



STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (CHAIR), MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), ANDREW BRADDOCK
MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by **MR CAIN** on 10 March 2021:

Ref: OLA Annual Report 2019-20, Hansard Staff

In relation to:

1. How were Hansard staff engaged during 2020 COVID arrangements?
 - a. Were any stood down?
2. Are Hansard staff numbers at optimal levels?
3. Has the trial of speech-to text- transcription software developed further since it was interrupted due to COVID -19 shutdowns?

MADAM SPEAKER: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. OLA's usual employment arrangements remained in place with a team consisting of three ongoing staff and eight casual editors, all of whom were able to work remotely. The continued sitting of the Assembly and regular committee hearings provided work for Hansard staff throughout 2020.
 - a. No
2. The current level of staffing allows OLA to provide a Hansard service that responds to fluctuating workloads.
3. OLA conducted preliminary trials of three speech to text transcription software options, but found that they did not meet OLA's needs. A project to update/enhance the transcript production process was interrupted due to the Covid-19 shutdown. We anticipate that this project will recommence shortly and may include further exploration and consideration of speech to text transcription software.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Signature:

By Joy Burch MLA, Speaker

Date:

20.3.2021