

the decisions that have been taken and the action that has been initiated over the last two years will produce the results which both the Auditor General and I desire.

In summary, then, Mr. Chairman, I believe action has been taken to remedy the situation described by the Auditor General. I repeat again, however, that the measures that have been taken are of a long term nature and it will be some time yet before the full effects are apparent. I am satisfied that progress has been made and that more will be made. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, and every member of this Committee, that I shall not be content until the maximum efficiency humanly possible is achieved in the administration of the Superannuation branch and the legislation for which it is responsible. I can assure you that this feeling, too, is shared by Mr. Trudeau, the Director of the branch, and every member of his staff.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Balls. This Committee, for at least the last three years, has had this matter brought to their attention concerning errors in the Public Superannuation department.

The Auditor General has carried out his responsibilities in bringing it to the attention of this Committee. You have explained to us the complexities and problems involved in this department. I think the Committee would want to know if these errors are being eliminated and you have endeavoured to prove to us that the branch is being operated on a much better level than it was previously.

I guess we are in the position where the Committee will have to ask the Auditor General if he feels that the outline which Mr. Balls has given us fulfills his requirements, or what he would like to see, as an auditor.

I think I will put this question to him at this time.

Mr. HENDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask Mr. Long to speak to this matter, if I may.

The CHAIRMAN: Before Mr. Long speaks, how many of a staff have you on this Superannuation branch?

Mr. BALLS: There is an establishment of 217, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you taken steps to automate it in any way, or computerize it, or come up to current efficiency methods?

Mr. BALLS: This is not essentially a problem of automation. This is essentially a problem of judgment and the interpretation of statutes.

We would visualize, in our longer range program, that there will be very real possibility to apply automatic data processing techniques for maintaining the records. But our prime concern is to ensure the accuracy of the records. It is no use putting inaccurate records on a computer. Our first step is to ensure that, as far as humanly possible, our records are accurate. Then our next step will be to see what possible applications there are for data-processing in the superannuation operation.

The CHAIRMAN: One other question: How did we allow this superannuation branch to get into this mess in the earlier days?

Mr. BALLS: On that, Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I cannot give you an answer to this. My association with it came in some measure with my responsibility for