

Ramsey wants input on next budget

Panel will stop in Prince George November 14

The provincial government is taking budget consultations on the road, asking B.C. residents for their ideas on how to improve B.C.'s economy and quality of life.

"We're asking the public's advice on what we should do," says Finance Minister Paul Ramsey in relation to Budget 2001 — Setting priorities for the Growing Economy to an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly.

The consultation report is required by the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act passed this spring, when the NDP vowed to consult with British Columbians before formulating the March 2001 budget.

He says the government expects a good fiscal report next year, but wants to hear from all regions including those from varying economies.

The select standing committee on finance and government services chair David Zirnhelt and Liberal finance critic Gary Farrell-Collins start the tour in Prince Rupert November 13. They arrive here the following day; and will pub-



Ramsey

licly report their findings from the province-wide tour December 31.

The recommendations will be taken back to cabinet and central ideas will be considered in the government's own budget considerations.

"It's somewhat similar to what the federal government does in their pre-budget talks," says Mr. Ramsey. "We thought it was a good model so we would reform and improve the process."

The report provides up-to-date information on the province's fiscal position and outlook, outlines key issues in the 2001-02 budget and questions the public on their spending and revenue priorities.

More than 1,100 copies of the consultation report were printed and the report is also available on the internet at

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