

[Autos](#) [Careers](#) [Classifieds](#) [Homes](#)

Western Union Money Transfers online with
\$9 plus 1%* of money sent
[Learn more](#)

Prison system must cut costs: report

By **KATHLEEN HARRIS**, SUN MEDIA

Last Updated: 16th June 2009, 11:00am

OTTAWA — Canada's prison system must do more to trim operating costs and clip a ballooning staff overtime bill, according to a committee of MPs.

In a report released today, the Commons public accounts committee called it "troubling" that Correctional Service of Canada has not paid proper attention to finding ways to cut costs for food, clothing and uniforms. Following on the findings of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, the committee recommended CSC explore opportunities for "economies of scale" in bulk buying. It also requested CSC improve management of staff overtime costs, which have "substantially exceeded" budgeted amounts for six years running.

"The OAG's finding that CSC had not given sufficient analysis and attention to economy and efficiency in managing its operations is troubling, especially in light of CSC's statement that it could no longer reallocate resources to meet its challenges," concluded the report from the committee chaired by Liberal MP Shawn Murphy.

But the committee also noted it is "encouraged" by CSC's response and pledge to act on recommendations.

Commissioner Don Head had told the committee CSC is committed to finding efficiencies and found the AG's report "extremely useful" in pointing to areas that need more attention.

The committee has asked for a status report by April 2010 detailing progress on the auditor general's recommendations.

CSC is responsible for the custody and care of 14,000 men and 500 women in 58 institutions and 16 community correctional centres across Canada. In 2007-2008, CSC's budget was \$1.87 billion, including \$570 million on guarding prisoners and \$72 million on food, cleaning and clothing.

kathleen.harris@sunmedia.ca

Copyright © 2009 Winnipeg Sun All Rights Reserved