator depending on the nature of the assignment. The Secretariat leads on matters such as national unity, defence and military matters, and immigration. In other areas, the Secretariat works directly with a lead department to ensure that the Province's intergovernmental strategy and agenda is considered and consistent. Where a number of departments are engaged in an intergovernmental matter, the Secretariat ensures there is a necessary degree of coordination between departments.

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat works closely with other departments and with provincial, federal and international governments, with the understanding that a significant part of the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat role is to facilitate and support the work of others.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat has many broad and varied priorities. In 2002-03, IGA continued to voice the Province's concerns and protect its interests in intergovernmental fora.

REPRESENTING THE PROVINCE'S INTERESTS

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat focused on the following issues in 2002-03:

Premiers' Meetings

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat provides principal support for the Premier at key meetings. In 2002-03, these included the following:

- < Premiers' Meeting on Health, Vancouver, BC, January 28-29, 2002;
- < Annual Premiers' Conference, Halifax, NS, July 31 - August 2, 2002;
- < New England Governors' - Eastern Canadian Premiers' Conference, Québec City, QC, August 25-27, 2002;
- < Council of Atlantic Premiers' meetings: Pictou, NS, June 10, 2002; and Fredericton, NB, November 22, 2002; and
- < First Ministers' Meeting on Health Care, Ottawa, ON, February 5, 2003.

National Defence

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, as lead provincial government agency, in cooperation with various departments, facilitated efforts to enhance training at CFB Goose Bay, primarily through the expansion of the Practice Target Area. IGAS, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation participated in the Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Program through the annual negotiation of an MOU overseeing the Program.

In July 2003, Intergovernmental Affairs represented the province at the Senate Standing Committee on National Defence review of the Alternative Service Delivery contract at 5 Wing.

The current MOU governing the foreign military flight training program is scheduled to expire in 2006. The Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs was successful in obtaining agreement from the Minister of National Defence to establish a Federal - Provincial Goose Bay Marketing Committee with a view to developing initiatives geared toward enhancing 5 Wing and ensuring its future viability. The Secretariat participates on working groups established to support the Committee.

Offshore Boundary Dispute

In cooperation with the Department of Mines and Energy and the Department of Justice, IGA helped to coordinate provincial policy and strategy related to the offshore boundary dispute between Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. On April 2, 2002, the dispute tribunal publicly released its decision which provides Newfoundland and Labrador with almost 70 per cent of the area that was in dispute between the two provinces.

Health Care

Working in close partnership with the Department of Health and Community Services, IGA supported the Premier's participation in the First Ministers' Meeting in February 2003. The resulting First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal will provide an additional \$17.3 billion investment in the key areas of primary health care, home care and catastrophic drug coverage. The Accord also provided for the establishment of a Health Council to monitor and report on the implementation of Accord provisions.

Continental Energy Policy

IGA worked with the Department of Mines and Energy and the Labrador Hydro Project to develop the Province's response to federal efforts to create a coordinated North American energy market. IGA continued to advance the Province's positions at intergovernmental fora such as the 2002 "Energy for the 21st Century" forum at New Brunswick which reported directly to the 2002 New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Conference at Québec City.

Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP)

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat worked with the other Atlantic provinces and provincial departments in implementing the Atlantic Action Plan for regional cooperation, which was established by Premiers in November 2001. This plan advanced Atlantic cooperation in key areas including education, research and innovation, and health care services.

The Social Union Framework Agreement

Together with other provinces and territories, IGA participated in the following activities: (i) a review of mobility policies to ensure compliance with both the Agreement on Internal Trade and the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA); (ii) the review of SUFA required in the third-year following its implementation; and (iii) the development of a dispute resolution mechanism for disputes under the *Canada Health Act*, as required by SUFA.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat will continue to work with its partners to further the Province's intergovernmental priorities in 2003-04.

Health Care

Health care systems in Canada remain under stress and health care remains the first priority of Canadians. IGA will continue its work with the Department of Health and Community Services to ensure that the Premier, Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Health and Community Services are well positioned to articulate the province's requirements, to advance its position in national fora and to seek additional and sustainable health care funding from the federal government.

Offshore Revenues

Newfoundland and Labrador will seek ways and means to retain a greater share of offshore petroleum revenues, either through changes within the Atlantic Accord or through the Equalization Program. IGA will continue to provide support to the Premier and the Department of Finance in advancing this issue.

Cost-Shared Agreements

All federal-provincial cost-shared economic development agreements expired as of March 31, 2003 and committed funds are in the final year of payout. IGA, in cooperation with provincial

departments and agencies, will continue to press the federal government to reestablish federal/provincial/territorial cost-shared agreements in support of economic development and key economic development stakeholders such as business and industry organizations and community economic development agencies in Newfoundland and Labrador.

National Defence

The military presence at Happy Valley - Goose Bay has always been important to Labrador and the entire province. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which governs the current training at Goose Bay will expire in February 2006. Changes in military flight training requirements and increasing fiscal constraints on our foreign partners have led to changes in their operations in Labrador, most notably the announcement that the Dutch would cease training in 2003 and withdraw from the MOU by March 2004. This has increased concern over the future of flight training in Labrador. Intergovernmental Affairs will continue to work with the federal government, MOU signatories and local stakeholders to maximize flight training opportunities and to seek ways of increasing training activity at the base.

Fisheries

Foreign vessels continue to prosecute fisheries on the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks in violation of quotas and conservation rules established by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). Intergovernmental Affairs will continue to work with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the federal government to achieve improved performance within NAFO. Intergovernmental Affairs is also continuing to work with Fisheries and Aquaculture to build the province's case for alternative management approaches, including custodial management, which may be required for the practical and effective management of straddling stocks in order to conserve and rebuild these stocks.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE AND RELATED REVENUE - SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2003

	Actual	Estimates Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
PREMIER'S OFFICE			
2.1.01 Premier's Office	\$1,347,990	\$1,452,000	\$1,450,000
CABINET SECRETARIAT			
2.2.01 Executive Support	\$944,266	\$1,049,100	\$1,115,800
2.2.02 Economic and Social Policy Analysis	\$299,579	\$357,200	\$454,200
2.2.03 Offshore Fund - Administration	\$96,735	\$152,100	\$152,100
Less Revenue	(\$91,347)	(\$103,000)	(\$103,000)
2.2.05 Advisory Councils on Economic and Social Policy	\$250,981	\$293,400	\$298,400
2.2.06 Protocol	\$211,691	\$245,800	\$513,600
2.2.07 Senior Management Development Committee	\$31,423	\$31,500	\$25,000
Total Cabinet Secretariat	\$1,743,328	\$2,026,100	\$2,456,100
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT			
2.3.01 Minister's Office	\$273,060	\$288,600	\$282,600
2.3.02 Executive Support	\$680,985	\$773,800	\$670,000
2.3.03 Policy Analysis and Coordination	\$670,471	\$795,900	\$1,343,400
2.3.04 Royal Commission	\$1,514,295	\$2,364,000	-
Total Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat	\$3,138,811	\$4,222,300	\$2,296,000
COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATION			
2.4.01 Communications, Consultation, Internet & Graphic Support	\$732,825	\$772,400	\$714,700
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION			
2.5.01 Financial Administration	\$734,947	\$782,300	\$803,300
STRATEGIC SOCIAL PLAN			
2.6.01 Strategic Social Plan	\$1,962,427	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
WOMEN'S POLICY			
2.7.01 Women's Policy Office	\$1,266,371	\$1,361,700	\$1,427,700
2.7.02 Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women	\$257,600	\$257,600	\$257,600
Total Women's Policy	\$1,523,971	\$1,619,300	\$1,685,300
TOTAL OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	\$11,184,299	\$12,874,400	\$11,405,400

Please refer to Volume III of the Public Accounts, which were previously tabled in the House of Assembly, for detailed financial information.