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MPs, auditor general meet over expenses

By **ALTHIA RAJ**, PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

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OTTAWA — A secretive committee of MPs came to an agreement Monday about whether the auditor general can look at their expenses, but refused to say what they decided.

Jay Hill, Conservative House Leader and Board of Internal Economy spokesman, would only say a decision had been reached and it would be communicated to the public Tuesday.

Auditor General Sheila Fraser's spokesman Ghislain Desjardins said her office had been informed of the decision.

"The only thing we can say, and we have said it before, is that we remain available to perform this work," he told QMI Agency.

The all-party committee that administers the House of Commons' \$540-million budget invited Fraser to address their concerns Monday morning.

She told QMI Agency she had "no intentions" of doing a detailed audit of each MP's expenses. Rather, she wants to conduct a broad review of the House's administration and will do random spot checks on some MPs' expenses.

Fraser said MPs have "nothing to worry" about if they're following all the rules.

Fraser asked MPs permission to audit the House of Commons and the Senate in March 2009. This spring, MPs told her she was not invited to perform an audit and suggested she has no authority to review the House's expenses.

The Senate has yet to respond to her request.

althia.raj@sunmedia.ca

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