prevented the company from meeting other current operating expenses causing the likely failure of the company and the loss of significant employment; and that the insurance, if paid by Government since 1995, would likely have cost in excess of $1 million, thus increasing Government's exposure, insurance was not placed. In addition, two insurance brokers refused to place insurance during 2001 because of the age of the facility and proximity of a large sawdust pile.

The Department also indicated that since the fire; company management has been attempting to rebuild the facility and has advised that the majority of the required funding is in place without a requirement for additional assistance from the Province. Government has agreed to release the land and planer mill, which has limited value due to its advanced age, over which its security charge remains, but only if the company rebuilds a similar facility which will once again create the much needed employment in the area. Close follow-up is continuing.

Company B

The Department indicated the company continues to operate, employing approximately 20 people. The Department has copies of the most recent financial statements as of 31 March 2003 and the company officials advised that 2004 financial statements would be available shortly. Redemption of the Department's shares have been made as scheduled since 2001 by way of a portion of the lease payments from the Department of Transportation and Works' 10-year lease for a portion of the company's facilities in Gander.

Department of Justice

3.2.11 Community Corrections (2001 Annual Report, Part 3.23)

Introduction

In 2001, we performed a review of the Community Corrections Branch of the Adult Corrections Division of the Department of Justice. The objectives of our review were:

- to identify and evaluate the policies and procedures in place to manage the operations of community correctional services in the Province;
- to determine the costs incurred in operating community correctional services in the Province;

- to determine whether there are adequate systems and procedures in place to monitor and control associated costs;

- to assess the adequacy of information systems used to manage community correctional services; and

- to assess compliance with relevant legislation.

The Community Corrections Branch is responsible for providing pre-sentence investigation services to assist the Court in determining the most appropriate sentence and to administer community-based sentencing alternatives through which the Courts may satisfy a range of sentencing objectives. These sentencing alternatives include probation supervision, community service order program, conditional sentence order program, restitution enforcement, temporary absence supervision (includes electronic monitoring) and contracted community-based programming.

Our 2001 review concluded the following:

Policies and Procedures

Although there was a Policy Manual at the Department, it did not reflect all current practices. As well, there were several areas noted where the Department was not complying with existing policies and procedures.

Community-Based Programs

The Community Corrections Branch provides for community-based intervention programs to offenders to assist in their safe reintegration into society such that the risk of re-offending is reduced. The Branch had two contracts at an annual cost of $456,000, to provide programs in both St. John's ($356,000) and on the West coast of the Province ($100,000). Our review of these contracts disclosed the following:

- There were no proposal calls on these contracts and they had not been approved by Cabinet as required by Government's policy on the hiring of consultants.

- Instances were identified where the minimum number of contracted hours was not provided by the contractor.

- Although the contract in St. John's has been renewed since 1997-98 at the same cost of $356,000, our review indicated that the number of hours of service provided under the contract had been decreasing.

Management Information Systems

The Community Corrections Information System operated by Community Corrections to manage case files was not adequate to meet their needs.

Update

In October 2004, we contacted the Department of Justice requesting an update as to further progress on the comments and recommendations included in our 2001 report. In 2003, we determined that five of the nine 2001 recommendations had been implemented. As a result, the information provided below is in response to the remaining four recommendations.

2001 Recommendation

The Community Corrections Branch should continue in its efforts to review and update its policies and procedures. These policies and procedures should be complete and circulated to all probation officers.

Action Taken

The Department indicated that a completely new Policy and Procedures Manual has been developed and circulated to all probation officers and assistant probation officers. Regional training was conducted with all probation officers between March - June 2003, focusing on Policy and Case Management. Further training has been scheduled during the Spring of 2005 to focus on supervision, case management and operational policies. Efforts continue to make the Manual available in an electronic format.

2001 Recommendation

The electronic monitoring program should be reviewed to determine whether it is cost effective and whether the Department's objectives are being met.

Action Taken

The Department indicated that as the result of representation made by the Chief Justice who conveyed concerns regarding the enforcement of home arrest conditions in conditional sentence orders, the electronic monitoring program has been expanded to include selected conditional offenders. An evaluation report on this program expansion has been completed. The Department indicated that there appears to be greater compliance for

offenders on electronic monitoring with few criminal offences committed while on conditional sentence. The average daily number of offenders being electronically monitored is 25-27 translating into a utilization rate of 85% of available electronic monitoring units.

2001 Recommendation

The Department should review its computerized systems with a view to having necessary management information available to adequately manage its programs and eliminate inefficiencies associated with the entry of duplicate information.

Action Taken

The Department indicated that a new offender information system (PCOMS) has been designed and implemented within all Community Corrections Offices. PCOMS is fully integrated with the adult institutional services branch, thus virtually eliminating duplication of data entry. A user committee with representatives of Community Corrections meets regularly to address issues and explore enhancements. Several operational and statistical case management reports have been developed by Information Technology over the past year.

2001 Recommendation

The Adult Corrections Division should endeavour to prepare its annual reports on a timely basis.

Action Taken

The Department indicated that efforts are underway to obtain Divisional statistics on a timely basis to assist with completion of annual reports. Information Technology has developed statistical reports for PCOMS which now provide data to complete Divisional annual reports on a more expeditious basis. The Biennial Report for 2001-02 and 2002-03 was being submitted for printing by 30 November 2004. The Annual Report for 2003-04 is targeted for printing by 30 January 2005.