

Distinguishing the real from the surreal in management reform: suggestions for beleaguered administrators in the government of Canada

Resubmitted to *Canadian Public Administration* on June 15, 2005

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Abstract: The authors believe that management reform initiatives can be jeopardized by the government-wide application of idealized management frameworks. They suggest that, according to what they call “the law of mandated utopias,” the resultant management requirements become surreal in the eyes of departmental managers. The authors explore the ethical and practical dilemmas caused by the conflict between a public servant’s duty to comply with centrally imposed requirements and the duty to manage people and public monies in a sensible way. The current management improvement initiatives in the Government of Canada are used to demonstrate the practical limitations of the conceptual frameworks associated with performance measurement, performance audit, modern comptrollership and human resources development. Suggestions are offered on how to improve management in departments while dealing with the surreal requirements generated by government-wide reforms based on utopian frameworks.

Sommaire: Les auteurs estiment que la mise en œuvre de cadres de gestion purement théoriques, à l’échelle de l’appareil gouvernemental, pourrait

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mettre en péril les initiatives de réforme de la gestion. Ils sont d'avis que, sous les effets de ce qu'ils appellent la «loi des utopies imposées», les exigences que les gestionnaires sont tenus de prendre en compte peuvent leur paraître surréalistes. Ils analysent les dilemmes concrets et déontologiques que posent l'obligation faite aux gestionnaires de se conformer aux exigences des organismes centraux tout en gérant des fonctionnaires et des fonds publics de façon judicieuse. Les initiatives actuelles d'amélioration de la gestion au gouvernement du Canada permettent de constater les limites concrètes des cadres conceptuels liés à la mesure du rendement, à la modernisation de la fonction de contrôleur et à la modernisation des ressources humaines. Les auteurs formulent, à l'intention des équipes de direction, quelques suggestions pour améliorer la gestion au sein de leurs ministères tout en faisant face aux exigences surréalistes engendrées par des réformes à l'échelle de l'appareil gouvernemental inspirées par des cadres utopistes.

We have both served in various capacities in central agencies and line departments and recall the debates we had as deputy ministers over the most effective way to design centrally generated rules to govern public administration in the government of Canada. But a decade after leaving Ottawa we think that the ever-more ambitious management frameworks emanating from the central agencies and the corresponding efforts of the auditor general to urge new management requirements on government are making it impossible for public administrators to fulfill all the stated expectations for management improvement.¹ In this paper we review how rulemaking has evolved by examining the material posted on government web sites.

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Our conclusion is that there is now a huge discrepancy between the intentions of parliamentarians when they set up departments and a baroque set of admonitions about how managers are to deliver on these intentions. Departments exist for important reasons: to manage the fishery, forecast the weather, defend the country, fund scientific, employment and income transfer programs, and the like. They exist because wise people have judged

these functions important to society as a whole and best accomplished through collective action. Moreover, Parliament has decreed that departments and the public servants who run them should do so in a fair, unbiased, honest, diligent way that is respectful of Canadian linguistic and equity norms. These norms are embodied in basic legislation such as the *Financial Administration Act*, the *Public Service Employment Act*, the *Access to Information Act* and departmental acts.

But alongside these core elements of government intent and process have arisen a variety of idealized expectations and requirements from the central agencies that are unlikely to assist in the efficient delivery of the intended services or assist with living up to the basic process norms and values of the Canadian public service. These expectations and requirements emanate from utopian management frameworks that are being formalized and imposed on the whole of government by the Treasury Board and its secretariat, the Privy Council Office and the new Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada.

This paper is organized as follows. The first section examines the attractions of conceptual management frameworks but also the perverse consequences of trying to impose them from the centre. It then reviews the principal areas in which such frameworks have been developed in the government of Canada. The next sections provide suggestions for departmental managers on how to cope in the face of centrally imposed frameworks, for central agencies on how to reduce the perverse consequences, and for both on how to approach performance audits of management systems by the auditor general.

Utopian management frameworks and their surreal requirements

Since Thomas More published *Utopia* in 1516, well-meaning theorists have offered visions of ideal places that operate according to frameworks that usually consist of a few principles, some broad objectives, and a set of more detailed prescriptions to guide conduct toward the achievement of those objectives. Often, in history as in bureaucracy, utopian frameworks rest on unstated assumptions about the nature of people and of society. In government, utopian frameworks have been advanced in many management areas, including results measurement, performance audit, modern comptrollership, human resources development, service standards and sustainable development. They provide a rich source of motivational rhetoric.²

However, these utopian management frameworks have meaning only in an idealized sense, divorced from the realities with which public administrators have to deal. Government officials have to manage in a political environment replete with demanding ministers, energetic political staff, skeptical opposition MPs, headline-seeking reporters, impatient stakeholders, human employees, late night calls from the Privy Council Office, and limits on money, time and people. Governments are elected to govern in real time. As events unfold the electorate usually accepts that the executive needs some margin for manoeuvre relative to its earlier commitments. As it adapts to changing circumstances, an elected government plans and acts in ways that, for a period at least, may be less than completely described in public pronouncements. Public service managers must, within the limits of law and professional conscience, support

the government in so doing. They will always have to work with less-than-ideal resources, with last-minute deadlines and perpetually changing expectations. In the real world of government, management is less a rational undertaking than a human skill adapted to the institutional context and the personalities at play. There is a fundamental tension between actually getting the job done and trying to demonstrate adherence to the precepts of utopian management frameworks.

The countervailing forces associated with the law of mandated utopias ensure that sooner or later – usually sooner – every central agency attempt to impose a management improvement framework on departments will prove unsuccessful

These frameworks can be helpful so long as they remain explanatory, exhortatory and voluntary. However, we believe that once they are formalized and mandated for application across the public service, what has been helpful quickly becomes unhelpful. We advance the following general hypothesis: *once a utopian management framework is formalized for application across the government, its mandated requirements become surreal* for departmental managers.*

* We use the term surreal in this essay to mean “beyond real.” The word’s origins lie in the term coined by art critic Guillaume Apollinaire to describe the 1917 collaboration *Parade* by Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie,

We believe that the evidence in support of this hypothesis is so strong that it might be considered a natural law of public administration – let us call it the *law of mandated utopias*. Table 1 sets out the attributes of surreal management requirements along with their associated shortcomings and countervailing forces. These forces are rooted in well understood human and institutional dynamics. The countervailing forces associated with the law of mandated utopias ensure that sooner or later – usually sooner – every central agency attempt to impose a management improvement framework on departments will prove unsuccessful.

Table 1. *Surreal management requirements*

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Shortcomings and countervailing forces</i>
<i>System-wide attempts to improve management</i>	<i>Context is crucial</i>
<i>Centrally imposed</i>	<i>Commitment is hard to secure</i>
<i>Frameworks rather than explicit rules</i>	<i>Interpretation is subjective</i>
<i>Require written plans and reports</i>	<i>Overhead is high</i>
<i>Rely on novelty and reform rhetoric</i>	<i>Novelty does not last</i>
<i>Based on utopian management frameworks</i>	<i>Reality eventually prevails</i>

Pablo Picasso and Léonide Massine. (See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealism>.) It has taken on a variety of meanings in popular use, where the word appears in the names of television shows (*The Surreal Gourmet*, *The Surreal Life*), web sites and magazines. Although some beleaguered managers might think it apt, we do not emphasize the *scary* nuance of popular usage, such as employed by *Surreal Magazine* (<http://surrealmag.com/guidelines.html>), “a magazine of dark, disturbing and surreal fiction,” where “creepy, chilling, disturbing and moody tales with horror elements are always welcome.”

Surreal management requirements can be contrasted with what we would call *the customary requirements of administrative systems*. Customary requirements are centrally imposed on a system-wide basis and specify rules for conducting the normal processes of public administration: procurement, staffing, contract administration, financial accounting, health and safety standards, materiel management, record keeping, and the like. The universe of what is considered normal and customary expands gradually over time as legislation and procedures cover additional areas such as language of service and access to information.

What, then, is real and what is surreal in management reform? There is much in management reform that is real and can be helpful. Changes to customary administrative requirements are real and often helpful. Deliberations and discussions involved in creating utopian frameworks can lead to real changes in the way managers think about problems and how they act in their departments. This, too, can be helpful. But we believe that mandated requirements emanating from the utopian frameworks will inevitably be surreal and unhelpful. And the costs associated with departmental efforts to live up to these surreal management requirements are very real and can be very substantial.³

It is worth reviewing the utopian management frameworks that generate most of the surreal requirements for public servants. Each portrays a seemingly worthy objective for any modern government and individual managers to consider. The problem is not the objective nor, in most cases, the set of underlying concepts. The problem is that experience has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that such utopian frameworks cannot successfully be mandated across the system.

Results measurement and performance management

Most management improvement initiatives in the federal government over the last half century have been rooted in some variant of results (or performance) measurement.⁴

The emphasis on quantifiable results comes from several sources. One is the legacy of F.W. Taylor's scientific management,⁵ which held that efficiency was best approached through disaggregating work into repetitive components, time-and-motion studies, bonuses for meeting targets, and the like. These ideas have enormous force when applied to repetitive industrial activities. Some government operations, such as sorting mail, producing passports or delivering pension cheques, partially fit this mould. The difficulty arises when attempts are made to apply them to unique, creative or highly discretionary activities, or to activities that are causally distant from the desired outcomes. To take an extreme example, the quality of a policy decision may be entirely unrelated to the resources required to arrive at it. It may, like much scientific work, depend on the brilliance of a single mind.

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Many of the activities of the federal government are more like policy work than they are like industrial processes, and the application of performance measurement techniques in those cases is at best wasteful and too often downright perverse. Governments must make decisions in the face of multiple and conflicting objectives, some of which will not be acknowledged in polite company, and in the face of irreducible as well as ordinary ignorance. The excessive focus on performance measurement can distort the understanding among managers of the purpose of good management, which in the public sector might be summarized as the effective stewardship of public resources to achieve the declared objectives of the elected government.

Paul Thomas recently reviewed the state of performance measurement and performance management in the Canadian public sector. Although he concludes that “performance measurement is here to stay,” he provides a wonderfully complete compilation of the challenges in implementing it sensibly. Thomas reminds us that performance measurement is “a subjective value-laden activity, taking place in a political context.” He points out that in the public sector the slogan “you can’t manage what you can’t measure” is highly misleading. He recalls the rhetorical flourish associated with introducing performance measurement systems (such as “Measuring Up” in Alberta, “Oregon Benchmarks,” the “Minnesota Milestones” and “Best Value” in the United Kingdom) but notes many have been reduced in scope or dropped entirely.⁶

Credible performance measurement schemes require on-going, balanced negotiation among the parties about the objectives to be measured, the outcomes desired, and the indicators used to measure performance. The challenges to be addressed in implementing performance measurement and management systems with integrity are summarized in Table 2. For most parts of the federal government these challenges are so daunting that performance measurement and management systems simply cannot and should not be implemented to the extent implied by central agency pronouncements.

Table 2. *Challenges in performance measurement and performance management*⁷

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- *Performance measurement systems are best suited to repetitive industrial activities with simple production functions and direct, unambiguous outcomes.*
 - *Most departmental activities serve multiple objectives, and many of the most politically important objectives – such as contributing hope, enhancing sovereignty or instilling national pride – are impossible to measure.*
 - *The causal link between activity and outcome is usually weak. Outcomes and results that are really of public interest almost always depend on factors beyond the direct control of government.*
 - *There are long delays between activities and intended outcomes.*
 - *Most performance measures are subjective and value-laden and therefore performance measurement systems cannot be strictly objective and neutral in their effects.*
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- *Not all the obvious measurable targets or indicators connect to the causal structure of the intended set of results because we do not have means-end techniques to reach all intelligibly stated goals.*
 - *Working to targets can cause perverse effects, such as encouraging tunnel vision, a focus on quantitative rather than qualitative results, and diminished cooperation with other organizations that work on the same issues.*
 - *Linking achievement of targets to resources and rewards may encourage outright cheating.*
 - *Serious performance management schemes are very costly to design and administer.*
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The introduction to *Guidance for Deputy Ministers* states that “information on results should be gathered and used to make departmental decisions, and public reporting should be balanced, accurate, and easy to understand.”

Balance for these purposes is described in the Treasury Board Secretariat’s *Preparation Guide: Departmental Performance Reports 2003-04*:

“Your report is an opportunity to explain risks and challenges and demonstrate how the department is dealing responsibly with complex, controversial issues. To present a balanced report implies that your report must treat performance information with fairness. Readiness to acknowledge performance that did not meet expectations shows an ability to learn and adapt. It is an indicator of organizational health and sound management.”

Let us see what happens in reality. Industry Canada’s 2003-04 departmental performance report (DPR) is highly informative with wonderful links to all

manner of information on the department, including 12 audits and 12 evaluations. However, we could not find a single confession of failure. That something was “ongoing” was as close as the department came to acknowledging that some result was not fully satisfactory, as in “Efforts are ongoing across the department to develop an Integrated Risk Management Framework.” Otherwise, the text is relentlessly upbeat. This may be comforting evidence that the department is paying attention to real outcomes.

Unless the challenges have sharply diminished in the last decade or techniques have immeasurably improved, neither of us would be comfortable with having to sign the deputy minister’s management representation statement at the beginning of such a document, which holds that:

“This report has been prepared based on the reporting principles and other requirements in the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat Preparation Guide: Departmental Performance Reports 2003-04. The report represents, to the best of my knowledge, a comprehensive, balanced and transparent picture of the organization's performance for the 2003-04 fiscal year.”

Such dissonance between departmental reality and what public servants are required by utopian management frameworks to sign contributes to cynicism within and outside the public service and undermines the values of honesty and forthrightness that the frameworks espouse.

Performance (value for money) audit

If the government promulgates surreal performance requirements, it should not be surprised when the legislative auditor compares actual performance against these requirements and finds gaps. Indeed, the Office of the Auditor General quickly provided a “model for rating departmental performance reports.”⁸ Such audit work is based on a closely related utopian framework – that of the performance audit (previously termed value for money audit). Canada’s Office of the Auditor General was among the first of the world’s national audit offices to embrace such a framework, and variations have since been adopted in most OECD countries.⁹

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The expansion in the mandate from auditing financial entries and compliance with administrative rules (financial and compliance audits) into the field of performance audit has been controversial. Scholars have identified a number of conceptual and practical shortcomings in performance audit relative to the traditional audit functions. Performance audits are based on a hyper-rationalist model of government and are more subjective in interpretation and thus less rigorous, reliable and replicable than financial and compliance audits.¹⁰ Differences between the results promised in the

government's performance framework and what departments can actually deliver will unavoidably lead to tensions between departments and the Office of the Auditor General.

Accountability and modern comptrollership

The modern comptrollership initiative, based on the report of an independent review panel in 1997, has many novel and commendable features – such as envisaging a lengthy implementation period following pilot testing.

Nevertheless, we think it is best seen as another in a long series of forlorn attempts to transfer accountancy utopias from Toronto to Ottawa.

From the Glassco commission's work in the early 1960s, through the Wilson report commissioned by auditor general J.J. Macdonell in the early 1970s, to the Lambert commission on financial management and accountability in the late 1970s, and the accountability framework initiatives of the Office of the Comptroller General in the early 1980s, there has been no shortage of attempts to introduce the federal government to precepts developed by private sector accountants and management consultants.¹¹ Both of us worked for a period in Toronto's banking and accounting towers after leaving Ottawa. We were impressed with the energy and intelligence of the occupants, but equally impressed with the differences in management metrics. Wallace Sayre was right in his assertion that the public and private sectors are fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects.¹² No utopian framework conceived at King and Bay has survived the thirty-seven minute flight between Pearson and Macdonald-Cartier International Airports.

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federal managers were less seized with the four pillars of modern comptrollership than with how to cope with the myriad reviews and organizational changes instituted by a government responding to the auditor general's report on the sponsorship program

Has the fate of this latest comptrollership initiative been any different? The March 2003 progress report on modern comptrollership described the efforts – the \$30 million modern comptrollership innovations fund, the social marketing strategy, the 50 conferences and learning events attracting 3,000 participants, the comprehensive curriculum with a range of classroom, e-learning and discussion forums – in order “to make commitment to the modern comptrollership vision self-sustaining by March 2004.” This vision was:

“...to transform comptrollership from a specialist function to a core responsibility of every manager” so that “a manager’s decisions should bring together...integrated performance information...sound risk management...rigorous stewardship and appropriate control...and shared values and ethics.”¹³

We suspect that in the spring of 2004 most federal managers were less seized with the four pillars of modern comptrollership than with how to cope with the myriad reviews and organizational changes instituted by a government responding to the auditor general’s report on the sponsorship program while preparing to call an election. In other words, the realities of

public sector management once again trumped a utopian management framework.

One thing the modern comptrollership vision did not envisage was the installation of high profile (specialist) comptrollers in each department as announced on December 12, 2003.¹⁴ Perhaps by March 2004 the government had already moved to the era of post-modern comptrollership.

Human resources development

For as long as public servants can remember, leaders in the human resources management community have striven for more enlightened approaches to people management. The two longest-standing personnel functions overseen by central agencies – classification and staffing – have an irreducible control element. They are, after all, intended to limit salary costs and prevent patronage. These, along with the other two legislated functions with long-standing organizational units – official languages and collective bargaining – lend themselves to centrally imposed rule-making. They are generally accepted as necessary elements of the public management landscape. The burden of introducing more enlightened approaches to human resources management usually falls on the other personnel functions – recruitment, training, human resources planning, values and ethics, workplace well-being, work/life balance, and awards and recognition. These have at times been grouped under the rubric of “human resources development.”¹⁵

Human resources development has been fecund ground for utopian management frameworks. But the extensive documentation available on the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency’s web site suggests that, although these utopias are more fully elaborated each year,¹⁶ progress toward them remains elusive. Mercifully for departmental managers, not all have been mandated across the government. Where they have been, as John Langford has documented in his critique of values-based decision-making, the results are judged less than successful.¹⁷

Other management utopias

But there are still more arenas where utopian frameworks can generate surreal requirements. If managers have not read the Treasury Board guide for the preparation of the 2003-04 departmental performance report, they may not be aware of the quantitative improvement in services and in sustainable development that their department has been committed to reach. On pages 21 and 22 one learns that:

“The Treasury Board, through the Service Improvement Initiative, commits the government to achieving, at a minimum, a 10 per cent increase in client satisfaction with key, significant direct service delivery activities by 2005. This initiative encourages service improvement from a citizen-centred perspective, focussing on achieving real improvement in client satisfaction with service quality. Departments are required to use their DPR to specify the activities, targets, and achievements that are moving the government toward the 10 per cent target....

“Sustainable development is a commitment of the Government of Canada ... Your DPR should provide a summary on progress made against commitments in the SDS tabled in February 2001. A recommended template is provided to help you. You are also required to describe linkages between the SDS tabled in February 2004 and the previous strategy ... At a government-wide level, such activities are coordinated under the Sustainable Federal House in Order (SFHIO), which includes work toward common measurement and reporting methods across departments.”

A common feature of utopian frameworks, in addition to their focus on idealized objectives, is that adherents seek central authority to enjoin all institutions to follow a consistent set of requirements. But can such centrally

promulgated requirements take account of crucial differences in local conditions? Experience demonstrates that they cannot. After reviewing Canadian attempts in the context of international developments, Peter Aucoin concluded, in 1998:

“The first lesson from recent experience is that productivity in the use of public resources cannot be secured in complex organizations simply through highly centralized decisionmaking structures and corporate management controls applied uniformly across the state apparatus.”¹⁸

The failure in Canada of centrally imposed management improvement initiatives to achieve their utopian promise is replicated in other jurisdictions. Pollitt and Bouckaert¹⁹ have conducted an extensive comparative analysis of management reform efforts in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Nowhere have the results of the reforms lived up to the rhetorical flourish with which they were introduced:

“...we know of not a single study from our twelve countries that convincingly links the actions taken with a set of positive and safely attributable positive outcomes.”²⁰

In his review of the Pollitt and Bouckaert study, Evert Lindquist reminds us that although public administration reforms *never* live up to expectations, some reforms are nevertheless worth undertaking.²¹ But when reforms are undertaken it is crucial to recognize that success will depend on the extent to which they can be sensitive to local context. As Pollitt has written in a subsequent book:

“Contexts matter. Public management is not all one thing....Different functions, performed in different administrative cultures and circumstances, require different approaches....Therefore it is inherently unlikely that a single set of prescriptions will work well in every – or even most – situations. Indeed, if such a simple and effective formula existed, one imagines it would have been found long ago and rapidly become common practice.”²²

Henry Mintzberg has shown why institutions with different purposes have different organizational forms and follow different organizational dynamics. He describes seven broad types of organizational form: entrepreneurial, machine, diversified, professional, innovative, missionary and political.²³ In the federal government, there are organizational units that resemble each of these. It would be astonishing if any centrally imposed framework of management improvement would be useful to all of them.

Perhaps the most serious cost of the incessant layering of centrally imposed management reforms is the undermining of the confidence of public service managers at all levels

Christopher Hood argues convincingly that there is no universality or inevitability in the techniques for improving public administration.

“...it is far from certain that public management at the turn of the century is headed everywhere towards the same ‘modern’ paradigm....A

more plural future seems more plausible – and perhaps more desirable too, because every style of organization has its strengths and weaknesses....”²⁴

In his recent book, *Breaking the Bargain*, Donald Savoie describes the political and bureaucratic trends in the last forty years that have driven the management reform agenda in Ottawa. He suggests how these trends have contributed to “the morale problems that have plagued the public service in recent years.”²⁵ Perhaps the most serious cost of the incessant layering of centrally imposed management reforms is the undermining of the confidence of public service managers at all levels. Many of the recent management improvement initiatives have implied that their behaviour is based on managerial ignorance, self-serving aspirations or reluctance to change. Such a view discounts the drive to excellence and accomplishment that underlies all sense of pride in good work.

If we are right, the departmental manager is faced with a dilemma. How can she or he responsibly adhere to central agency policies when so many of the requirements emanating from utopian management improvement frameworks are not useful in the real world? We would recommend that central agencies reduce the dilemma by dropping most of the mandatory elements from their management improvement frameworks. But until they do, we suggest that departmental managers explicitly divide central agency requirements into two categories so that they can be dealt with differently. Those in the first category – what we call customary requirements – should be adhered to in the normal way. Those in the second category – surreal requirements – should be dealt with in another way entirely.

Suggestions to help distinguish the real from the surreal

Senior managers should stay personally and visibly committed to management improvement. From time to time every public administrator should make a mental list of what they believe to be the most important management issues that need to be addressed in their area of responsibility. These days the list would likely include initiatives to improve departmental employees' sense of professionalism and pride in their work after a difficult period for the public service and initiatives to improve internal communications and the willingness to speak frankly. In any institution operated by real human beings, the manager's list will always include specific personnel issues that need resolution.

Such a list should be compared with one derived from a performance management framework, which gives pride of place to things that can be written down and quantified. The performance audit framework generates priorities along the lines of those in Table 3. There is almost no overlap in the lists of real management priorities and those in Table 3. We believe that the extensive resources required to try to advance the requirements of a performance management framework would do little to improve management in a real department. Indeed, a fixation with total documentation undermines an administrator's ability to resolve the most important people-management problems in a cost effective and humane way.

Table 3. *Management improvement priorities derived from the performance management framework*

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- *Begin a major exercise to specify more clearly the objectives of all departmental programs and develop quantitative measures for outputs, outcomes, and results.*
 - *Require managers to establish targets and key performance indicators for all departmental activities.*
 - *Require managers to measure the contribution of every departmental activity to sustainable development.*
 - *Require all managers to develop and sign performance agreements with their subordinates, based on measurable outputs tied to identified results.*
 - *Require all branches to produce a written risk analysis for all major activities and to develop written contingency plans.*
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We offer a number of suggestions to help public administrators deal with surreal management requirements. Although some of our suggestions might seem heretical, most of our beliefs on these matters should be consonant with those of current central agency leaders. For example, we believe that: central agencies have a crucial role in setting administrative frameworks for the government as a whole and that a (rather large) minimum number of mandatory system-wide requirements is necessary to achieve this; that the auditor general has an important role in verifying that rules are followed and money is spent where it is supposed to be; that management improvement is important and requires ongoing attention by central agencies and senior

managers; that many government operations could benefit from greater use of performance-management tools; that the development and discussion of utopian frameworks can be useful in clarifying concepts, raising awareness and inspiring commitment; and that central agency policies should not be ignored and that system-wide objectives set out by central agency leaders should be taken seriously. There may be only one important point on which we differ from our successors in the central agencies: we have become convinced that management improvement frameworks should not be mandated in the form of system-wide requirements.

Suggestion: Each department should create a list of all externally developed expectations and requirements imposed on managers, categorizing them as customary or surreal.

We recommend categorizing as customary all the rules for conducting the normal processes of public administration such as those pertaining to procurement, staffing, contract administration, financial accounting and official languages provision. Not all such requirements help get the job done in a narrowly efficient way. This applies to many of the requirements instituted since the 1960s through new legislation and new parliamentary agencies, such as policies respecting labour relations and collective bargaining, official languages, human rights, access to information, protection of privacy, conflict of interest and lobbyist registration. They are classified as customary because they are now part of the manager's legislated environment.

We would categorize as surreal all the externally imposed management requirements that are derived from management improvement frameworks. As noted earlier, these frameworks typically call for submissions of

departmental plans modelled on general templates followed by reports on progress being achieved. We believe that the result of the categorization process will look like Table 4.

Suggestion: Cost, and quarantine, the surreal.

Categorizing a Treasury Board requirement as surreal will not make it go away. Most of the requirements set out in the second column of Table 4 have the imprimatur of formal government policy. Forms still have to be filled out and meetings must be attended. But it is incumbent on departmental management to control the costs of compliance.

Table 4: *Examples of customary and surreal management requirements*

<i>Customary</i>	<i>Surreal</i>
<p><i>Requirements associated with the Financial Administration Act including Treasury Board policies relative to audit, internal audit, financial management, contract management, materiel management and preparation of Parts I and II of the Estimates</i></p> <p><i>Requirements associated with the Official Languages Act and related Treasury Board</i></p>	<p><i>Requirements associated with departmental performance reports and departmental report on priorities and plans</i></p> <p><i>Requirements associated with the management accountability framework²⁶</i></p> <p><i>Requirements associated with human resources modernization framework and with Treasury Board policies relative to human resources planning and accountability, values and ethics, and workplace well-being</i></p>

<i>policies</i>	<i>now overseen by the Public Service</i>
<i>Treasury Board policies</i>	<i>Human Resources Management</i>
<i>relative to classification and</i>	<i>Agency of Canada²⁷</i>
<i>pay, labour relations,</i>	<i>Requirements associated with the</i>
<i>occupational health and</i>	<i>modern comptrollership initiative</i>
<i>safety, harassment in the</i>	<i>including the integrated risk</i>
<i>workplace</i>	<i>management framework, and</i>
<i>Requirements associated with</i>	<i>Treasury Board policies relative to</i>
<i>the Public Service</i>	<i>evaluation, alternative services</i>
<i>Employment Act including</i>	<i>delivery, horizontal results, results-</i>
<i>Public Service Commission</i>	<i>based management, risk</i>
<i>policies</i>	<i>management, and regulatory issues²⁸</i>
<i>Requirements of the Access to</i>	<i>Requirements associated with the</i>
<i>Information Act and Privacy</i>	<i>service improvement initiative</i>
<i>Act</i>	<i>Requirements associated with the</i>
<i>Treasury Board policies</i>	<i>sustainable development initiative</i>
<i>relative to common look and</i>	
<i>feel, federal identity and</i>	
<i>information management</i>	

Each department should consider creating a special unit to take care of all surreal management requirements. The unit should be staffed with a few very bright officers who can write well and are knowledgeable about the concepts of management reform, preferably having worked in central agencies. They would be assigned to the unit for a maximum of two years, at which point they would be brought back to the real world of departmental

management, potentially with a promotion. The first job of the special unit should be to calculate the direct and indirect cost of the last full year of surreal activities, and then estimate next year's costs if mitigating procedures are not established.

A cursory review of the web-available descriptions of the forms, templates, training manuals and recommended conferences supporting the items in the second column of Table 4 suggests that many departments have devoted dozens – perhaps hundreds – of person-years and millions of dollars to the exercises in the last twelve months. We suggest that the department commit to reducing the cost of complying with surreal requirements by 50% in the next year.

Although initiatives that can halve costs without hurting output are rare, we think this is such a case. First, there should be substantial economies of specialization and scale because most surreal requirements share a similar conceptual basis and require a similar response (plans and reports) written for a similar audience. Second, a great deal of work has been done in the department to develop formats and databases. These should provide the basis for next year's reporting requirements. Third, the time and energy that might otherwise be devoted to trying to determine what is really needed can be avoided once surreal requirements are recognized for what they are.

*Create a special unit that will take care of all
surreal management requirements*

The second task of the special unit could be to organize a departmental seminar to review the most recent literature on public service management reform initiatives in comparable situations. To help departmental managers regain the moral high ground, we think it would be useful to have a thorough discussion of the conceptual and practical weaknesses of surreal initiatives. Such a session should enable managers to be more confident that the principled application of their own experience and common sense actually does lead to the most effective use of public resources in the area for which they are responsible. This seminar should remind everyone that there is little that is conceptually new in the latest management improvement efforts.

Suggestion: Departments should circulate a formal memorandum on the matter of potential conflicts between customary and surreal management requirements.

It would be useful to have a memorandum prepared jointly by the special unit and the departmental legal counsel to remind managers that the unambiguous duties set out in departmental acts and other legislation take precedence over the rhetorical admonitions associated with management reform initiatives. The memorandum should also remind managers of the simplifying advantages of chain of command. While the deputy minister may have several bosses, individual public servants do not. If a manager has difficulty reconciling competing requirements, the issue should be raised with the immediate supervisor. The memorandum could remind managers about the obligations to report perceived transgressions and to whom to report them (again, the immediate supervisor in the first instance). Finally, everyone could be reminded of the legislated mandate of the auditor general, and the fact that her office does not have responsibility for establishing

management practices for the Government of Canada in general or for the department in particular.

Suggestion: Find gold in the dross.

Evert Lindquist has suggested that central initiatives can be used to further departmental ambitions and to respond to the internal management challenges.²⁹ Because there will be dozens of highly motivated and intelligent people involved in these exercises in the central agencies and across the government, some of the ideas and principles can undoubtedly be adapted to the needs of the department. The special unit should be challenged to find and bring forward at least one good idea per month from the various central agency management improvement exercises.

Most OECD countries claim to be implementing thoroughgoing programs of management improvement. Some initiatives will be relevant for Canada but it is important to look at the detail, analyzing the materials rather than just the rhetorical claims to understand the substance of what is being done and the methods in use for measuring accomplishment. It is useful to try to adapt the applicable and reliable advances but Canadians should not simply take foreign central agency claims at face value.

For example, we would suggest that those managers who have opposite numbers in Whitehall should ask them in confidence how important the highly advertised public service agreement process actually is in the management of the department, in the setting of its budget and in the assessment of managerial performance.

If it turns out that the processes of performance management are currently more important in London than Ottawa, it does not necessarily follow that

the U.K. is farther advanced down a path that would improve management in the federal government. It may reflect the fact that in the U.K. the national government is responsible for delivering programs that in Canada are delivered by the provincial governments, some of which are more amenable to performance measurement.

Suggestions for management reformers

In the last few years four currents have combined to create surrealism's perfect storm.

One current was the new public management approach inherent in Public Service 2000 and similar movements in western countries with its assumption that enabling frameworks and employee empowerment, combined with performance reporting, are more desirable than detailed rules and input controls. But, as we have noted earlier, the detailed conditions under which this can work are demanding and have received scant attention precisely because those conditions tend to be specific to particular operations and thus invisible to central agency theorists. Marrying the enabling framework approach to the older "scientific management" paradigms of industrial efficiency and optimization can produce the worst of both worlds.

A second, and related, current was the effective withdrawal of the Treasury Board Secretariat from its traditional budget office functions, performed from the 1960s to the late 1990s by the Program Branch. The withdrawal left the Treasury Board Secretariat with little day-to-day contact with detailed resourcing and management issues in departments. Instead, it adopted a

“management board” posture and relied on developing and issuing broad frameworks to promote system-wide improvement.³⁰

The third current was the trilogy of the “HRDC billion dollar boondoggle,” the “Radwanski affair” and the “sponsorship scandal.” Each was different. The HRDC saga was a case of well-meaning spending in an area where results are value-laden and difficult to assess. Although decision processes were inadequately documented, very little money actually went missing.³¹ The Radwanski affair was an example of egomaniacal behaviour by the head of a small, arm’s-length agency who was unencumbered by any previous public sector management experience. The last one is, as they say, still before the courts. Each was the subject of a detailed report of the auditor general that gained wide public and political attention and enhanced the esteem of her office. Even though the investigations were classical financial and compliance audits, they strengthened a public and political yearning for utopian management frameworks – whether of the performance management or centralized control genre.

The fourth current was the protracted change of leadership within the governing party, followed by a minority government. In Ottawa dramatic changes in the machinery of government and central agency initiatives often come during transitions where the party remains in office and the new leader wishes to demonstrate change. This occurred, for example, in 1984, 1993 and 2003.³²

But, as difficult as it may be in the current political environment, central agencies now have an obligation to try to reduce the burdens of surreal management requirements. Our suggestions are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. *Suggestions for central agencies to reduce the burden of surreal requirements*

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- *Make no further public undertakings to do what cannot be done.*
 - *Issue no further policies that cannot be followed.*
 - *Restrain the rhetoric used in describing ideal states and ultimate goals.*
 - *Downplay the “management board” role of Treasury Board since this role seems to encourage the system-wide mandating of utopian frameworks.*
 - *Resist the glossy production of central agency policies since this appears to encourage writing for a public and media audience rather than for those who have to implement the policy.*
 - *Convert most management improvement frameworks into “ideas for management improvement” to be implemented on a voluntary basis, with no reporting requirements.*
 - *Add the phrase “where this makes sense in the specific departmental context” to most of the remaining mandatory measures.*
 - *Ask departmental managers which new conceptual frameworks and system-wide policies would actually be helpful, and which might be dropped or radically simplified.*
 - *Decline all further challenges from opposition critics and the auditor general to commit the government to more performance measurement and results reporting.*
 - *Introduce a learning module at the Canada School of Public Service on the tensions between the expectations of the performance management framework and the challenges of improving management*
-

in a real department.

- *Introduce a learning module at the Canada School of Public Service on the shortcomings of results measurement and the types of government activity in which it should not be applied.*
-

Suggestions for working with the Office of the Auditor General

One of the more futile admonitions of utopian reformers is that management information systems should be integrated with the parliamentary reporting system. This will never work because 1) information that managers need to do their jobs is specific and detailed, 2) much of it is subject to privacy provisions and 3) presentations to review bodies will inevitably be made in ways that try to put the organization's activities and plans in the most favourable light.

*In the last few years four currents have
combined to create surrealism's perfect storm*

How useful do parliamentarians find additional performance information?

Donald Savoie observes:

“Whatever the reason, MPs, including those on the Public Accounts Committee, take little interest in [‘the sea of information that departments submit to Parliament every year in parts I, II and III of the

estimates and other reports'] and rarely discuss in detail the performance of a department and its programs.”³³

Indeed, relatively few MPs have shown much interest in matters of departmental management in any of its dimensions.

But there are constructive things that can be done to improve the realism of reporting to Parliament, particularly in the context of audits by of the auditor general.

Suggestion: Once the auditor general determines to undertake a performance audit, departmental managers should help her office develop the most realistic and useful audit scope and methodology.

It would be inappropriate for the departmental management team to change its priorities to accommodate the performance audit framework, since public servants work for the government, not the auditor general. However, we do suggest that some effort be devoted to have the Office of the Auditor General select its audit subjects and make its judgments in a manner that takes account of real management priorities.

This is more feasible than one might think, for two reasons. The first is that, relative to financial audit, performance audit is “much more difficult to standardize as each performance audit tends to be a project on its own which has to be designed individually.”³⁴ This means that considerable discussion should be possible about the focus, scope and methodology of a performance audit. The second reason is that, at least in our experience, audit teams under auditors general Denis Desautels and Sheila Fraser have been more interested in understanding the realities of departmental management than

was the case during earlier periods when their predecessors were engaged in very public battles with the governments of the day.³⁵

Suggestion: Put the department in a position to make credible comments in the Department's Response sections of the audit reports.

For example, departmental preparation for the auditor general's audit could include management-initiated reviews, perhaps by a recognized expert from outside the country. There is usually a period of one to two years between the identification of the program for audit and the time the department's response is needed, so there is ample opportunity to organize such a review. After helping the auditor general with the scope and methodology, and after completing the management-initiated review, the department should be in a position to provide credible responses to the points raised in the audit. Table 6 suggests the kinds of responses that we believe are credible and constructive. It illustrates our belief that 1) many recommendations coming from performance audits are useful, 2) many of the premises underlying performance audit are nevertheless fundamentally contestable, and departments have a duty to contest the audit's conclusions if they believe them to be wrong, 3) the Office of the Auditor General does not have a monopoly on judgment about what constitutes good management practice, and other credible reviewers may differ, and finally, 4) if serious management shortcomings are found, there should be serious consequences for managers.

Table 6. *Credible lines for Department's Response sections of performance audits by the auditor general*

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- *The department agrees with the auditor general's recommendations*
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and has implemented [or is implementing] them.

- *The department disagrees with the recommendations of the auditor general since they fail to take sufficient account of...*
 - *The department does not believe that devoting further efforts to quantify targets in this area would constitute a responsible use of public resources. The department is implementing the recommendations of an independent review by a recognized international expert.*
 - *The department agrees that the facts described by the auditor general are unacceptable. Disciplinary action has been taken and the responsible managers are no longer employed in the Government of Canada.*
-

How public administrators are judged

How is the performance of public administrators to be judged in a world of utopian management frameworks with all their surreal requirements?

Recall the features of surreal management requirements listed in Table 1.

The last two should provide solace for administrators concerned about how to account for failing to follow utopian management frameworks. *Novelty does not last* implies that it would be prudent to wait for the next new initiative that will inevitably shift the focus off the last one. But the most encouraging feature is that *reality eventually prevails*. The department may fail to meet the expectations set out in one or another of Treasury Board's management improvement frameworks, and it may be criticized for such lapses in reports of the auditor general. However, unless underlying dynamics in Ottawa have changed markedly since we were there, managerial

performance will rightly be judged on how real management issues have been handled.

The committee of senior officials is the group of senior deputies that advises the clerk of the Privy Council on the performance of deputies and assistant deputies, grooms the best for promotion, guides their careers and recommends the best available person to fill a vacancy. In horse racing terms, it writes the form book. The auditor general is not a member.

Two overwhelming truths emerge from our experience on this committee. First, the number of people suitable for any particular vacancy is usually frighteningly small at any given time. Many lacunae may have to be tolerated to fit a person with the right temperament, judgment and professional experience to a particular vacancy. Among the most highly tolerable lapses are those stemming from unenthusiastic adherence to surreal requirements. Second, the matters that count when performance is assessed, bonuses recommended and promotions arranged are the real, deep, permanent matters of character, judgment, toughness, energy and quality of mind.

Just as important as how they will be assessed by others is how public administrators think about their management duties and judge their own management performance in the context of the latest reform initiatives. We hope that this paper can help our former colleagues make the appropriate judgments.

Notes

¹ We use the term management improvement interchangeably with the term management reform. The former somewhat more modest term has been common in Canada, and for a period in the 1970s the Treasury Board had a management improvement branch. The term public management reform is used in

the international public administration literature to refer to significant changes in administrative practice since the 1960s and particularly since the 1980s.

²See for example, the introductory section of the Privy Council Office's *Guidance for Deputy Ministers*. The body of the text is a useful description of the constitutional and legislated responsibilities of the deputy minister but the introduction contains admonitions that even the saintly Thomas More would have trouble living up to:

"The Deputy Minister articulates a corporate vision for his or her department that is shared and lived throughout the organization. The Deputy Minister engenders trust within the department and promotes an organizational environment focussed on achieving results. The Deputy Minister puts in place the essential conditions – internal coherence, corporate discipline and alignment to strategic outcomes – for effective strategic direction and the delivery of results in support of the government's agenda. As a matter of course, information on results should be gathered and used to make departmental decisions, and public reporting should be balanced, accurate, and easy to understand. The Deputy Minister assigns responsibilities and authorities for results consistent with resources and capabilities. In the management of public resources, the Deputy Minister ensures the departmental control regime is integrated and effective, and its underlying principles are clear to all staff...the Deputy Minister defines the corporate context and practices for managing organizational risk proactively. The Deputy Minister must ensure that continuous improvement is central to the delivery of services to Canadians and that, in the development of policies and programs, the views of Canadians are actively considered..."

Canada, Privy Council Office, *Guidance for Deputy Ministers*, Privy Council Office [web site] (Ottawa: 2003), at http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Page=Publications&Language=E&doc=gdm-gsm/gdm-gsm_doc_e.htm

³ In her comments on a draft of this paper, a highly respected (and recently retired) manager, wrote "Our management team estimated at one point that we were spending more than 35% of our time coping with understanding and responding to frameworks and other change management initiatives. Adding to that the implementation of new rules and paperwork on 'accountability,' and we found we were spending less than 45% of our time on actually delivering the various programs for which we were responsible." 17 January 2005.

⁴ Until the recent shift of the management pendulum toward greatly increased control from the centre.

⁵ Frederick W. Taylor, *Scientific Management* (1911, reprinted 1964 by Harper & Row, New York) is the canonical reference, summarizing more than three decades of work in time and motion studies, standardization and performance-based compensation.

⁶ Thomas, "Performance Measurement," pp. 2, 11 and 12. These themes are further developed in a paper by Thomas prepared for future publication by the Conference Board in Canada entitled *The Future of Performance Measurement and Performance Management in the Public Sector*.

⁷ List draws on Paul G. Thomas, "Performance Measurement, Reporting and Accountability," Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, Public Policy Paper 23, ISBN# 0-7731-0471-2 (Regina: University of Regina, February, 2004) pp. 46-7 and on Christopher Pollitt, Xavier Girre, Jeremy Lonsdale, Robert Mul, Hilka Summa and Mary Waerness, *Performance or Compliance? Performance Audit and Public Management in Five Countries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁸ See Canada, Auditor General, "A Model for Rating Departmental Performance Reports," Chapter 6 of the April 2002 *Report* (Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General, Ottawa, 2002). Exhibit 6.1 in this report provides a good historical review of the disappointingly slow progress since 1981 along the path toward a performance management utopia.

⁹ The governance structures of the offices differ from country to country. In Canada's case, the public auditor is an "executive-appointed auditor to serve the legislature." See Sharon L. Sutherland, "The politics of audit, the federal Office of the Auditor General in comparative perspective," CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 29, no. 1 (Spring 1986), and Pollitt et al, *Performance or Compliance*

¹⁰ Sutherland, "The politics of audit."

¹¹ For a detailed description of the role of the accounting and consulting firms, see Denis Saint-Martin, *Building the New Managerialist State: Consultants and the Politics of Public Sector Reform in Comparative Perspective* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), and the review of the book by Ian D. Clark in *Isuma*, Summer 2001, pp. 138-40.

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- ¹² See Graham T. Allison. 1980. "Public and Private Management: Are They Fundamentally Alike in All Unimportant Respects?" Reprinted in Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde (eds.), *Classics of Public Administration*, 4th Edition (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997), pp. 14-26.
- ¹³ Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat, *Modern Comptrollership Initiative: A Progress Report on Government-wide Implementation* (Ottawa: Treasury Board Secretariat, March 2003), p. 3.
- ¹⁴ Although it is too early to know how this initiative will play out, the model bears an eerie resemblance to the pre-Glassco system of a central comptroller general with agents in all departments who had the financial signing authority. This hyper-centralized system has for a half-century provided the rhetorical epitome of all that was un-modern about financial management in the Government of Canada.
- ¹⁵ This is the terminology used in the early 1990s when there was a Human Resources Development Branch in the Treasury Board Secretariat and a Human Resources Development Council of deputy ministers.
- ¹⁶ See Canada, President of the Treasury Board, *Human Resources Management Framework, A Reference Tool for Managers* (Ottawa: Treasury Board Secretariat, 2001) and Canada, Interdepartmental Human Resources Planning Working Group, *Human Resources Planning in the Public Service of Canada – Rebuilding Our Capacity*. Final Report. (Ottawa, Treasury Board Secretariat, 2004).
- ¹⁷ John W. Langford, "Acting on values: An ethical dead end for public servants," *CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION* 47 no. 4 (Winter 2004), p. 429.
- ¹⁸ Peter Aucoin, "Restructuring Government for the Management and Delivery of Public Services" in Guy B. Peters and Donald J. Savoie, eds., *Taking Stock: Assessing Public Sector Reforms* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1998), p. 337.
- ¹⁹ Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert, *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis* (London:, Oxford University Press, second ed., 2004).
- ²⁰ Pollitt and Bouckaert, *Public Management Reform*, p. 118.
- ²¹ Linquist wrote: "...several waves of reform have washed across countries during the last 150 years, whether they involved building, re-orienting, or rationalizing the public sector. With every incoming tide expectations were high (how else does one initiate reform?)" Evert Lindquist, Review of Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert, *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*, in *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (November 2001), pp. 339-42.
- ²² Christopher Pollitt, *The Essential Public Manager* (Maidenhead and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), p. 152.
- ²³ Henry Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations* (The Free Press, New York, 1989). Mintzberg's later look at how management work differs from the theory of strategic planning makes distinctions similar to ours: "planning on the left side, managing on the right." See Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (The Free Press, New York, 1994).
- ²⁴ Christopher Hood, *The Art of the State: Culture, Rhetoric, and Public Management* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 206.
- ²⁵ Donald J. Savoie, *Breaking the Bargain: Public Servants, Ministers and Parliament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 279.
- ²⁶ Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat, *TBS Management Accountability Framework* (Ottawa: Treasury Board Secretariat, 2004), Treasury Board Secretariat [web site] at http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/maf-crg/maf-crg_e.asp. The framework is an impressively concise compilation of the expectations of all the relevant central policies. However, the utopian nature of the framework is evident from the opening paragraphs.
- ²⁷ The human resources management framework was published as a "reference tool for managers" by the Treasury Board Secretariat in 2001. Responsibility for most of these policies was transferred in 2004 to the public service human resources management agency of Canada. Documents can be found on the agency's web site from its home page: http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/index_e.asp
- ²⁸ These documents can all be found from the Modern Comptrollership section of the Treasury Board Secretariat web site: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cmo_mfc/index_e.asp.
- ²⁹ Evert Lindquist, "Business Planning Comes to Ottawa: Critical Issues and Future Directions" in Peter Aucoin and Donald Savoie (eds.), *Strategic Management in the Public Sector: Lessons from Program Review* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1998), pp. 143-168.
- ³⁰ The evolution of the Treasury Board Secretariat and the other central agencies is described in Evert Lindquist, Ian D. Clark and James Mitchell, "Reshaping Ottawa's Centre of Government: Martin's Reforms in Historic Perspective," in G. Bruce Doern, ed., *How Ottawa Spends 2004-2005: Mandate*

Change in the Paul Martin Era (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), pp. 317-347.

³¹ Sharon L. Sutherland, "'Biggest Scandal in Canadian History': HRDC Audit Starts Probity War," *Critical Perspectives in Accounting* 14, 1-2, 2003, pp. 187-224; David A. Good, *The Politics of Public Management: The HRDC Audit of Grants and Contributions* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003).

³² When Prime Minister Turner followed Trudeau, he eliminated the ministries of state for economic and social development and dramatically reduced the size of cabinet. When Prime Minister Campbell followed Mulroney, she agreed to the most dramatic consolidation of departments in recent memory. The changes introduced by Prime Minister Martin, mostly before the June 2004 election, are detailed in Lindquist, Clark and Mitchell, "Reshaping Ottawa."

³³ Savoie, *Breaking the Bargain*, p. 234.

³⁴ Hilikka Summa, "Definitions and Frameworks," in Pollitt et al, *Performance or Compliance*, p. 16.

³⁵ For entertaining, even alarming, descriptions of the public battles led by James Macdonell over the Auditor General's Act and by Ken Dye on the Petrofina case, see Sharon L. Sutherland, "On the Audit Trail of the Auditor General," *CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION* 23 no. 4 (Winter 1980), pp. 616-44, and "The politics of audit."