Agents of Parliament, Independence and Funding Constraints
*The Early Canadian PBO Experience*
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The Context

- Autonomy is a critical element for a well functioning PBO.
- In order to achieve proper autonomy, PBOs need sufficient monetary, material and human resources.
- If the resources are insufficient, these offices may risk their sustainability and the quality and scope of their work.
The Challenges

- How do agents of parliament manage and maintain their independence?
- What role can a legislature play in supporting the work of these independent agents?
The Fiscal Ecosystem
Defining Independence

- **Legislation** – a minimum not a maximum
- **Appointment Process** – transparent, stable?
- **Mandate** – breadth, clarity
- **Budget** – adequate, stable?
- **Staff** – qualified, job security?
- **Communications** – unfiltered and unfettered?
- **Information Access** – timely, sufficient?
Independence is an on-going effort

- Political space is a zero sum game (in the short term)
- PBO’s must fight to gain and hold political space
- A PBO’s independence is a prerequisite to discharging its mandate…
- …but it is also to be protected as a core asset of the organization.
Thank-you

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