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Wednesday 29 August 2012

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 29 août 2012

**Standing Committee on
Public Accounts**

Special report, Auditor General:
Ornge Air Ambulance and
Related Services

**Comité permanent des
comptes publics**

Rapport spécial, vérificateur
général : Services d'ambulance
aérienne et services connexes
d'Ornge

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC ACCOUNTSCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
COMPTES PUBLICS

Wednesday 29 August 2012

Mercredi 29 août 2012

The committee met at 0901 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): I'll call the committee to order and to start out with, we have a subcommittee report. Mrs. Sandals.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Your subcommittee met on Thursday, August 23, 2012, to consider the method of proceeding on the 2012 Special Report of the Office of the Auditor General on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services, and recommends the following:

(1) That should the House be in session, the committee meet on Wednesday, August 29, 2012, and Wednesday, September 5, 2012, to continue its review of the Special Report on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services.

(2) That the committee invite two witnesses to appear before the committee on both Wednesday, August 29, 2012, and Wednesday, September 5, 2012.

(3) That each witness be scheduled for one hour and fifteen minutes.

(4) That the committee clerk contact the following witnesses for scheduling: Jay Lebo, Lisa Kirbie, the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Poul-Erik Binderup, Pat Auger and Giuseppe Orsi.

(5) That the committee meet in camera to discuss report writing.

(6) That the committee clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized prior to the adoption of the report of the subcommittee to commence making any preliminary arrangements necessary to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. Any debate? All in favour? Carried.

Then we shall now go into closed session to discuss the report writing and other items.

The committee continued in closed session at 0903 and resumed at 1225.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL:
ORNGE AIR AMBULANCE
AND RELATED SERVICES

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): I'll call the meeting to order, then. We have some motions before us. France.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes. So Will was nice enough to help me rephrase the original motion into three motions.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Do you want to move your microphone down?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I could. Will is still nice and he has still done the splitting of the motion into three, and it goes as follows:

I move that, pursuant to standing order 110(b), that Ornge air ambulance produce all correspondence and documents relating to the suspension of Ornge rotor pilot Bruce Wade, and that these documents shall be produced by Tuesday, September 4, 2012.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Any discussion? Yes, Liz?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Would it be friendly, or if not, I'll move it—"produce all correspondence and documents, including"—this is the addition—"Bruce Wade's entire employment file, as well as complaints, incident reports and minutes from meetings relating to the suspension." That's just the catalogue of related documents. I think you've already said "all correspondence and documents," but that would make it clear that we're looking for the whole file.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have no problem with this.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): Could she say it again?

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Could you say it again, please, Ms. Sandals?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm not sure where you want to put it in because we were amending the motion sight unseen. So I'm happy with wherever you make it make sense.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): So it would now read, "I move that, pursuant to standing order 110(b), that Ornge air ambulance produce all correspondence and documents, including Bruce Wade's entire employment file, as well as all complaints, incident reports and minutes from meetings relating to the suspension of Ornge rotor pilot Bruce Wade, and that these documents shall be produced by Tuesday, September 4, 2012." Agreed? All in favour? We're voting on the amendment and for the motion as amended. Carried.

Okay, we have a second motion.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I move that, pursuant to standing order 110(b), that Ornge rotor pilot Bruce Wade produce all correspondence and documents relating to his

suspension at Ornge air ambulance, and that these documents shall be produced by Tuesday, September 4, 2012.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: And then again, if we could just, for further clarity, add in “all correspondence, including email.” So just add in “including emails.”

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Including emails, okay. So there’s agreement to the amendment?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I do.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Okay. All in favour of the motion, as amended? Carried.

The third motion, Ms. Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The lucky third one. I move that, pursuant to standing order 110(b), that Ornge air ambulance produce their aircraft out-of-service reports and that these documents shall be produced by Tuesday, September 4, 2012.

I would be willing to give it a time frame. So let’s say from January 2012 till now.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Okay. And actually, that’s what I was going to suggest, that we put in a time frame. So, for further clarity, that would be from January 2012 to August 2012.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Is there agreement on the amendment? Agreed.

And now for the motion, as amended, all in agreement? Carried.

MR. JAY LEBO

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Our first witness of the afternoon is Mr. Jay Lebo. If you could come forward, Mr. Lebo.

Just to confirm that you received the letter for a witness coming before the committee?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, I did.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. Great. Our clerk shall do either an oath or affirmation.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Affirmation.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): An affirmation. Okay. Mr. Lebo, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give to this committee touching the subject of the present inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, I do.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. If you want to take some time for an opening statement, please—

Mr. Jay Lebo: I have no opening remarks.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Okay. Very well. Then we shall move to the opposition for questioning to begin with, Mr. Klees.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Lebo, welcome.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Thank you.

Mr. Frank Klees: I would like to start off by asking you why you took the initiative to write this committee and volunteer to come forward. With some witnesses

we’ve had difficulty getting them here, including the Premier himself. But, could I ask why you took the initiative to write to us?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Sure. I wasn’t eager to be here, but I’ve been following this committee’s investigation into what happened at Ornge. I’ve heard questions asked in this committee that weren’t answered, and I felt that I had some of the answers, and so I felt an obligation to make myself known to the committee.

1230

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, and I appreciate that.

Could I ask you, then, to perhaps give us an idea of what some of those questions are, and if we could, perhaps—as someone who was on the inside at Ornge, you have a sensitivity. Clearly, you knew what was going on there; you know the issues that this committee is interested in. What would the most important issue be that, as you were observing these proceedings, your antennae went up and you said, “Wait a minute. This is wrong. This is an important issue. I know what really happened.” Could you share that with us?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Sure. I do want to make it clear that there are a lot of things of which I don’t have any first-hand knowledge. There are a lot of things that have come out through this committee and through the media that are news to me. So I don’t want to let anyone think that I had some inside information—but I wasn’t all knowing.

The reason that I reached out to the committee was really for a couple of questions in particular. Earlier on in this procedure, it seemed ambiguous as to whether or not money that had been intended for Ornge’s operation had been used for personal gain. I think that’s become decreasingly ambiguous, but it’s not at all ambiguous to me because I was paid from Ornge—always from Ornge, never from Ornge Peel or any other organization, and a great deal of my time was spent working on for-profit ventures that I later found out through the Toronto Star were benefiting primarily private shareholders. At the time, I believed that those for-profit entities were going to flow 100% of their profits to the province. When I discovered through the media that in fact that was not the case, that’s when it became clear to me that at the very least, if nothing else, at least a portion of my salary was used to pursue avenues for private benefit.

Mr. Frank Klees: We’ve heard testimony here that any dollar amount that may have been paid to Ornge employees through Ornge and they were doing work for for-profits would be charged back. Can you share with us what insight you have as to whether or not that in fact took place?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I worked on a couple of consulting projects for third party clients on behalf of the company, and when I was doing work that was being paid for by third parties, I logged my time so that the company could recoup it. But in my day-to-day activities I was not keeping track of which hours were spent on, let’s call it, provincial issues versus international expansion. I wasn’t asked to keep a log for that.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay, and of course everyone at Ornge in the executive suite at least knew full well what your time was being focused on and at no time were you ever asked to log that time so that it could be charged back; is that right?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Exactly. That's right, yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay. Could you just tell us—you indicated that you did work on behalf of a number of these for-profit entities. Can you give us some specifics on that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Certainly. I conducted—I'll back up a minute and say that I'm not a health care professional and so my involvement in all of these projects, the projects that I'm about to tell you about, were of a project management and client relations nature. I was never the subject matter expert, but I worked on a project evaluating Bermuda air ambulance on behalf of an Ontario insurance company. I can't remember the name of that company, but a Canadian insurance company asked us to evaluate Bermuda air ambulance, which was one of their partners, and they asked us for our opinion on what kind of outfit Bermuda air ambulance was, and I project-managed that.

I worked on a consulting agreement to the province of Saskatchewan and that was an evaluation of their air ambulance operation, along with recommendations for the launch of a rotor-wing program in Saskatchewan. I was the project manager and lead author on that project. Finally, there was a consulting project to the government of Nunavut which was similar to the Saskatchewan project but on a smaller scale. I was the project manager and author for that agreement.

Mr. Frank Klees: And who would have given you those specific assignments?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Dr. Mazza.

Mr. Frank Klees: Dr. Mazza himself?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to just follow up on the Saskatchewan report. Obviously, there are some media reports around that report. You yourself say that you were the lead author, and yet your name never appeared on that report. Could you tell us, first of all, why? There was a biography in that report and it named, I think, four or five individuals in-house at Ornge. If you read the report, it talks about the team biographies, and one would conclude—and probably it was intended that one would conclude—that the report was actually written by these well-experienced individuals. Help me to understand how it is that you were the lead author, your name didn't appear on the report at all and, from what I understand, the people whose names did appear had very little to do with the report itself.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I would disagree with the last part of your question there. The report is entirely the product of the opinions, analysis and recommendations of the people described in the back of the report. It was my job to take what they had to say and to compile it into a report that was fit for public consumption. Writing is one of my talents. It's probably not among the talents of the

people listed at the back of the report, but they were the subject matter experts. So they made their observations, they made the recommendations and analysis, and I crafted the report. But everything in the report really comes from their minds, not from mine.

Mr. Frank Klees: Do you recall what the value of that report was? What was the consulting fee that Saskatchewan paid to Ornge?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I don't remember exactly what it was. It was, I believe, in the neighbourhood of \$100,000 to \$220,000.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay. And that would have been which of the companies?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Ornge Peel, I assume.

Mr. Frank Klees: While you were writing that report, who were you billing your time to?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was being paid only by Ornge and I was logging my time so that my hours could then be billed to the client.

Mr. Frank Klees: So for this particular report it was charged back, as far as you know.

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's my understanding, yes, sir.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to move on to another report, and that is the marketing agreement with AgustaWestland. As the senior aide to the CEO, can you tell me, were you aware of the discussions that were taking place between Chris Mazza and AgustaWestland?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was aware that there were discussions, yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: Can you confirm for us some of the testimony that we have had here, namely that the amount that was related to that marketing agreement essentially was an overpayment of the contract for the helicopters that was signed between AgustaWestland and Ornge? Are you aware of that detail?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Not really, no. While I was there, I heard some talk about the weight upgrades. That was discussed within earshot of me. And I always knew that it was Dr. Mazza's intention to make Agusta a consulting client, but I knew of no other details. The details of the marketing agreement I think came after I left the organization.

Mr. Frank Klees: As a senior aide, you would be very close to discussions that Chris Mazza was having. This was a very important deal. Did you ever become privy to or overhear conversations relating to this? Was there ever any reason for you to have concern that something might not be quite right about this deal that was coming down?

1240

Mr. Jay Lebo: No.

Mr. Frank Klees: What was your response when—and I'm assuming that you've been following these hearings—

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: —particularly the last testimony we had from Mr. Beltzner as the chair of the board—when he advised this committee that he was presented with a letter that gave him documentary proof of the fact

that Ornge was overpaying to the tune of some \$6.7 million for those weight upgrades. You're aware of that testimony that was given?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: How did you react to that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: When I heard that testimony?

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes. Did it surprise you?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to get your sense of who in that executive suite would have been aware of the details of that deal.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I can only speculate: Dr. Mazza and Maria Renzella.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to ask you to give some thought to your experience as a base manager, a very important role in an air ambulance organization. When you were appointed as the base manager—I think it was for the Toronto base, is that right?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's right, yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: What experience did you have in helicopters, in EMS, in managing an emergency helicopter base?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I had no management experience in that area. In terms of my knowledge of air ambulance in general, it would be only what I had learned at Ornge in the year and a few months prior to me taking on that role.

Mr. Frank Klees: And how did you feel about being placed into that responsible position?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Well, I volunteered for it; I should make that clear. It seemed to me an unusual choice, but a good choice given the circumstances at the time. I think it's important to realize that a regional operations manager at Ornge is not part of the decision loop that actually helps the patients. A regional operations manager is not at all involved in dispatching helicopters or in any real-time patient care sort of way; it's really a support role and a conduit to improve communication between headquarters and the front line. So being a paramedic or having a strong health care background is not a job requirement for that position.

At the time that I was given that position, I had been told that the position had been open for months, that there were no qualified applicants and that the region was in crisis. At this time, I had been at Ornge for about a year and I was looking forward to a long career at Ornge. I felt that it would be beneficial to me to get some operational experience on the front line.

Also at that time, the overarching strategic objective for Ornge was operational excellence, and that's something I know quite a lot about from my business background. The major challenge in Toronto was low morale, poor employee engagement and poor trust between the front line and headquarters. That's really a leadership function rather than a health care type of function, so I felt that given that nobody else would apply for this position and given that the major objectives were about operational improvement and human capital management, I was a suitable choice, even though my qualifications were unusual for that role.

Mr. Frank Klees: How long were you the operations manager there?

Mr. Jay Lebo: How long was I the operations manager?

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I officially became the operations manager in March 2009. I was finishing up the Saskatchewan report at that time, so I wasn't able to devote 100% of my time to that role until about April 2009, and then I was terminated from the organization in January 2010.

Mr. Frank Klees: During the period of time that you were the operations manager, was there ever a visit from the Ministry of Health in terms of an inspection, an on-site visit?

Mr. Jay Lebo: There was. I believe it was called a performance review, where the government basically audited the operation—not the type of audit that the Auditor General does, but an audit of the health care provision side of the organization.

Mr. Frank Klees: Did you ever get a call or were you ever confronted or alerted by paramedics or pilots concerning perhaps issues such as understaffing? Can you tell us about them?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes. I heard complaints about all kinds of things. If you want me to focus on understaffing—

Mr. Frank Klees: Let's talk about the understaffing issue because we've heard a lot about that, and obviously that leads to incident reports that we've been dealing with here. So let's focus on this understaffing issue, paramedics not available or pilots not available, so that Ornge could not respond to calls.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Okay. In my time, there were never any issues of pilot availability. CHL was completely responsible for the aviation side of the rotoring operation, and I never experienced at first hand any issues of pilots being unavailable. It was a common occurrence for there to be only one paramedic on duty at a time or for a paramedic who had called in sick to be backfilled with, let's say, a primary care paramedic, which I think you understand. If you've got a primary care paramedic partnered with a critical care paramedic, then as a team they don't operate at a critical care level. So even though one paramedic knows what to do, they're not permitted as a team to do all of that if one of them is a primary care paramedic. So there were lots of complaints that came to be about, "Why do I have to work alone?" or "Why can I not work to the full breadth of my abilities because I've been partnered with someone whose qualifications are below my own?"

Mr. Frank Klees: All right. Of course we know that, by regulation, they're not allowed to work alone?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: And yet you're telling us that quite often that would be the case, which translates into the understaffing, which obviously translates into the incident reports that we've had reviewed here where a helicopter goes to a scene and the paramedic actually has to

decline because they're not qualified to deal with that particular critical case.

What did you as an operations manager then do, knowing that these circumstances were prevailing, knowing the implications to patient care? How did you respond to that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Well, first, I took the issues to my superiors and made them aware of these complaints—

Mr. Frank Klees: And your superiors at that time were?

Mr. Jay Lebo: At that time, for about the first half of my term in that role, my direct superior was Steve Farquhar, the vice-president of operations. Later on, there was a new director of operations inserted between us. When I started, there was no director of operations.

Mr. Frank Klees: And who was that director of operations?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Sandra Burnside.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay. And how did they respond to your concerns?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I haven't quite finished answering your previous question.

Mr. Frank Klees: Oh, sorry; go ahead.

Mr. Jay Lebo: So I brought these issues to my superiors and I also, as regional operations manager, made what efforts I could to improve staffing. I didn't have the authority to hire people, but I did what I could to reduce absenteeism and days off work due to workplace injury and that sort of thing.

I'm sorry; could you repeat your next question, please?

Mr. Frank Klees: When you brought these concerns to your superiors, how did they respond?

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): And you have five minutes, Mr. Klees.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you.

Mr. Jay Lebo: They acknowledged them. There wasn't any indication that anything would be done about it. Senior management had determined that every base gets X number of paramedics, and that really wasn't open to negotiation, for me to say, "But my base needs more."

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay. So, you made it very clear to your superiors that you were understaffed on the paramedic side. At the same time that you were understaffed at your base for paramedics, Ornge was engaged in these international outreaches and was establishing these various beachheads, whether it's Brazil, Bermuda or wherever else, and while they were starving your base and probably others in the province of Ontario, a decision was made to divert funds to these international schemes, if I can put it that way.

1250

Mr. Jay Lebo: It seems that way. I want to make it clear that in the time that I was there, there were no beachheads, so to speak; that came after my time. It's my understanding that there was an employee in Brazil, but that was after my time. In the time that I was there, everything was being done from headquarters in Toronto.

At the time, it was my understanding that these diversions were an investment in a new model that would generate revenue from outside the province to the benefit of Ornge's stakeholders. So yes, I saw some money going towards these efforts, but I believed that there would ultimately be an enormous return on those investments for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Frank Klees: So we had testimony here that the expertise that was being developed within Ornge, the not-for-profit, was being used to develop strategies and competencies that would ultimately be ceded into these for-profit companies and the shareholders of those for-profit companies would then benefit from that equity that's created in those companies. The amount that would be streamed back to the taxpayers of Ontario was something like 3%. Did you ever question that formula?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I only learned that formula from the Toronto Star. In my time at Ornge, I had been told—everybody had been told—that 100% of the profits would flow to the province; there was never any talk of shareholders.

Mr. Frank Klees: So you weren't aware that Mr. Mazza and others in that executive suite were actually the shareholders of these for-profit companies, is that correct?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Absolutely not.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay. Thank you, sir.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Thank you very much. We'll move on to Ms. Gélinas of the NDP.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I think I will continue on this before I go on with other questions that I have. So the plan, if it had worked and the way it was explained to you, was really, we would leverage this great thing that we had in Ontario with air ambulance and show the rest of the world how great we're doing. They would buy our knowledge, buy our technology and buy our competencies. We would make money. So who shared that vision and how come you knew about it?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was common knowledge that—you know, you could have asked anybody at Ornge, "What is the CEO's vision?" and that's what they would have articulated to you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So this was shared broadly while you were there in 2009 and before—

Mr. Jay Lebo: Absolutely. Absolutely. When paramedics came to me with questions about why we were diverting our attention, the answer I was instructed to give was: These are investments from which the people of Ontario will realize a return. The vision was that Ornge would one day be able to go to the Ministry of Health and say, "We don't need your money any more. We're self-sufficient. We'll continue meeting our performance agreement obligations, but you can cut our budget to zero." That seemed like a terrific vision. I was proud to be part of that.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And it was presented to you and the rest of the people at Ornge in a way where you believed in it and worked in it and really thought that that was achievable?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And when you were terminated, had you changed your mind about the vision?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. I still think that the vision, as it was articulated to me at the time, is a good one.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay; that it could have worked? Why do you figure it didn't?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It appears as though somewhere along the way the senior executives decided to keep the money.

M^{me} France Gélinas: From the time that you spent at Ornge, you've already shared with us that everybody knew about the vision. So everybody knew that there were people divesting some of their time, their energy, their effort in Saskatchewan, Bermuda, Brazil etc. Would the people at the ministry have been aware of the vision?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was my understanding that they were aware of the vision, but I had no first-hand knowledge of any communication between the ministry and the organization.

M^{me} France Gélinas: When you were executive to Chris Mazza, you never saw anything where Dr. Mazza tried to communicate with the ministry or that the ministry tried to communicate with Ornge?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was aware that meetings took place. I would observe executives talking to each other about some upcoming meeting or following up on some question, but I wasn't privy to details.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay, but you knew that meetings were taking place between the executive at Ornge and the people at the ministry?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Were any of those meetings ever at Ornge sites?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I don't think so, no.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They were mainly at the ministry?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes. In fact, I think that Dr. Mazza didn't want anyone from the ministry to see the office.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Why is that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was expensive.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Oh. And it looked expensive and it was?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And why do you figure he didn't want the ministry to see that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That might have raised questions that he would prefer not to answer.

Mr. David Zimmer: Sorry. I'm having trouble hearing—

Mr. Jay Lebo: It would seem to me that that would have raised questions that Dr. Mazza would have preferred not to answer.

M^{me} France Gélinas: As to being too lavish and being on the taxpayers' dime?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes. At some stage, he also said that paramedics were no longer welcome at head office—at least, not without an escort.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What about the office was so lavish or would have raised those concerns, do you think? In detail, I guess.

Mr. Jay Lebo: By the standards of private organizations, it wasn't lavish. I mean, there were no marble fountains or anything like that. But it was a nice office, with—I don't know what the dollar value was, but I know that a lot of money had been spent on renovations, and it showed.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: You've indicated that you knew that there were meetings, that they took place not at the office. How were you aware of those meetings?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I observed the daily meeting of the executive management team, and when there were meetings coming up, that was mentioned at the table. I was there when those meetings were discussed, although I want to say that as far as I can recall, the details or the content of those meetings was never discussed in great detail at the—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In front of you.

Mr. Jay Lebo: In front of me, yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So the vision that we are going to develop—all of those for-profits, we are going to go outside of Ontario and Canada—was broadly shared with everybody. From front-line staff on, everybody knew. Do you figure there would have been any way of keeping this a secret from the ministry?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I couldn't say. As far as I know, there was no intention to keep it a secret. It wasn't a secret. There were plenty of secrets at Ornge. This was not one of them. I don't know how to answer that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What were some of the secrets at Ornge?

Mr. Jay Lebo: You're testing my memory now.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I've put you on the spot.

Mr. Jay Lebo: You're putting me on the spot. I guess, you know, the nature of Dr. Mazza's relationship with Ms. Long. The details about this marketing agreement, I expect, would have happened behind closed doors. What's come out in the media about 3% of the profits flowing to the province, as opposed to 100%—I don't know if any of that was ever shared. I've been out of the organization for more than two years, so for all I know, some of these secrets ceased to be secret after I left. But the executive team was certainly secretive.

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M^{me} France Gélinas: The Minister of Health said that she tried to get meetings with Dr. Mazza but couldn't get through to the man. To your knowledge, was Dr. Mazza or the executive at Ornge trying to avoid the ministry?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Not to my knowledge, but I know that they were very careful about what they disclosed to the ministry.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay.

Mr. David Zimmer: Sorry. I didn't hear that again.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I don't know that they intended to avoid the ministry, but I do know that they were very selective in what they disclosed to the ministry.

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So would you think it out of the ordinary that if the ministry calls, they don't make themselves available, that they refused to meet with her?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That seems strange to me. Dr. Mazza presents well. He's very persuasive and I never saw him shy away from an opportunity to win someone over.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So your best bet is that if the minister calls, he puts on the best show he can put on?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's my best bet, but I'm speculating.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That's okay. We were not there either. You were closer than us.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In 2008 to 2009, your role was executive aide—

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's right.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh:—directly to Mr. Mazza?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: To Dr. Mazza. Is that correct?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, it is.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: During that time, do you recall Dr. Mazza ever asking you to try to schedule meetings with the minister or attempting to set up meetings with the minister?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. I wasn't responsible for Dr. Mazza's scheduling. He had someone else for that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Who was involved in his scheduling or who was responsible for that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: His personal assistant.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: At that time, who was it?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Lina Paolucci.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So what were your responsibilities as an executive aide? What does that mean, anyway?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's a good question. I say that because I was never really happy with the title. I never felt that the title described what I did, but it was the best we could come up with. My role was essentially business analysis. Dr. Mazza recently got an MBA himself and, as far as I know, he was the only person in the organization with an MBA. He had this vision to launch these for-profit activities, and he wanted someone with a business education to help him strategize and plan that and also to act as a sort of ad hoc internal consultant, helping whom-ever needed help in the organization to infuse some business rigour into what they were doing.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. Except for the three contracts you've talked to us about, the ones for Bermuda, Saskatchewan and Nunavut, did you do any other work toward the international side of the business?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, a lot of research and analysis and strategizing about potential opportunities. So, you know, all the work that precedes launching something, that's—when I began, Dr. Mazza knew that he wanted to generate revenue in a number of different ways, and he had lots of ideas about how that might be done, but none of these ideas were concrete. So part of my role was to

put some meat on the bones and help him identify the best opportunities.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Did you identify any? Were there any good leads out there?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Well, it wasn't my job to look for leads. It was my job to figure out how Ornge's strengths could best be commercialized. Yes, it seemed to me that there were lots of opportunities to commercialize Ornge's intellectual property.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And this is what you were hired to do. Did you ever have a chance to do this? Did you ever—

Mr. Jay Lebo: No.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No, nothing was ever executed while I was there.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: You mentioned that some of the paramedics came to you and asked why this shift, why the priority shift. What was that about? Why were they asking that question?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Why were they asking that question?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Right. I mean, there was a vision. The vision was that the for-profits would create revenue that would eventually flow back into the organizations with a view to having 100% funding—you know, self-sufficient, not needing the ministry for funding. And you mentioned something to the effect that paramedics would, and I don't know if I'm quoting exactly, approach you, saying, "Why are our priorities changing?"

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What would be the reason why they were asking you that? There must have been something that went on in the organization that prompted them to ask this question.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Sure. I hope I'm going to answer your question correctly. You'll let me know if I don't. The rationale for this new vision was—I had been told; everyone had been told—was that demand for Ornge's operation was steadily increasing and that the ministry had indicated that the organization could not expect commensurate increases in its budget year over year. So there was a gap between growing demand and growing budget, and the only choices of the organization were to either let that gap be and let some people do without the service, or fill that gap with revenue generated elsewhere. That's what I was told. That's what everyone was told. The Auditor General's report doesn't seem consistent with that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I take it that at some point, because of this for-profit to address this potential gap that was perceived or that the management was warning people about, there was a priority shift in terms of what paramedics were doing in terms of their actual employment. Were they doing less primary care work and then they were starting to do more for-profit work? Is that—

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. No, not at all. The day-to-day duties of paramedics never changed. All of what we're talking about—you would have seen changes at head

office but not on the front line. The front line may have felt that their superiors were distracted, but the job duties of the paramedics didn't change.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I understand.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The ministry laid down the cards, "We know that demand for your services is going to grow. Your budget is not going to grow. You're on your own to try to fill that gap," and this is why you did the business analysis and this is why Ornge did the best it could to try to find business elsewhere so that they could continue to fully meet the needs of the people of Ontario. That was what you were operating under?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, that's right.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Had the ministry come at any time and said, "No, I don't think this private venture is working anymore; we want you to live within your means," would the vision have changed?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It would have had to.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It would have had to?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes. That's incompatible with what was happening. If the organization had been directed to stop that, that would have necessarily changed the vision.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That confirmed my question that I asked you earlier: Was the vision shared by the ministry? Not only was it shared, but it came from the ministry that you were responsible for fully meeting the needs of the people of Ontario, but you were not fully funded to meet those needs.

Mr. Jay Lebo: To be fair, I'm very confused myself about all this. I was told that demand was increasing steadily and that the budget was staying flat. The Auditor General's report suggests the opposite: that the budget was increasing steadily and that demand was flat. It would seem to me that what I was told wasn't true.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What was the source of that? Was that directly from Dr. Mazza, or was it—

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This issue of the gap was something that was told to you directly by Dr. Mazza?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, and anyone who was in a management position was also instructed to disseminate this.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So it would be the same thing with Mr. Farquhar, who, if you went to him and said, "I have issues," you didn't even have an opportunity to ask for more medics to work within your base because this was the way it had been allocated, but he would also agree with the fact that, "We have to do the best we can with the resources we have, and anything over and above we have to self-fund"?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes,

M^{me} France Gélinas: Basically, the mission and the vision were well explained, it was well understood, and there were people dedicated within Ornge to making sure that this vision was being implemented?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

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M^{me} France Gélinas: From your experience, having worked there, had the ministry at any time said no, like it

does to other transfer payment agencies, you would have done what the ministry had told you to do?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's my expectation. We've seen some evidence that Dr. Mazza and the board felt that they were beyond the ministry's influence in areas like that. There was a letter from the chairman to the ministry, saying something along the lines of, "We can do whatever we want," so I can't say for certain whether or not that would have stopped them. I don't know.

M^{me} France Gélinas: But from what had been shared with—

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Excuse me. The Auditor General would like to clarify a point.

Mr. Jim McCarter: Just to clarify, what we said about the issue being about the demand going down: What we actually said was that Ornge was saying that the number of transports they were doing was gradually going up. We did some computer-based analysis and other analysis, and what we found was that the number of actual transports was actually going down, not going up. But that could be different than demand, because you could get a situation where the number of land ambulance inter-facility transfers was down, but that may have been—the demand may be going up, but if, for instance, the hospitals were saying, "We're not getting timely transport from Ornge," they'd get somebody else. So, just a clarification.

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's fair. Thank you. Everybody knows about the demographic shift that's happening in the Western world, so I think it's reasonable to expect that the demand for health care is going to go up as the population ages. You don't have to be a health care expert to understand that. But it seems to me, from the Auditor General's report, that the money was there for the asking, because it increased steadily every year.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Had it not been for what ended up on the front page of the Toronto Star, you would have left Ornge thinking that the vision that had been put in place made sense, that what they were trying to do to leverage the knowledge and skills elsewhere to bring money in made sense, that it was being supported by the ministry because the ministry was saying, "You will have to manage within your own means or go find your own means of financing increases, because we are on a tight budget." All of this held together and made sense to you till it hit the front page of the Toronto Star?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): You have five minutes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Is there anything in our questioning that maybe perhaps we've missed that you think is important for us to know, some areas that we should perhaps look into more, or areas of concern that you saw, looking at the hearings or from what you've read in the newspaper, as areas of concern that have not been touched by this committee hearing?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No, I don't think so. I think you've done a pretty good job of getting everything out there.

M^{me} France Gélinas: While you were at Ornge, how much effort was put into keeping salaries secret?

Mr. Jay Lebo: A lot.

M^{me} France Gélinas: A lot? And at what level was that happening?

Mr. Jay Lebo: The most senior levels.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So we're talking Maria Renzella. We're talking Dr. Mazza—

Mr. Jay Lebo: The executive management team, including the CEO.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Steve Farquhar. How far down did it go?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Not below the level of vice-presidents. The executive management team included anyone with a VP title, a COO title, and the CEO. All of those people would have been privy to those discussions.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Within the executive team, the salaries were shared, but outside of the executive team, nobody knew?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I don't think I understand your question. Shared among the executives? I don't think that they shared their salaries with each other.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, but they knew the salaries within the organization?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes. I'm sorry; maybe I'm still not understanding your question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No; you're doing fine. I wanted to know how much effort was put into keeping salaries secret. So you didn't know what the executives were making at Ornge?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. It was understood among the executives that the CEO wanted to keep executive compensation secret.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: How was that known?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was a regular topic of discussion at the executive management team meetings.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In what sense?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I can't recall specifics, but people saying, "I don't want my salaries disclosed," or "What can we do to avoid disclosing salaries?" or "How will this or that keep us off the sunshine list?" I don't recall any efforts to keep the entire organization off the sunshine list. You know, plenty of paramedics and middle managers appear on the sunshine list, and as far as I know, senior management was never concerned with that, but certainly the executive management team understood that Dr. Mazza wanted executive salaries kept secret.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'll save my two minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. We'll move on to the government, Mr. Moridi.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Lebo, for appearing before this committee.

Mr. Lebo, I see from your resumé that you attended the Richard Ivey School of Business between the years 2006 and 2007, I believe; is that correct?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: And your resumé states that you attended the University of Toronto between the years 1998 and 2000, two years.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Did you do a degree program there or—

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was pursuing a degree but I didn't complete that degree.

Mr. Reza Moridi: And how did you get to a master's degree program without having a bachelor's degree?

Mr. Jay Lebo: The other parts of my application package were strong. I had international experience, entrepreneurial experience, a strong GMAT score, and I think that the admission team liked me. I was what they call a "special admit." I was one of two people in that class who didn't have an undergraduate degree, but part of what I like about that school so much is that they take a holistic view of applicants and they make exceptions.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you. You began working at Ornge as an executive aide to the CEO, Dr. Chris Mazza, in 2008. This committee has previously heard that executives at Ornge had the tendency to hire their friends and relatives, and so on and so forth. How did this position come about so that you got employed at Ornge?

Mr. Jay Lebo: An HR manager at Ornge reached out to me. At that time, I had never heard of Ornge; I didn't know who they were. I got an email from someone in the HR department at Ornge saying that they had found my resumé in the Ivey resumé book—the school publishes a book of resumé of recent graduates—that the CEO had specifically asked for a recent Ivey graduate and that they had identified me as a potential candidate and invited me to apply for the position.

Mr. Reza Moridi: So you didn't have any personal dealing with Dr. Mazza or any executive prior to—

Mr. Jay Lebo: I had never heard of them or the organization.

Mr. Reza Moridi: You worked as Dr. Mazza's executive aide between the years 2008 and 2009, for about a year; is that correct?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: And from there, you moved to become the regional operations manager for the greater Toronto area at Ornge; is that correct?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: How did this change in position come through?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It began in the back of a taxi with Steve Farquhar in Saskatoon. We were working on the Saskatchewan project together. We were just making conversation and he mentioned his frustration with not having a manager in Toronto. He talked about how the region was in crisis, how he couldn't get anyone to apply for the job and how, between the operational challenges and the labour relations challenges, he really needed a manager there. I said to him that sounded like a tremendous challenge and opportunity, and given the right kind of support, that might be a challenge that I would like to take on.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Dr. Mazza has been characterized in many ways by people who came as witnesses to this committee. He has been called, for example, “inspiring” but also “controlling” and even a “monster.” Another witness, actually, Mr. Tom Rothfels, described him as “charming but emotional,” and explained that the organization was top-driven. These are the points some of the witnesses made to this committee. How would you describe Dr. Mazza and his management style?

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Mr. Jay Lebo: I’ve been following these committee hearings, and I think all of the adjectives that you’ve heard are true. He is all of those things. I could add adjectives of my own if you’d like, but—

Mr. Reza Moridi: Yes, please.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Okay. He is inspiring and charismatic and deeply intelligent and passionate. He is also controlling. I want to use the word “paranoid,” but not in a clinical sense because I can’t diagnose him, but fearful of a lot of things; autocratic, volatile. I think that covers it.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Okay, thank you. In an article that appeared in the Star Phoenix—I guess this is the Saskatchewan paper, right?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: On February 10, 2012, you were quoted as describing Ornge as an autocratic organization.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: You already mentioned that he was an autocratic person, basically—Dr. Mazza.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: What did you mean by that, or what do you mean by “autocratic”?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was his way or the highway. Dissent in the organization was not tolerated. You either did as you were told with a smile or you were shown the door.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Were there any instances, in your view, of which you’re aware, of Dr. Mazza ramming an initiative through despite advice to the contrary?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I’m sorry, could you please repeat that?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Yes. Were there any instances which you were aware of where Dr. Mazza rammed an initiative through despite advice to the contrary? Any specific example of his being autocratic or—

Mr. Jay Lebo: The boat that we all know of: The boat was purchased before I arrived in Ornge, but it was my understanding, not that he went ahead despite advice to the contrary, but that he went ahead unilaterally and announced one day that he had done this.

There was another instance in which he announced during a meeting of the executive management team that he had sold Ornge’s hangar at the Toronto Island Airport to Porter.

I can’t recall any instances where somebody said, “Don’t do this,” and then he went ahead and did it. But there were certainly times where he just went and did things, and there were other times where people expressed, let’s say, more general concerns, not, “Don’t do this project,” but rather, “We have a problem here,” or, “I

think that you should change this.” People learned that your time at Ornge would be short if you kept that up.

Mr. Reza Moridi: The Star Phoenix article—the same article, actually—reports that you and several others at Ornge were fired in 2010 without any cause. Is this correct?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: You are cited as saying that you frequently disagreed with them and they didn’t like it. What did you disagree over?

Mr. Jay Lebo: A variety of things, but more than anything else I disagreed with management’s tactics. As I mentioned to Mr. Klees, the overarching strategic goal for the organization was operational excellence. The biggest problem, in my region in particular, was trust, morale and engagement. I felt that senior management’s style was making it impossible to achieve those objectives.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Who are “they” in the article? When you refer to “they,” do you mean the senior management?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Were any of the concerns you raised when you disagreed with them addressed? Did they ever address your concerns when you disagreed with them?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. On the contrary, when I was terminated I was informed that the reason for my termination was that it appeared to them as though I felt senior management lived in an ivory tower, that I dissented too much and I didn’t fit in with the direction the organization was going. That was an hour-long conversation. But the very first thing that was expressed to me after I was informed that my employment was being terminated was, “Jay, you seem to think we live in an ivory tower, and we don’t understand why you feel that way.”

Mr. Reza Moridi: So they simply ignored you, basically.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I would have preferred to be ignored; I was terminated.

Mr. Reza Moridi: You were terminated, yes.

Mr. Lebo, we touched very briefly on this issue earlier when I asked you whether you came to be employed at Ornge due to any family or personal relationship, but I want to revisit this issue a little more because, as I explained, there seemed to have been a pattern at Ornge of hiring friends and family members etc., regardless of qualifications.

One person who has stood in this committee was Ms. Kelly Long, Dr. Mazza’s girlfriend. Ms. Kelly Long was originally hired at Pathway Group and then seconded to Ornge, and a few months later Ms. Long was hired to work at Ornge as a junior level communications officer. This was in December 2006. She was earning \$60,000 a year for that position. Then she quickly ascended to the ranks of associate vice-president in 2011, with a salary of \$120,000 a year. In just a few years, her salary doubled.

When Dr. Mazza appeared before this committee, he maintained the view that Ms. Kelly Long was just a

friend of his when she first started her work at Ornge. Is this true? And if yes, when did Dr. Mazza and Ms. Long begin dating?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I don't know. I always knew that they were friends; that was not a secret. When they became more than friends, I don't know.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Didn't it strike you that this was odd, that Dr. Mazza was dating one of his much younger employees?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I didn't know that they were dating. I remember thinking, "If they are dating, then this is not good," but I didn't know.

Mr. Reza Moridi: You weren't aware.

Dr. Mazza said that Ms. Kelly Long was smart and that her ascension through the ranks was due to her ability and not to her status as his girlfriend. Do you agree with this statement?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. Intending no disrespect to Ms. Long, I don't agree with that statement.

Mr. Reza Moridi: In a few short years, Ms. Long went from making \$60,000 to \$120,000 a year. That's a lot of money, as you know. Do you believe that someone with Ms. Kelly Long's limited experience should have been making \$120,000 a year?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you.

It's my understanding, Mr. Lebo, that Ms. Kelly Long was originally hired by Pathway Group and then seconded to Ornge because Dr. Mazza had another girlfriend at that time working at Ornge. Do you have any knowledge of this?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No, I don't.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It has been reported in the media that Dr. Mazza earned a whopping \$1.4-million-per-year salary in the year 2011. In addition, he received loans from Ornge to purchase his million-dollar home, and he received a medical stipend as well. Were you aware of Dr. Mazza's outrageous salary and benefits and the whole compensation?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was aware of Dr. Mazza's compensation at that time, and at that time, in my opinion, it was not outrageous. It was not \$1.4 million; it was under \$500,000, as I understood it.

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Mr. Reza Moridi: At that time.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Do you think that Dr. Mazza deserved this type of compensation while working for a not-for-profit entity such as Ornge? Did not the organization receive the majority of its funding from the taxpayers' funds, from the government of Ontario?

Mr. Jay Lebo: If you're speaking of compensation of \$1.4 million, no, I don't think that's reasonable.

Mr. Reza Moridi: When Dr. Mazza appeared before this committee, he said that he regretted that his \$1.4-million-a-year salary had become—I'm just quoting him saying it—"a lightning rod for controversy." However, Dr. Mazza refused to acknowledge that his compensation package was in any way excessive and repeatedly told

this committee that he was not involved in setting up his own compensation. He said, "My compensation was always the purview of my board of directors. I had no input into my compensation. I had no opinion that was ever—my opinion was never requested about my compensation."

It's somehow bizarre that Dr. Mazza was unable to confirm his salary for the committee over the years and tried basically to convince this committee that he had no input to his salary and to his compensation. Rather, he seemed to suggest that the board of directors simply set his salary and compensation without even him negotiating with them.

During your time, your work at Ornge, and working for Dr. Mazza as his executive aide, were you ever aware of or do you have any knowledge of any involvement of Dr. Mazza relating to establishing his compensation?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. Dr. Mazza worked hard to manage his board. It's hard for me to imagine that anything at the board happened without his influence, but I have no specific knowledge of what you're asking me about.

Mr. Reza Moridi: In your letter to this committee, where you offered basically to appear before the committee, you suggested that your salary during the year 2008 might represent a misuse of public funds for privileged gains. What did you mean by that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's what I was trying to explain to Mr. Klees, that a good deal of my time was spent researching for-profit opportunities. I was always paid out of the Ornge operational budget. So when I found out through the media that 97% of this profit was going to the senior executives and board members, that's when it occurred to me that—I thought that I was working for the benefit of the people of Ontario. It now appears as though I was working for their personal benefit. That's what I meant by that.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It must be hard on you to have that kind of feeling at that moment.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I have lots of feelings about all of this. That's not one of the dominating ones.

Mr. Reza Moridi: While you were an employee at Ornge, Mr. Lebo, what was your salary at that time?

Mr. Jay Lebo: As executive aide to Dr. Mazza, my base salary was \$75,000.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Was this the starting salary when you started working there?

Mr. Jay Lebo: That was a guaranteed base salary, with an opportunity to earn up to I think 20% more, if I recall correctly. My total compensation for the year, including bonus, was slightly less than \$100,000. As regional operations manager, I made about \$10,000 more than that.

Mr. Reza Moridi: So when you left—or you were fired, basically—

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi:—your salary and compensation total would have been over \$100,000, or \$110,000.

Mr. Jay Lebo: I think it was a smidge under \$100,000, including all bonuses.

Mr. Reza Moridi: You also wrote to the committee that you were under the impression, while working at Ornge, that for-profit ventures were donating 100% of their profits. Do you still think that this was the case?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No, I don't. No.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Do you have any reason to believe that the money was not being given back to the Ornge not-for-profit?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It's only what I've read—reading the Auditor General's report and reading the reports in the media. That's how I came to understand that 97% of the money was destined for the individual shareholders.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you. In your resumé, Mr. Lebo, you stated that you provided strategic advice and tactical analysis for securing new sources of revenue and promoting the Ornge brand. How did Dr. Mazza describe this vision to you?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Which vision do you mean, exactly?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Your job, basically, at Ornge saying that you were providing strategic advice and tactical analysis for securing new sources of revenue for Ornge and promoting the Ornge brand—I guess you had conversations with Dr. Mazza.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: How did he convey his vision to you so that you could develop this kind of strategy and tactics for the organization?

Mr. Jay Lebo: He felt that Ornge was a world leader in transport medicine, that it was the best organization of its kind. He referenced some other companies: the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, for example. You may have heard of them. If you have heard of them, it's remarkable that you have heard of them, because they're in Australia. He wanted a similar global reputation for Ornge and felt that if that could be achieved, it could be very lucrative.

Mr. Reza Moridi: That was basically your job, to develop such strategies and tactics.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, to research the opportunities and to make the CEO aware of them and to make my recommendations when asked.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): You have about three minutes left.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you. Between the years of 2006 and 2011, Ornge established a series of affiliated corporations, as you know, some of which were not-for-profit. Many of them were for-profit corporations. I'm not going to name all of them, but the list includes Ornge Peel, Ornge Issuer Trust and Ornge Global Air Inc. Were you involved in these initiatives?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No. I observed them; I wasn't involved.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Were you aware that Dr. Mazza's salary used to be disclosed on an annual basis on the sunshine list, but in the year of 2008, when Dr. Mazza's employment was transferred from not-for-profit Ornge to Ornge Peel, his name ceased to appear on the sunshine list? Was there ever any discussion around using the for-

profit entities at Ornge to shield executives from having to disclose their salaries on the sunshine list?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Can you tell us about it? The conversation that you were aware of.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Sure. We're now going back more than three years. I don't recall the specifics of the conversations, but certainly at the executive management team meetings it was discussed, by moving us onto the—"us" meaning the executives—by moving the executives onto the payroll of the for-profit companies, they could be removed from the sunshine list, and that would be good.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: So that was an explicit conversation that you overheard.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. We'll move on to the opposition. You have two minutes.

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Lebo, in the time that you were associated with Mr. Mazza, do you recall any meetings that he would have had with the Premier?

Mr. Jay Lebo: No.

Mr. Frank Klees: Any meetings that he might have had with the Minister of Health?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes. I recall that he had a meeting with Minister Smitherman. I don't think I remember anything more than that.

Mr. Frank Klees: No details about that?

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Mr. Jay Lebo: No, I believe it was over dinner. I'm sorry; I don't remember anything more about that.

Mr. Frank Klees: You're familiar with the—

Mr. Jay Lebo: Excuse me, Mr. Klees. When Mr. Smitherman was succeeded by Minister Caplan, I believe that there was also a meeting during which Chris wanted to introduce himself to the new minister, and I think that that happened.

Mr. Frank Klees: So he would have had a meeting with Minister Caplan as well.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: You're familiar with the Meyers Norris Penny audit—

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: —a fairly extensive audit. Were you involved in that audit at all?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I wasn't involved in the audit. It depends what you call "involved." I was asked to make some—there were a few occasions where someone would come to me and say, "The auditor is asking for this. Can you help us with that?"

Mr. Frank Klees: Were you ever instructed to give false information to the auditors?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was instructed to create false information for the auditors.

Mr. Frank Klees: And who would have instructed you to create that false information?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Dr. Mazza and Maria Renzella.

Mr. Frank Klees: What was the nature of the information, to the best of your recollection, that they were trying to falsify?

Mr. Jay Lebo: To the best of my recollection, the auditors were asking for the business justification for a number of expenses, and I was asked to write the business justifications and to backdate them.

Mr. Frank Klees: And did you do that?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I wrote the business justifications but I did not backdate them. I put the correct dates on them.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): I'm sorry; you're out of time, Mr. Klees. We'll move to the NDP.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay, so the auditors are in there. Basically, what Dr. Mazza is asking you to do is illegal; you don't backdate documents. So you wrote them up but you put the actual dates on it.

Mr. Jay Lebo: That's what I recall, yes. That's the best of my recollection.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So here we have Dr. Mazza asking you to do something specific, and you're not doing what he wants. I expect you out the door the same night, but you're still there. You stayed there after not following his order.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: How did it go?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was never mentioned again. You know, when I delivered the documents to Ms. Renzella, they were in the form of an electronic Word document. If she wanted the date changed, she could have done so herself without coming back to me.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Do you figure that's what happened?

Mr. Jay Lebo: At the time, I didn't expect that that would happen. I know more now than I did then. In retrospect, for them to do that would seem consistent with a pattern of behaviour; at the time, it seemed implausible that they would actually go through with that.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Was this the first and only time you were asked to do something that was morally wrong or illegal?

Mr. Jay Lebo: It was the only time I was asked to do something illegal. It was not the only time I was asked to do something morally wrong.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Give me an example.

Mr. Jay Lebo: The examples would have come from my time as regional operations manager, where I actually had responsibility for doing things. I was instructed to lie to paramedics.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: About what?

Mr. Jay Lebo: About what? One example I can give is that during that year the organization's budget for paramedic overtime had been far exceeded. It was something like 50% beyond what it was supposed to be and there were still some months left in the year. The collective bargaining agreement between the CAW, representing the medics, and the organization specifically said that paramedics' vacation could only be denied on the grounds of "operational requirements." I and my

fellow regional operations managers were instructed to deny vacations to mitigate the hemorrhaging of the overtime budget, but if asked why we were denying vacation, we were instructed to say it was for operational requirements.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): And we must move to the government now. Go ahead, Ms. Sandals.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Were there other examples? You said that the backdating of documents was the only thing that you were asked to do which was illegal. Were there other things you were asked to do which were morally wrong?

Mr. Jay Lebo: I was instructed to terminate people where I felt that doing so was morally wrong. I was—

Mrs. Liz Sandals: We don't need names, but give us a sense of why.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Sure. I was instructed to terminate one person who had done nothing wrong at all, but by virtue of where he lived—it's hard to explain. Having this person on the payroll was more expensive than having some other person on the payroll who lived in a more convenient place. I was instructed to terminate him for that reason, even though the collective bargaining agreement is very specific about what are permissible terms for termination, and this is not one of them. You can't terminate a unionized employee who has done nothing wrong, and that was precisely what I was instructed to do.

There was another paramedic whom I was instructed to terminate even though I felt that this person needed help—was facing challenges that I wasn't qualified to diagnose—but that terminating this person was neither in the organization's interest nor in his interest; I did not feel right about doing that. I objected repeatedly and was ultimately given a flat-out order: "Do this today."

Mrs. Liz Sandals: So, "He goes or you go"?

Mr. Jay Lebo: Yes, and I went anyway, about two weeks later.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): We are out of time, so thank you very much, Mr. Lebo, for coming in.

Mr. Jay Lebo: Thank you.

ORNGE

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Our next witness is Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup, senior pilot, fixed-wing operations, from Ornge. If he could come up, please.

Welcome. Just to confirm: You have received the letter for witnesses coming before the committee?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. Our clerk has an oath for you.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): The Bible is in front of you there, Mr. Binderup.

Mr. Binderup, do you solemnly swear that the evidence you shall give to this committee touching the subject of the present inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: So help me God.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): If you'd like to make a short opening statement, you're welcome to, and then we'll move to questioning after that.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Thanks. Good afternoon. My name is Poul-Erik Binderup, and I am one of the fixed-wing pilots who operate the PC-12 aircraft for Ornge based in Thunder Bay. When I was asked to come and appear before this committee, I spent countless hours, mostly while I was trying to sleep, considering what I could possibly add to the extensive testimony that has already been given, in an effort to get to the bottom of the current state that Ornge finds itself in.

I debated what words of wisdom that I might be able to impart that would convince everyone to get along and get down to fixing what needs to be fixed. However, I realized that that would require more than a few clever words. Then I thought that I should arm myself with statistics and information that might make me seem wise—I didn't think on that one too long—or perhaps I should watch as much testimony as I could and then I could pick all of the good stuff that might help further my agenda. That's when it dawned on me that I wasn't even really sure what my agenda was.

On July 28, I sent a letter to the members of this committee, with the support of many of my fixed-wing colleagues, to say that I stand behind Ornge and that I wanted to see it succeed. I still stand behind that statement. In the weeks following, it became very apparent that I underestimated the biggest problem Ornge has to overcome, and that is lack of trust—not only the public's trust in us, but also our trust in each other and in the Ornge management.

I have been fortunate in my three-plus years at Ornge to work with some very dedicated individuals, not only fixed-wing pilots but paramedics and helicopter pilots who have devoted their lives to the goal of serving the people of Ontario. I owe it to them to show them the respect that they deserve—something that my previous letter neglected to do. For many of these people, it's more than a job; it's a calling.

The fixed-wing pilots are considered the new kids on the block, but many of us hold this model of dedication up as something to aspire to. When Ornge announced in 2009 that it would be starting a fixed-wing division, there were many of us who jumped at the opportunity to be a part of something special.

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So now here we are, in the middle of quite an awful mess, to be honest. There have been political lines drawn in the sand, personal lines drawn in the sand and some pretty incredible rifts formed right on the front lines. The very people who should be unified in one purpose are now fractured. Many employees, including myself, have felt forced to pick sides and, in doing so, ran the risk of alienating those with differing views, only serving to deepen these rifts.

Right now, Ornge is dealing with some very serious issues. No one, including myself, is arguing that those issues don't exist. Let's be honest, we need more paramedics and we need more pilots, specifically rotor pilots. I'm sure that there are many other issues needing to be dealt with, but these things, in my opinion, are not insurmountable; they can be fixed. It wasn't that long ago that there were many people in this organization who didn't think there would ever be a chance that the top management would ever be held accountable for mismanaging Ornge. Well, we know how that worked out.

So now the new Ornge management is faced with the daunting task of trying to sort out all these issues while, at the same time, dealing with a rash of new issues that arise. But change is happening.

So now what? Well, it turns out I found my agenda. My agenda is the people who work for Ornge. It's why I came to Ornge in the first place. I still feel that Ornge, with all of its issues, can be fixed. It's going to take a whole lot of work by a whole lot of people, but at the heart of it all we need to be able to trust each other. The new Ornge management needs to be purposeful in establishing an atmosphere of trust, not only within the company but also with the people of Ontario.

I, for my part, feel bad that I lost some of the trust and respect of some of my colleagues by picking a side. I can only pledge to do exactly what I am encouraging others to do, and that is to work even harder to fix what problems I can and hopefully gain back that trust. Certainly, the people of Ontario deserve no less. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Thank you. We'll move to the NDP for the first questioning. Ms. Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Sure. Before I start with my questions, I'm sort of curious to know a little bit more. You seem very—how can I say it?—moved by what happened since you picked a side and the lack of trust between some of the front line who work together. When you say “picked a side,” what are the sides?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Within Ornge there are two very distinct camps. There are people who feel that Ornge screwed up, that Ornge messed up, that they mismanaged the company to the point where Ornge should be disbanded, shut down—however you want to word it—and that a new company or a different company should be given the opportunity to come in and do things right. Then there are those who feel that yes, Ornge messed up, but that, you know, there have been steps taken to rectify that over the course of the last eight months, that we still have a long way to go but that these problems can be fixed and that Ornge should have the opportunity to fix them. With its new management structure, we've seen some of the steps taken towards that—or I have.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So there are people within the organization who still think that Ornge should be disbanded?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Absolutely.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And it should be shut down?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Are there many?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: There are a vocal few; some are more vocal than others. There are many who are just kind of watching to see what happens, kind of let it play out and hope for the best, and then there are a few on the other side who are actively trying to make things better. I'd say in each camp there's maybe a handful, a half dozen to a dozen, who are fairly vocal either way.

M^{me} France Gélinas: What would there be to win or to gain by dismantling Ornge?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Well, if you think about it, everybody hates change and this whole thing has really been, in my opinion again, about change. If you look at the rotor-wing pilots who worked for Canadian Helicopters for many, many years—some of them have been there countless years—that job, for them, has become the pinnacle of their career. They worked with Ornge but not for Ornge. Now that contract is no longer, and they're faced with numerous changes to their operation. Ornge is doing things differently, perhaps with the same helicopter, but it's a different operation, and it has had to play by different rules. That change can be very difficult, for sure.

It's the same for paramedics. Many of the paramedics who have worked for Ornge have seen many changes. Some of them worked for the Ministry of Health back before Ornge was in operation. They saw Ornge come in and saw the mismanagement happening. Some of them tried to raise concerns over the years that weren't listened to. But they saw all that change happening, and a lot of it, for them, was not for the better. For them, there was actually, honestly, a collective cry of cheer when Dr. Mazza was fired. There were quite a number of paramedics that thought, at that point, "Yay; our team won."

On the fixed-wing side, again, we're kind of the new kids on the block, so we haven't seen any of that change. We came in under the guise of thinking that Ornge had it all together. Really, all we had to go by, for the most part, were the paramedics and the rotor pilots that we would end up working with. Change is difficult, for sure.

M^{me} France Gélinas: From the time you were there, you had never heard of problems at Ornge, of whistle-blowers coming to the government, of whistle-blowers coming to the opposition, of people thinking that something is wrong at Ornge? Until it hit the front page of the paper, you had never heard of anything wrong?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No. There were memos. There were inside jokes, if you will, about Dr. Mazza and some of his memos. For us, we came in at a time—the summer of 2009—when a lot of this, I believe—I don't know the exact timeline—was just starting to really develop. Ornge Global came in the next summer, I believe. I don't know how long that had been in the works prior to that.

While there were always people that were quite vocal about the downside at Ornge, it never presented itself more than people that were vocal about the downside of Ornge. The term "whistle-blower" really never even popped up until this spring, when things really hit the fan.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you perceive the committee work, or any investigation into things that are not being properly handled at Ornge by the management, as an attack on the front-line workers?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, not the committee. There's a perception that lines are divided in the government circles, but not necessarily at the committee level.

That doesn't really make sense; let me try to explain. The opposition has its duties to try and steer the government straight. The government, I think, would try and do its best to lead the people of Ontario. This committee was set up—and this is my understanding, at least—to really get down to the bare bones of what went wrong at Ornge. When it all became very apparent through the Star—Kevin Donovan—

Mr. David Zimmer: Can I ask you to speak into the mike?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Oh, sorry.

Mr. David Zimmer: Pull the mike towards you—just like this.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Is that better?

Mr. David Zimmer: That's better, yes.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Okay. When it all became very apparent, what was actually going on—I'm sorry; I lost my train of thought. What was your question?

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Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I can move on to another area.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Oh, the committee.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Just in general—I mean, I don't want the front-line workers to think that by looking at what Ornge did wrong or how Ornge was mismanaged or how there was some oversight that was not done by the government, perhaps, then none of that—I hope that the front-line workers don't think that that is in any way casting aspersions on their work or on their qualifications or on their quality of care.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, we understand—I can really only speak for myself for the most part, but we understand that there is a job to be done, that you guys need to get to the bottom of what happened. How else are we going to make sure that it doesn't happen again?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure; that's exactly it.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes. The front line—we've had some disparaging things from the public through all of this. But the public is kind of funny that way. Sometimes they will latch on to the negative things that can just as easily fizzle and go away. You kind of roll with that, I guess.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. Do you know Bruce Wade?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I do.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you know him personally?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I do.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And how would you describe your relationship with him?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Strained as of late.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Can you explain to me what a FOOR is?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: FOOR is basically a flight operations occurrence report. It's our way of basically making the company know of just about anything that happens within Ornge. That could be a delayed departure, it could be a declined trip due to weather, safety concerns reports. It's tied very closely with our safety management system, so it's partly the safety system as well as just our way of tracking information in general.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do I have it correct that you initiated or wrote up a FOOR in regards to Mr. Wade?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I did.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And what was the basis of that FOOR?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I don't want to get into—if I am allowed the latitude, I don't want to get into bashing of Mr. Wade any further than has already been done.

For me, I initiated that process as a way to hold Mr. Wade accountable for his actions in the workplace. That strictly stemmed around the way that he carried himself at work, which in my opinion created a hostile work environment.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: So it would be a personality thing as opposed to an actual—the way he was flying his aircraft or the way he was—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, it had nothing to do with the way he was flying his aircraft.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: My worry would be that it would affect me in a way that I flew mine.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And how would it affect you?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: We're trained as pilots every year in terms of human factors, things that affect us from outside the cockpit that could affect us inside the cockpit—somebody going through a divorce, financial troubles. I mean, it could be anything. We're trained in that manner to recognize or at least try to recognize these things. I felt that it was getting to the point where it was becoming what we would call a human factor.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I get a sense that you're somewhat of a leader amongst, perhaps—maybe not officially, but definitely you have some leadership qualities. Is that how people look up to you in your organization?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'm sorry?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Is that how people regard you in your organization?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'd like to think I'm well respected and I certainly get along with people that I work with, for the most part.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Does that also apply, then, to upper levels of management, that you have a very good relationship with them as well?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I do; I try. In Thunder Bay, we don't have much contact with the management here in Toronto; just geographical for the most part, some via email and whatnot—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In terms of upper management, who would your contact person be that you have—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: My direct supervisor would be our chief pilot, Jim Bennett.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm sorry, who—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Our chief pilot, Jim Bennett, would be my direct supervisor.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And then, besides Mr. Bennett, in terms of any contact here in Toronto, who would you have relationships with—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Beyond that would probably be, right now, Jeff Gariepy. He's our director of flight operations. He would be the next up the—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The ladder.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: —chain of command.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I've put a copy of an email that you sent out on July 27. Do you recognize this email?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes, I sure do.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will read some of it into the record later, but I want to first give you an opportunity to give me some context as to, why would you write to all of the fixed-wing pilots, from the people I was able to identify—some of them I have not been able to identify—what were you hoping to achieve, and did you achieve your goals?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I guess partly it was a two-fold thing. As a group in Thunder Bay, and the Sioux Lookout and Timmins bases as well, we always have the opportunity to talk, and many of us had become very frustrated with what we perceived as being a very negative turn on Ornge, both in the press and even within our own workplace and work environment. The negativity was really starting to beat us up, to be honest. There was a pretty solid sentiment among the fixed-wing pilots that we just didn't know what to do. Where do we go? What do we do?

At that point, I guess my first thing that I did was, I went to my union representative. I sent him an email and asked how we might go about filing a grievance, given the work environment that we were working in. The union indicated to me that it wouldn't be able to do anything. I'm not very well versed in union protocols, but same union, two different bargaining units, so it felt like the answer was, how does one bargaining unit complain against the other? I didn't really have any reason to believe that that wasn't the case, so I left that. I didn't pursue it through the union.

My next avenue, I felt, was to send something through the FOOR, through our safety department, in that respect. That's where the original complaint actually came in.

The other part of this was that, again, we were feeling a very negative sentiment in terms of how Ornge was being portrayed. Some of it we didn't feel was fair. The fixed-wing pilots really hadn't had a voice at that point. That's when I drafted the letter to the committee—on July 28, I believe.

The email itself was kind of twofold. It was to see, first of all, if there was support behind a move to actually draft a letter and send it. So this email went out prior to that letter. The issue with Mr. Wade was something that had happened prior to the letter as well, so it was kind of a separate issue, although the two are inexplicably united.

The pilots that I spoke with to whom I sent this email indicated that they were behind that process. So that's why I went forward with the letter. I believe there was an attached—I had sent as well some of the comments from the pilots to kind of indicate that support as well.

We just felt that we hadn't had a voice up to that point and that it was important that somebody heard from a group of pilots that really kind of stood behind Ornge and wanted to see it succeed.

M^{me} France Gélinas: There are lots of people who want Ornge to succeed. I represent the fourth-biggest riding in northern Ontario. All of my constituents depend on Ornge being there in their time of need because this is the way we get ambulance services for the people. There are a lot of people who want Ornge to succeed, but we don't go about shutting down the people who are saying, "Well, things were not that good." You realize what has happened to Mr. Wade since you put the FOOR forward?
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Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: What has happened to Mr. Wade?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Since that time, Ornge has hired an outside, independent investigator to investigate the allegation. I'm not sure exactly how that process will end. I didn't really see that process starting to begin, to be honest. I thought that at some point there needed to be some accountability for his actions. That was my goal: that somebody would just say, "Stop."

M^{me} France Gélinas: What action do you figure he was not being held accountable for?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Mr. Wade has been described as a very passionate individual, but he comes across as angry and argumentative—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: So you filed a FOOR against him because he's angry?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, no.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: You filed a FOOR against him because he's complaining about things?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I filed a FOOR against him because that's the way—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's not acceptable to you that someone can complain about what's going on in the workplace?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I know that you folks have protocols that you need to follow in Parliament, and if you go outside of those protocols, then you are held accountable. There are things that you can and can't do. I felt that, in my opinion, Mr. Wade was creating an environment where—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: How was he creating this environment?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Use of language—

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Please let him finish, Mr. Singh.

You have three minutes left, by the way.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Use of language, being aggressive, argumentative, raised voice—

M^{me} France Gélinas: You're describing 50% of the pilots that I know.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Could be, but 50% of the pilots that you know don't make people angry back and don't create an environment whereby I don't feel safe to go to work. I can only tell you how he made me feel at the time.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: How often do you cross each other's paths?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Not very often.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In your day-to-day work, you go and fly a fixed-wing aircraft; he flies a rotary-wing aircraft?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you have shared locker rooms?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you have shared places where you change clothes?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And how often do you work the same shift?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I would say—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: How many times a week, let's say, would you cross his path?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: How many times a week? Maybe two to three.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Two to three times a week, you cross his path. And how long would you be in his proximity for, in terms of minutes, hours, seconds?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That would depend. If we were sharing a shift, we would be there 12 hours.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And you would be in the same workplace?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: We'd be in the same workplace.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And how close together would you be sitting?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That depends. If we were sitting in the lunchroom together, then we'd be very close. Rotary pilots and fixed-wing pilots share a flight planning office, so again there's close proximity. It's not that big a facility.

M^{me} France Gélinas: When was the last time you spent a 12-hour shift with Mr. Wade?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: It would have been in July.

M^{me} France Gélinas: In July this year?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And the time before that?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: There would be several times in July.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Where you worked together.

We'll save our time.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Okay; very well. We'll move on to the government. Ms. Sandals.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you, Mr. Binderup. How do we pronounce that properly?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: It's Binderup, yes.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you. There has been a lot of discussion about the letter that you wrote. Just so we can be absolutely clear, I think you've described already that you had a discussion with some of your fellow pilots about whether you should do something. Did anybody ask you to write that letter?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No; absolutely not.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: So this was something that you, with the support of some of your fellow pilots, wanted to do. It isn't that somebody came to you and asked you to—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No; absolutely not.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: And there's a mention here that you contacted Minister Gravelle's office.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Would he have been your MPP in Thunder Bay?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: He is one of the MPPs in Thunder Bay, yes. I don't think that he's mine, actually. He's in the north end of the city. But I had known of him through a mutual friend.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Okay, so he was one of your area MPPs, which is—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: But it wasn't him. It was his assistant, Mr. Larry Joy, whom I was actually able to contact.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Okay, so you spoke to Mr. Joy. You didn't actually speak to Mr. Gravelle.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That's correct.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: And what was the conversation that you had with Mr. Joy?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I indicated to him that we, as a group of fixed-wing pilots, would like to basically stand behind Minister Deb Matthews, because we felt that she had shown some support to us so we'd like to return the favour, basically, and how would I go about getting a letter to her or to the committee or to someone, to do that, to make that happen?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: So you went to Mr. Joy and said, "We'd like to send a letter," and asked him for our contact information for the committee or the minister or whoever.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Exactly—whatever he was able to do, or did he think that was even possible?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Could we talk a bit about some of the things that you actually did say in your letter that you sent to the committee?

You say in your letter that in December of last year, you "watched as the fabric of the Ornge machine began to unravel." Can you explain to us what you meant by the fabric of Ornge beginning to unravel? You were having a poetic flight here, so let's get some specifics.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Basically, we watched, the same as everybody else did, through the newspaper. I guess it was probably the middle of December when things really became open, or began to open up, essentially, in the press. We watched that happen, just the same as everybody in Ontario did, I guess—very concerned. The whole thing seemed to be kind of falling

down, so everybody, I think, was concerned initially, until it started to take shape and we could get an idea of what was actually going on and who was being singled out and how that actually took shape.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: One of the other things that you talked about was an issue that seemed to be part of the conflict, maybe, between yourself and Mr. Wade, if I can put it that way. You talked in your letter about, "There have been issues raised that there are not enough paramedics to staff all the aircraft that Ornge operates. While I cannot speak to optimal staffing levels, I can say that there are many, many cases where the weather precludes the helicopters from being able to respond to a call, where the PC-12 aircraft is subsequently dispatched. And yes, in those cases it is often the helicopter medics that are dispatched on the PC-12. For our part, we are there to fly aircraft and respond to the calls of people all over the province of Ontario who may need us. And if we can respond to that call safely, then we do."

Could you elaborate on that a little bit? For those of us who aren't actually pilots—and actually, there are a couple of pilots in the room—it would be helpful if we understood when a helicopter can go, when an aircraft can go, and this flow back and forth of paramedics.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'm going to round-about answer your question, if I could. One of the things that we saw, and I made reference to in that—I'll back you up a couple of paragraphs, where I said that there were people with flawed information. What I was alluding to there, and I guess I didn't maybe say it all that well, was that people were gathering information at that point on downstaffing, for example. Nobody disagrees that we need paramedics for the helicopter, but what I saw happening was that every time a helicopter couldn't fly, it was being blamed on the one issue.

You can take information and you can take data and you can spin it however you want. I'll use an example. For the helicopter in Thunder Bay, they have some pretty strict regulations or guidelines in terms of when they can fly at night just due to the aircraft, Transport Canada regulations and whatnot. They basically need essentially VFR conditions roughly around 3,000 feet before they can actually go out and fly at night.

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So, if an aircraft or if a helicopter—let's say the weather is down to 1,000 feet and they can't fly, and the helicopter can't do anything, and then the medics go out on an airplane, is it because of the weather or is it because of the lack of paramedics?

There are some who would take that information and say, "Well, the paramedics are gone. That's down-staffed the helicopter." And while that may be, it's all on how you—

Mrs. Liz Sandals: You up-staff the aircraft—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: We up-staff the aircraft. It's all how you put the spin on it. I want to say, along with that, that I believe that we should have medics for every aircraft so that everything—if the weather is good, everything should be able to fly. So, my issue wasn't

necessarily with the lack of paramedics so much as it was the way that it was being portrayed.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Okay. The email that Ms. Gélinas mentioned, which is the email from you to some of your colleagues—I suspect that you’re going to get questioned on it more. Would you like to read it into the record and stop and comment on why you wrote what you did? Because I suspect we’re going to have more questions, and when we’ve got you here, go ahead and tell us what you said and tell us why you said it.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Okay. Do you want me to read from the top?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Yes.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Okay. This is, again, an email from myself to my fixed-wing pilot group.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Yes, and you weren’t anticipating that it was for public consumption, but it’s now been tabled with the committee so it’s now part of the public record.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: “I trust this email finds everyone well as the summer motors on. Many of you have been following the legislative hearings in Toronto by the standing committee investigating the scandal at Ornge.”

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Sorry. Could you slow down a little bit and speak into that microphone, please?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Sorry. This is all new to me.

“I trust this email finds everyone well as the summer motors on. Many of you have been following the legislative hearings in Toronto by the standing committee investigating the scandal at Ornge. While many of us have been content up to now to watch these on YouTube and smiling, there have been some things developing behind the scenes that I would like everyone to be aware of. Those of you in Thunder Bay are no doubt aware that Mr. Bruce Wade has been a significant source of information to MPP Frank Klees.”

Can I just interject as I go?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Yes, that’s what I’d like you to do, is comment on—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Okay. I mean Bruce had commented on this at numerous times as well, so this—

Mrs. Liz Sandals: So you got this information from Mr. Wade himself, that he’d been in contact with Mr. Klees?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes, for sure.

“Mr. Wade has bragged to many of us in Thunder Bay of his relationship to Mr. Klees. He has also made it very clear through ... verbal altercations with flight crew that he wishes to aid Mr. Klees”—and I quote Bruce—“in ‘bringing Ornge down,’ no doubt in the hope that Canadian Helicopters would come riding to his rescue”—again, comments that he had made as well.

“I do not wish to comment on this except to say that this is not how I feel. Mr. Wade does not have my support nor does he represent me in any way. I found out

recently that Mr. Wade has been invited by Mr. Klees to appear before the committee to speak on the state of Ornge. While I do not know what this testimony will entail, I do not get a warm fuzzy feeling about it, that I can assure you. All of a sudden I realized that the time is now to stand up for ourselves and let someone know how we feel. As Terry”—one of my co-workers—“mentioned in his ... email, we are the dirty little secret of Ornge. In fact, when we should be applauded for going out there and making a difference in the lives of Ontarians, we are being shot down and bad-mouthed for ‘stealing’ medics off the helicopter.

“Well, folks, I don’t want to put too fine a point on this, but I have had enough. Having been a part of this from the very beginning, I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished here. And I am even more proud of what we do ... what I do. I think we can all say that. When the weather is less than stellar, we are the guys and gals out there making a difference. It’s time we stood together as a unified group of professionals and let people know how we feel.

“So here is what I have been up to.

“I spoke with Rob Lindsay”—he is our union representative in Thunder Bay—“about the union’s standpoint on this (specifically how Mr. Wade has been undermining our future employment with Ornge). Thank you to Rob for following this up with the union. Unfortunately, the union has indicated that it is unable to do anything with respect to Mr. Wade’s actions.”

“So I filed a FOOR with respect to Mr. Wade’s actions, and indicated that he is creating a hostile work environment and that this matter is bordering on a safety issue. As human factors go, this is distracting when we should be focusing on our duties. I received a positive response from the safety department, and would encourage anyone who feels similarly to file such a report or simply send an email to the safety department.

“Lastly, I have started a dialogue with the office of Michael Gravelle, the local Liberal MPP here in Thunder Bay. I do not want to get into politics here, but the bottom line is that the current Liberal Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, has been a huge supporter of ours over the last number of months, and I believe it is time to return the favour. I will be drafting a letter to Ms. Matthews in essence stating how much we appreciate her support. It is also my goal to put some distance between myself and Mr. Wade. I believe that he is a loose cannon, and has his own agenda that in no way represents how I feel about my job. People like Ron McKerlie and Deb Matthews are the ones on the front lines fighting to keep Ornge alive. It’s time we put some ammunition back in the guns of the people who are trying to defend us against the Wades and Kleeses out there who are constantly taking potshots at us and our livelihood.

“Mr. Wade is scheduled to appear before the committee next Tuesday, and I am hoping to have a letter ... together and sent to Deb Matthews’s office no later than Monday. I am also hoping to be able to send the letters to each member of the standing committee. At this time I am waiting to hear back from Mr. Gravelle’s office with

the contact information ... and with the most advantageous method of proceeding. I will let you know as things progress.

"In the meantime, please understand that I am not trying to convince anyone of anything. If there is any among you that do not feel as I do or don't want to get involved or just really don't care, that is your prerogative. If you do care, then please put together a letter or simply email me your support. Remember there is strength in numbers. There are those individuals out there who are fighting to take away my livelihood and put my family on the street.... Nobody messes with my family (and you all can consider yourselves my family).

"Cheers,

"PE"

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you for taking the initiative, because that's tough to do when you find yourself in a workplace where life has become difficult. We're kind of used to being at the centre of political storms, but when your job is to fly medevac airplanes, you don't really expect to be at the centre of a political storm. So thank you for having the courage to take that initiative.

You've mentioned your intent here and when you wrote the actual letter, to note that you've seen positive changes since Mr. McKerlie replaced Dr. Mazza and the support you've gotten from Minister Matthews. Could you tell us a little bit about the things that you've seen change since December, as the world was unravelling? What's going back together?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Even right now, one of the things, and this is just kind of from the outside looking in—to address the paramedic issue, for example, right now we have two classes of paramedics that are being upgraded in certification, one in Toronto and one in Thunder Bay. I'm not sure of the exact numbers, but I think there are 10 to 12 in Thunder Bay, and I'm not sure in Toronto. That will go a long way to putting more advanced care paramedics into the mix. We've hired a few, at least, paramedics in Thunder Bay. Some of them have been to replace the paramedics that are now on course, so in that respect, we haven't really seen a whole lot of change in terms of the actual staffing levels in Thunder Bay. But again, from the outside looking in, we've done some hiring and we're doing some upgrading, so that's positive change.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: And you anticipate that when the training is complete, then there will be more people on the ground in Thunder Bay.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: We've hired enough, I believe, to sort of backfill the ones that are on course. We constantly see emails go out in terms of job postings. I don't know how many of those are responded to, but they certainly are looking for paramedics.

Once the courses are complete, then we've got a dozen or more paramedics who are instantly put back into the system as well, which will again go a long way to staffing.

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I can't speak to the intent of staffing levels and what the endgame is in terms of staffing. We're having some

difficulties right now keeping helicopter pilots. Again, they're actively seeking out helicopter pilots. I believe there will be two, if not four, rotor pilots coming out of sim this week or next week, who will be put into Moosonee, I believe. Don't necessarily quote me on that, but I know that Moosonee is a big issue right now, and having to down-staff one base to up-staff another. But again, there are pilots being hired. Is it enough? I can't speak to the actual numbers right now, but again, for me, it's a step in the right direction.

Communication has been another big thing. There was a time when, if I were to actually send Dr. Mazza an email and jump the chain of command, I would likely lose my job, or at least that would be a fear. I can actually send Mr. McKerlie an email, and he's quite likely to respond. We get weekly updates in terms of what's going on in the OCC, what's going on the rotor world, what's going on with the different departments. So every week we get at least a taste of what's being done to help. Again, is it enough? I can't speak to that, but there are certainly steps that are being taken in the right direction to fix some of these problems. At this stage in the game, for me, that's good news.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: On the flip side, one of the things Mr. Klees has said, and I think this was in the House, was, "I would not want to be a pilot, I would not want to be a paramedic and I would not want to be a patient. Knowing the track record of these helicopters, I would take my chances getting from point A to point B with some other means."

How would you and your pilot colleagues react when you hear those sorts of comments?

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): You have about three minutes left.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: All I can say to that, really, is that, in the face of all this, we take our jobs very seriously. I had a quick look on the website, because I was curious—I alluded to it in the letter—to see how many miles we flew yesterday, between the helicopters and the fixed-wing. It was 27,000 statute miles yesterday. We transported 60 patients. That's something to be proud of. I don't know what all those patients were; we're not supposed to know. But I know that every day I go to work, whether the phone rings or not, if somebody out there needs me, I'm going to go if it's safe to do so. That goes across the board for paramedics, rotor pilots, fixed-wing pilots. Regardless of everything else, we're very happy to do what we do. That's why we're there, and it is what we do. We're medevac pilots.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you for doing your job. We appreciate that the pilots, regardless of what sort of aircraft they're flying, and the paramedics who are on the ground, are out there doing their job; and, I guess, apologies that the administrative levels of Ornge have interfered with the good work you're out there doing every day and dragged you into a hornet's nest that you have no need to be in the middle of. Thank you very much.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I appreciate that.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): We'll move to the official opposition. Mr. Klees.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Binderup, I want to put into context the comments by Ms. Sandals. Those comments were made in response to this document here, which was a confidential document that listed numerous incidents where paramedics had to decline critically ill patients because they were incapable of doing basic CPR because of the interior of the AW139. Are you familiar with that?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'm familiar with the document, yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: Does that concern you as someone who is in your profession, that you would have to turn down a patient because the interior of a helicopter would not allow a paramedic to do CPR?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Absolutely. That's an issue.

Mr. Frank Klees: I would think so.

I want to clarify something else as well. The advantage that I have is that every word that is said in the Legislature and in this hearing is recorded, as is yours. I'm sure that your colleagues will observe this hearing right across the province, and they'll be very interested in what you have to say here, as they were when Mr. Wade was here.

I have some of that record here, and I can tell you, when Mr. Wade came forward, there wasn't a negative thing that Mr. Wade said about fixed-wing pilots or about paramedics. He had a great deal of negative comment to make about the administration at Ornge, the lack of proper resourcing, the fact that incidents such as the one reported just yesterday by the CBC in Thunder Bay—Thunder Bay without an Ornge helicopter yet one more time, and the reason is understaffing.

To Mr. Wade's credit, he was very courageous. I can't tell you the number of times that I spoke with him when he was very hesitant to give us factual information that we could use to make the point not only here in this committee but in the Legislature to get the attention, yes, of the government but also of the administration at Ornge to say, "What is happening is unacceptable."

Sir, you are a very experienced pilot. I have to believe that you're a pretty strong guy. I think you can stand up for yourself pretty well. I can't understand, I have to admit to you, that you felt compelled to report a fellow colleague for what you have described here as being angry, as being unco-operative, as being offensive. You come across him once or twice a month. I would think you could hold your own, perhaps even understand that the reason that Mr. Wade is not a happy man is because of the circumstances that he has to face on a very regular basis about not having enough paramedics to respond to a call, because he shares your calling as well.

Here's what Mr. Wade said when he was here. First of all, he told us about the problems of understaffing of paramedics. He was asked the question, "Are things getting better under the new administration?" On July 31, he said this: "It's not gotten better from the rotary perspective. From the fixed-wing side, kudos to my colleagues. They're doing great work."

Mr. Wade continues to advocate because of what he feels is a patient care issue. I'm concerned about how we got here with you, and I'd like to just follow through on some questions with you. The email that my colleague distributed, that you read into the record, went to your colleagues.

You are the flight training captain?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I am one of them, yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: And approved check pilot.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: I understand that you're really the person who reports to management as to which one of the pilots—or if you do your check with the pilot, management would take your recommendation as to whether those pilots deserve to stay on or whether they should perhaps be promoted. Is that true?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Not just me, and not just for those qualifications.

Mr. Frank Klees: No, but that is one of your responsibilities, right?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: So those people who are on your email list hold you in pretty high regard, because, as you say—and your entire email is all about your job, let's face it. They're going to be concerned about theirs too. I would think it would be reasonable to assume that any of those colleagues who got that email from you in which you say that one of their colleagues is conspiring with an MPP to bring down Ornge—is it fair to say that those people on that distribution list would be somewhat intimidated by that?

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Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, sir.

Mr. Frank Klees: Really? You don't think that would concern them at all?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No.

Mr. Frank Klees: How can you say that?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Because I know those guys and girls. I work very closely with them. I have a very good relationship with them. Yes, I'm one of the training captains; I do check rides. We also have outside people do check rides, but I am—

Mr. Frank Klees: Just one of the guys.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: They're my friends. They're my colleagues. No, I would say, absolutely not.

Mr. Frank Klees: Can you share with us what would have emboldened you to ascribe to Mr. Wade the objective of bringing down Ornge?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'm not sure I understand the question.

Mr. Frank Klees: You make it very clear in your email that it's Mr. Wade's objective to bring down Ornge, and you ascribe that same objective to me.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That was a statement that he made.

Mr. Frank Klees: Is there anything in the course of the last number of months that would cause you to think that I, as a member of this committee, as a member of the Legislature who spent hours and hours trying to deter-

mine what went wrong and what it is that we need to do to get things right—that it would be my objective to bring down Ornge?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Not specifically, no.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you. I want to assure you that that is the last thing that any of us here want to do. The reason that we spent hours and hours and hours on this file is because what we want to do is ensure that people like yourself—whether it's on the fixed-wing or rotor-wing, whether it's paramedics or anyone else on the front line—are properly resourced so that we determine what went wrong and so that we can ensure that it'll never happen again, and so that we can restore confidence in our air ambulance service. It'll be up to us to determine what the best go-forward strategy is going to be. That's our objective here. I would suggest that everything that I've heard—there hasn't been a witness that has come forward that hasn't expressed that same objective.

I will say this: The timing seemed somewhat questionable of your email that went out to all of your colleagues. Two days later we get a letter here, and it just so happens to be 24 hours before Bruce Wade is testifying. Is that just coincidence, or was there an intention on your part to send a signal, as you said in your email, that you're going to take it upon yourself; you're going to do something about it; you're going to separate yourself from Wade and you're going to send a strong message? Was that the intent?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes, it was. My intent with the letter was to present a group of pilots that felt differently. Again, my sentiment towards Mr. Wade was based on what he said at work and how he said it. I wasn't drawing conclusions. Many of the pilots have heard him make those statements. Yes, it made us quite concerned—

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Wade, today, is—

Mr. David Zimmer: Wait a second. Let him finish. He's midway through his answer.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Zimmer, it's okay. I will chair.

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Frank Klees: I thought you were finished. Thank you, Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Wade, today, is suspended.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: In large part because of your actions of filing a grievance against him. An investigation is under way.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: We raised the issue in the Legislature today that his suspension came within hours of him testifying here. You yourself admitted that your letter, your email, his testifying—all were interlinked.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: The timing was absolutely awful.

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, the timing, in one sense, was awful for sure. In the other, it certainly achieved a certain objective, didn't it?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I had absolutely no objective in terms of having Mr. Wade suspended. That was not my wish.

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, if you didn't want him to be suspended, what was your objective in signing a grievance?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: The grievance was—ultimately, I wanted somebody to take him aside and say—

Mr. David Zimmer: Chair, perhaps we should have a copy of the grievance so that we all know what—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): We've passed a resolution asking for that, Mr. Zimmer. Continue, Mr. Klees.

Mr. Frank Klees: Please continue.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Okay. Sorry. I thought that—

Mr. Frank Klees: So you filed a grievance. What was your objective?

Mr. David Zimmer: What was the grievance?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Was for somebody—sorry, I lost my train of thought—was for somebody—

Mr. Frank Klees: Is it not true that the purpose of your filing the grievance was to silence Mr. Wade, to shut him down because he was complaining about what was going on—

Mr. David Zimmer: Chair, that's an inappropriate line of questioning—

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Zimmer, if you can please just—

Mr. Frank Klees: It's a reasonable conclusion.

Mr. David Zimmer: —we don't have the grievance in front of us.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Will you allow the questioning, please? Continue.

Mr. David Zimmer: Well, maybe he can tell us what the substance of the grievance was and then that'll help us to understand the—

M^{me} France Gélinas: When you get to ask questions, ask him.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Mr. Zimmer. Please.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Zimmer, can you please—

Mr. Frank Klees: You don't have to listen to Mr. Zimmer. He'll have his time. I'm asking the questions.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Okay. I wanted somebody to take Mr. Wade aside and say, "Bruce, you're making people angry. Please stop it." Ultimately—

Mr. Frank Klees: So it was for the purpose of silencing him?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I wanted him—I have conversations all the time with paramedics, with maintenance engineers from Canadian who have radically different opinions from me. We're able to sit down or stand in the hangar and have conversations about it. At the end of the day, we agree to disagree. I was not in any way able to have a conversation with Mr. Wade. It was very hostile. Every encounter with him was very hostile.

Mr. Frank Klees: We have some people like that in the Legislature here, too.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I can imagine.

Mr. Frank Klees: But we don't go about filing grievances. However, when you wrote your letter, were you advised by Mr. Gravelle's office that the Minister of Health would be appearing at the committee the same time that Mr. Wade was going to be here?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No.

Mr. Frank Klees: Were you advised that the letter would be read at the committee?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I honestly had no idea where it would go. I just sent it.

Mr. Frank Klees: Did anyone at any time ever tell you that the intimidation of a witness is an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I wasn't, in my mind, intimidating anybody.

Mr. Frank Klees: You were never told that—

Mr. David Zimmer: Chair, that's entirely inappropriate. The information is that this person is trying to—

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Zimmer—

Mr. David Zimmer: —and you should rein Mr. Klees in. That's entirely inappropriate. That's scandalous.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Mr. Zimmer. I think it takes—

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Klees, if you can not lead the witness, that would be appreciated.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'll try not to lead the witness. I'm just simply trying to tell you what seems to be apparent to a lot of people who were observing what took place.

As you say, it may be an unfortunate timing, but the reality is, we have a circumstance where Mr. Wade was complaining about what was happening at Ornge. He was concerned about understaffing. He was making recommendations. He was coming here. Two days before he was scheduled to be here, you send out your email to 40 of your colleagues saying that you're going to separate yourself from Wade. You've had enough with him. Now we get the letter read at the committee hours before Mr. Wade is here; in fact, he's sitting in the audience listening to it being read. Would that be intimidating? It would be intimidating to me, and I'm just simply saying—and Mr. Zimmer knows well—that intimidation of a witness is—

Mr. David Zimmer: Chair, that's inappropriate.

Mr. Frank Klees: —is inappropriate and it is illegal.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Zimmer—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Zimmer, if you can be quiet for a moment, please. I would just clarify that the committee has asked for information to determine if intimidation has occurred, but there's been no conclusion by the committee that intimidation has occurred—

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, that's right, and I think I'm entitled to my opinion about that, and we'll have to see what happens. My point simply is that that is how this is

being perceived. Mr. Binderup, I'm just saying to you that we appreciate you coming forward—

Mr. David Zimmer: Perceptions aren't facts. Fairy tales aren't facts. Your daydreams aren't facts.

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Mr. Frank Klees: You see Mr. Zimmer, who is trying to drown out the facts of what has happened, and there's a reason for that. They were very quick to read your letter that praises the minister. When we challenged the circumstance under which that letter was presented to this committee—

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: He can't keep quiet. I understand that, because I'm used to heckling in this place, but unfortunately, you're not.

So, Mr. Binderup, here's how I'd like to leave this with you. There's a man who today is suspended. From what I can conclude, the reason that he is suspended, is not working today and is under investigation, is because you took issue with the fact that he was expressing his concerns—and, yes, obviously in a passionate way. My question to you is: Is that what your intention was?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Let me answer your question with a question. Had this gone just a little bit differently and had the union been able to do what I was hoping they would be able to do with the grievance, if that's what it was, we wouldn't be having this conversation. I would have sent the letter anyway, but the issue between Mr. Wade and myself would have been resolved either through union channels or through the company itself. The fact that it has gone to an investigation and they've gone so far as to suspend Mr. Wade with pay—I have no control over that. So it could have gone very differently.

Mr. Frank Klees: So you don't blame us for drawing the conclusion that the reason for the suspension was more because of Mr. Wade's testimony—

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Mr. Klees, remember, that's your—Mr. Klees, it's your opinion. Please don't say “us,” being the committee.

Continue.

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, I think some of us on the committee probably agree.

Can I just ask this, Mr. Binderup? Would you agree that this wouldn't be an issue, Mr. Wade would not be suspended today, you would not have filed a grievance, had the issue been different? If those bases, and specifically the Thunder Bay base, were properly staffed, if Mr. Wade did not have to agonize over the fact that calls come in and there are no paramedics to respond to the call—that that is really the issue; that the issue is the underfunding or the understaffing at that Thunder Bay base? That's really the problem, and who we should be focusing on is in fact the Minister of Health, whom you praised, to say, “Minister, we've got a problem. Staff us up. Get us up to the point where not only can the fixed-wing division of Ornge do their job, but let's ensure that the rotary-wing side of our operation is also able to do their job.”

That's the problem. The problem is not Mr. Wade; the problem is the Ministry of Health, which after all this length of time still has bases that are understaffed. Would you agree with that?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No.

Mr. Frank Klees: You don't agree that there are bases that are understaffed?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I agree with that 100%, but I don't think that's the point you're trying to make.

My problem with Mr. Wade was his behaviour. Maybe that behaviour was brought on by the issues; I can't speak to that. I don't know Bruce that well. I will grant you that he is a very passionate individual. But my issue with Mr. Wade was brought on, and this whole situation was brought on, by his actions, not the issues directly at Ornge.

Mr. Frank Klees: So you yourself agree that it didn't merit a suspension; that's what you said earlier.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That was not my goal, certainly.

Mr. Frank Klees: That wasn't your goal—

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That wasn't something I wanted.

Mr. Frank Klees: Do you think a suspension was deserved?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I can't speak to that. I wouldn't have wanted that. If somebody had asked me in the beginning, that wouldn't have been one of my choices.

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Binderup, thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Very well. Unless the government wants to use their 30 seconds—

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have my two minutes that I saved—

Mr. David Zimmer: I've got 30 seconds, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Okay. We have five minutes left, so you will split that evenly, because you've already used about 22 minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. David Zimmer: And I have 30 seconds.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The first question I want to ask you is, before coming to testify today, did you talk to anybody in Ornge management?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I did speak with a couple of folks in our communications department.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Who were they?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: James MacDonald—mostly to James—and I did speak very briefly with Jennifer Tracey as well.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Jennifer Tracey?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes. Really, it was more just to let her know that I had been invited. James and I talked briefly. I wanted to try to get an idea of the flavour of how the committee hearings were going, just to try to get the lay of the land, if you will.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You made reference to having a contact with Minister Gravelle or Minister Gravelle's office staff. Who is this contact, and how did you come to have contact with Minister Gravelle's office?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: The gentleman I talked to was Mr. Larry Joy. That was the only contact I had.

M^{me} France Gélinas: How do you know Larry?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I don't know him, actually, but I know somebody who worked for him. It was a friend of mine from Nova Scotia who gave me his name.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Do you know Mr. McKerlie?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I've met him a couple of times. I wouldn't say that I know him, but I have met him a couple of times, yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Do you know anybody within the Liberal Party that you are friends with?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What about Minister Matthews, Deb Matthews? Do you have any contact with her, or do you know anyone in her office?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, none whatsoever. I've never spoken with her.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And how many times have you met Mr. McKerlie?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Including today, twice.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: When did you meet him today?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: This morning.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): We'll move to the government for a minute of questioning. Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. David Zimmer: I just want to confirm again from your letter that the following phrase that you used in your letter is a direct quote from Mr. Wade. I'll read the sentence to you again: "He," referring to Wade, "has also made it very clear through many verbal altercations with flight crew that he wishes to aid Mr. Klees in 'bringing Ornge down'...." That's a quote you heard Mr. Wade say?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes, sir.

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): And the last 30 seconds of your question before we go?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: The other thing I just want to double-check with you: When I look at your email to your colleagues, dated July 27, and look at the language, you say, "I filed an FOOR"—past tense—"with respect to Mr. Wade ... and indicated that he is creating a hostile work environment...."

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I understand from that that your complaint, your grievance, was with respect to the workplace atmosphere.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: It was not with respect to his testimony, because he didn't give his testimony until later that week.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That's true. The FOOR came out certainly before the letter and before the testimony.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: So it was relevant to what was already happening in the workplace, not about the testimony.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes, ma'am.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Okay. We shall move to Mr. Klees for the last two minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Binderup, you mentioned that you met with Mr. McKerlie this morning.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: Was that at his request?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, sir. I went to the head office. I had some time to kill before coming here.

Mr. Frank Klees: What did you discuss with Mr. McKerlie?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I didn't discuss anything. I shook his hand and—

Mr. Frank Klees: Pardon?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I shook his hand and he said, "Good luck."

Mr. Frank Klees: Good luck?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: What did he mean by that?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'm not sure.

Mr. Frank Klees: And that was it?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: That was it.

Mr. Frank Klees: Did you meet with anyone else there?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: At Ornge head office?

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: Yes. Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay.

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: I'd never been in the facility yet, so I got a little bit of a grand tour.

Mr. Frank Klees: Did you show anyone there your script that you used here, in terms of your preparation?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No, not at all.

Mr. Frank Klees: No?

Mr. Poul-Erik Binderup: No.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller): Thank you very much for coming before the committee today. It's appreciated.

We are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1500.

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