

**Senator ALSTON**—So Bell Canada made a contribution to that, presumably, but you are able to go further, are you?

**Mr Davey**—Yes.

**Senator ALSTON**—Is that proposition something that you have taken directly into account? I presume you have seen the minute, have you?

**Mr Davey**—Quite frankly, I cannot recall seeing that precise minute.

**Senator ALSTON**—Perhaps you might come back to me on any action that has been taken in response to this, if you have indeed previously seen it. If not, you might indicate what action you think should be taken as a result of seeing it. Can you do that?

**Mr Davey**—Certainly.

**Senator ALSTON**—You said that you hoped to be able to complete and presumably release your report in March.

**Mr Davey**—Mid-March, we are aiming for at this point.

**Senator ALSTON**—At that time, could you also include the total cost to Austel of the investigation; in other words, the amount of resources, human and financial, that has been absorbed by this exercise?

**Mr Davey**—I see no reason not to. I do not know whether we can give an accurate estimate—we have not until more recently kept it. It has been absorbed in our usual functions. We have not set aside specific resources until more recently.

**Senator ALSTON**—But it has been a major project.

**Mr Davey**—Yes. There is no doubt about it.

**Senator ALSTON**—It ought to be desirable to try to quantify the cost?

**Mr Davey**—Yes.

**Senator ALSTON**—Are you developing indicative performance standards to ensure that carriers provide an adequate phone service?

**Mr Davey**—Yes, indeed. In the context of the COT cases we are working specifically to get an agreement on a standard upon which we can sign off that the complainants, if they

settle with Telecom, are receiving an adequate standard of telephone service at the time.

**Senator ALSTON**—Will that be backed up by direction?

**Mr Davey**—If necessary, yes.

**Senator ALSTON**—What about in relation to others, apart from the top eight?

**Mr Davey**—It would apply in relation to all of them. What we are aiming to do is to get an across-the-board standard that people can sign off and know these sorts of things.

**Senator ALSTON**—Meaning both carriers or the three carriers?

**Mr Davey**—It will apply principally to Telecom as the provider of the local loop.

**Senator ALSTON**—Very well. Have you issued any directives to Telecom in relation to COT matters?

**Mr Davey**—Yes. They are published in the 1992-93 annual report, I think.

**Senator ALSTON**—In relation to COT?

**Mr Davey**—I think it is. Do not hold me to it but we do publish our directions in the annual report.

**Senator ALSTON**—Have any directions been issued since that time?

**Mr Davey**—It has not been necessary to issue further directions.

**Senator ALSTON**—Of the 257 consumer complaints that Austel received in 1992-93, approximately 91, according to the report, were referred to other agencies. Does that sound right?

**Mr Davey**—It sounds right.

**Senator ALSTON**—Why did not Austel immediately refer COT's allegations of voice recording to the federal police instead of waiting for the minister to refer the matter to the Attorney-General and then on to the federal police?

**Mr Davey**—That is a question that I think I need some further detail on.

**CHAIRMAN**—Minister, we might confirm that you have accepted the questions from Senator Alston and Senator Tierney.

**Senator McMullan**—Yes, I accept.