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For Immediate Distribution
Tuesday, May 14, 2002

NEWS RELEASE

Empowering Reforms Needed for Parliament's Contribution to Budgetary Process

Montreal – In a new *Policy Matters* paper released today by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), Peter Dobell and Martin Ulrich analyse how Parliament carries out three roles in the annual budget process – representing citizen interests, empowering the government and scrutinizing the government's performance.

In this paper, entitled "Parliament's Performance in the Budget Process: A Case Study," the authors organize their findings with the aid of performance indicators, seeking to shed light on the role of Parliament in preparing budgets. These ratings provide an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of Parliament's engagement in the budget process.

The findings point to three important areas needing attention:

- A more understandable financial control framework for supply so Members know what they are voting for or against;
- Improved scrutiny of the effectiveness of programs for those committee studies aimed at influencing budget decisions; and
- Improved means to engage citizens on budget and program matters.

This study also suggests that parliamentary committees take a critical look at their tasks and objectives to ensure that Parliament and Canadians are getting the greatest value for the substantial time and resources invested. Periodic committee performance reports would be one way to begin.

"Parliament's Performance in the Budget Process: A Case Study," is now available in Adobe (.pdf) format on the IRPP website at <http://www.irpp.org> – to access the document, simply click on the "What's New" icon on the homepage.

Peter Dobell is the Founding Director of the Parliamentary Centre. He has worked with Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees since the Centre's founding in 1968. Martin Ulrich is a Senior Associate at the Parliamentary Centre. He joined the Centre in 2001, after 30 years in the federal public service, where he led Treasury Board initiatives to improve performance measurement and reporting to Parliament.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with the authors, please contact the IRPP. To receive IRPP media advisories and news releases via e-mail, please subscribe to the IRPP e-distribution service by visiting the newsroom on the IRPP website.

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