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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 23 October 2013**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 23 octobre 2013**

**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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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Wednesday 23 October 2013

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*The committee met at 1402 in room 151, following a closed session.*

### SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL: ORNGE AIR AMBULANCE AND RELATED SERVICES WABUSK AIR INC.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** I'd like to call the committee to order. I'd like to welcome Paul Cox, president of Wabusk Air Inc., who will be before the committee this afternoon. Our Clerk has an oath or affirmation for you, Mr. Cox.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short):** The Bible is in front of you there, Mr. Cox, if you'll just put your right or left hand on it, whichever is better for you.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes. Left hand's there.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short):** Mr. Cox, 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. Paul Cox:** I do.

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

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Very well. You have some time for an opening statement if you want to make one. Otherwise, we'll go to questions.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, I don't have a whole bunch. On the whole, the experience with Ornge has been getting better over maybe the last year, since we've actually signed a contract. We have been on renewals up until approximately six months ago. We have been renewing contracts, and things haven't changed a whole bunch up to then. But like I said, everything has gotten better.

There are a few things that can't be undone from back when we first started to bid to work for Ornge. There is the issue of all the operators having to hand over proprietary information. Stuff like that can't be undone. So we had to hand over some proprietary information, which is ongoing, but nothing to do with the function of Ornge and how we operate now. That's behind us; it is what it is.

A lot of stuff has been addressed. Our big thing is we wanted to go ACP when we first went in as well, when we entered into negotiations with Ornge, and it wasn't an

option because Ornge kind of gobbled up all the ACPs, for lack of a better word. They seemed to take all the ACP positions, and they hired a lot of the people so there was nobody left. So we didn't have a chance to participate in the advanced care program.

Having said that, we had issues a while ago where Ornge was stealing a lot of carrier staff, which I don't see as being a problem anymore. We don't have such changeover.

Again, I see things going in the right way, to be honest. There are glitches. It's a big outfit; there's a lot of stuff. But really, like I said, things are changing for the better there.

In the beginning as well, we carried some pretty heavy balances for Ornge, well past 90 days, well into six figures. It's not an issue anymore. Everything I think is pretty much up to 90 days. We have no real complaints there. Other than that, that's really all I have to bring.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Very well. Thank you. We'll start with 15 minutes per caucus. I understand we're going to start with the NDP. Ms. Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You are. It's a pleasure to have you here, Mr. Cox. Thank you for coming down. How did you come down?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** You don't want to know. I started out yesterday morning to get on a flight, and it was weathered out. Then the second flight was full because the first flight was weathered out. I ended up on the train last night, arrived into Cochrane at 10 o'clock last night; drove all night, got in to North Bay at about 3 o'clock; slept for a few hours and drove the rest of the way down this morning. If I look baggy-eyed or I get cross halfway through, it's because I haven't slept a whole bunch.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I appreciate all the effort you've made to come down here, and we thank you for being here today.

I enjoyed your opening statement. You were there before; you've seen the changes and you are still there. In your view, if you were in control of it all, would you have some recommendations to make things better?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I really believe it belongs back in the public sector the way it was before. Maybe a few key bases that somebody doesn't want to be or whatever—if there was a reason why somebody wouldn't man them or take them or want them and the province felt the necessity for that to be a base that then they step up and do what needs to be done.

There's been a lot of money spent on a lot of airplanes and a lot of our backs ridden and work taken from us. We could have grown our businesses substantially—myself and most of the other carriers probably—if, from day one, we were awarded the stuff we bid on and then the advanced care and then furthermore. You know what I mean?

But all in all, as you've said, it is getting better.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** What percentage of your business right now is patient transportation?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I'd say about close to a fifth, from a quarter to a fifth.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And the other four fifths, you do—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** We're based in Moosonee, obviously, as you know, so we're a hub community or a railhead community. Everything north of us is by air, so we service basically charter to freight to whatever. We're just an air taxi. If it goes in an airplane, we'll do what we have to do.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** To get it there and get it back?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's it, yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Right now, you are able to recruit and retain a stable workforce. You talked about the problem you had when Ornge first came—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, we have a pretty good workforce. A lot of our employees are full-time employees of Ornge, and they do rotations and they'll come to us on rotations. We have a lot of full-time, part-time people that do rotations.

Advanced people are still impossible to get, and I believe even Ornge is waiting for advanced people, to be honest with you. It's something to do with the training and the bridge course, but I believe there's something in the works with that where they're trying to get one of the colleges to help with that. Hopefully, in the future, that problem goes away as well. So there is a shortage of advanced care paramedics, which I don't believe is Ornge's fault. It is what it is, again. But there are steps being taken to resolve the issue. But no, we don't have the transfer patients. Like, at one point, we had lost 12 medics in one year to Ornge.

I would say we've had the same crew now for the last year and a half or so, and then some guys longer than that. So no, it's really slowed down substantially.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You feel your workforce is stable now?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I believe so. For primary care, yes; advanced care, no—we need medics. Ontario needs medics.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You are in support of having a bigger role played by the colleges, not just having Ornge train, but also having—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I would prefer that anything that Ornge doesn't have to do to be in conflict should be in somebody's hands, to be honest. That just makes sense to me.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Your primary care medics, they were college-trained and then—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** A lot of them, college-trained, came in. They have to be landed. A lot of the guys we have now actually came to us first. We certified them for air; they went to Ornge because of the rotation benefits. A lot of guys don't want to live in Moosonee, so we get rotation guys or girls. But most of them are full-time employees of Ornge, part-time of ours, even though they're on a rotation base.

But we are filling our roster. We don't have an issue with that right now.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. They happen to be full-time employees of Ornge, but they come and do shifts for you on—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's correct. They come on. They work with Ornge, and the average is two weeks on, two weeks off. They come to us on their two weeks off.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Do you deal with Argus at all for auditing?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely. We actually hold a platinum rating with Argus. They're coming up next week or the week after again for probably our third audit with that particular company.

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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How much does it cost to have a platinum—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** You can't buy it. All platinum status means is that you meet or exceed standards as per the regulations. What they do is they audit you, much like anybody would audit. They take the standards, which is the law, the rules and regulations of air, and they audit your manuals and your training files—everything—and they audit it to that. Either you're in compliance, not compliant or you exceed the compliance standard, kind of like an MOH audit but with airplanes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Do they actually come to Moosonee?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How much time do they spend?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Two days.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And do they actually look at your aircraft, talk to your staff? What do they do?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely, yes. There are interviews of key personnel. It's a full audit. They go through everything. It's the same as Transport Canada walking into your hangar and going through it.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And just because I am a little bit ignorant, what's the relationship between this audit and Transport Canada?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely nothing.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There's no relationship between the two?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Transport Canada audits us as they feel. Argus is put in place by Ornge, and Ornge has decided they want somebody to keep tabs on the operator, so to speak, their compliance, without relying on Transport Canada to do it. So my understanding is that they have initiated Argus to do it.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, I see. So Transport Canada could still drop into Moosonee any time they want and do—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely. Yes, there's CTA, which is the Canadian Transportation Agency, and then there's Transport Canada. The CTA governs fares and rights and wrongs. Transport Canada is legislation, the rules and regulations of CARs, which is what we call the Canadian Aviation Regulations, and they govern that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So they could still come and audit you at any time?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They come and they spot audit. They show up whenever they get the itch that they don't want to be in Toronto or Hamilton anymore. They jump in the Citation, their airplane, and they fly up for a visit. Yes. And they do it to every operator.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So you say that Argus is coming to Moosonee next week?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, I believe—within the next two weeks, before November. So that's next week. Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How often do they come?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Argus comes once a year, I believe. But they come based on what Ornge—my understanding is that Argus is employed by Ornge, because they're not even a Canadian company. They're actually an American company, I believe.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** They come and they do their audit. Do you get to see what their audit is all about?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** What happens is, when you do an audit, you go through it. They'll tell you whether you comply, don't comply or whatever, and then give any suggestions they have. Yes, you get a debriefing at the end. If you have deficiencies, or you have whatever, you're definitely made aware of it. You have to correct and supply the corrections to them as well.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And are they useful? Have they brought forward suggestions that were useful?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They're good. Good paperwork. Good fences make good neighbours. Yes, it's a very good tool for an operator in my opinion, yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How much do they charge you to come?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They don't charge me anything. Like I said, Ornge pays. I have no idea.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. So they just drop in and do their work. They show you—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They call us a month ahead, or two months ahead, and say they're coming. "Here are some dates. Let's schedule."

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So they're coming in November. When was the last time before that that they came?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It would be roughly a year, I would say, without looking at a calendar.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So about every year?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How about Transport Canada? When was the last time they dropped—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They can be anywhere from one to three years. Last time they were up was probably a month

or two ago when they stopped by for a visit. A full audit from Transport Canada was probably two years ago.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to take you back in time. You've been there for a while. I take it you know what has happened to Ornge. Dr. Mazza is no longer there. The board is gone etc. We won't miss him.

Before all this happened, did you know that something was wrong at Ornge?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Something wrong, maybe not. But would I do things that way? You know what I mean? I don't think the government would ever run a business quite like I would run a business, or the next guy wouldn't run the business the same as me. So I don't know if—that's kind of a loaded question. Anybody can find fault. It's easy to look back and say, "Yes, you should do it like that." It's whether in actuality it's correct or not.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. So let's say right now you would be made aware that something is wrong at Ornge. Would you know what to do?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Depending on what you mean by "something is wrong."

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If you think that there's misappropriation of funds.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** There was misappropriation of funds the day they bought the airplanes.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Paul Cox:** What do you want me to say? I'm sorry.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That's fine. Are you aware that there is a whistle-blower policy at Ornge?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely. We sign on our contract that there is a whistle-blower policy, yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Do you know how it works?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I never really dug into it. I went through it on the contract when we filled it out and looked through. I've got an understanding of it, I guess. Transport Canada has the same thing; a lot of agencies have a typical thing like that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. I'll let it go around.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Go ahead, Ms. Jaczek.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I just wanted to explore a little bit your opening statement that "things are getting better." Could you characterize what you mean more specifically? Is it an issue of communication?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** At first, it took a very long time—when we first started out, the frequency of the work was there, but Ornge kind of grabbed everything and everybody else got the crumbs. They seem to be a little better at divvying up the pot. The bills are definitely getting paid on time, or much—it's not unmanageable for us anymore. Like I said, they're not taking our staff anymore, and that came with Ted Rabicki, a few of the people we met with. We had a committee started up at one point, but it fell apart. Everybody who was on it shouldn't have been on it anyway.

Anyway, yes, there has been progress that way. It's very hard to go to work when somebody is stealing your

employees. But it all seems to have settled now. I'm much more content now than I was, I can tell you.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** What about dispatch issues? Are you ever aware of an issue where they're ready to go and—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Dispatch—that's a whole new ball game. That's actually on my list, but I didn't even want to touch on it, because 793 is not really an issue right now because I think they're just bringing it back online. But, yes, there are lots of days that we'll get a call from a call centre and they'll schedule a flight for, say, 7 o'clock, but we know there's no way we'll be wheels-up at 7 o'clock because that's shift change. We know it can't happen before 8 o'clock because the 7 o'clock guys aren't going to do it and the other guys aren't coming in early. You can't tell dispatch—you really have to watch what you do, but there are days like that. I think they've gotten a little better at that, too. They're starting to realize that you take delays and you take delays—

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** So you've been able to talk to someone about this issue—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Usually. Ted Rabicki used to be kind of a go-to guy, and there's a new fellow in there I haven't met yet. We used to be able to accomplish stuff. It was pretty open-ended. We talked, and there was never anything major. It was a big deal at first, because what would happen is they would call us out and they'd start our duty days, and we know we're not going to leave until 10 o'clock—well, they knocked three hours of our day where we can actually go fly and generate revenue. What happens is they park us, so you lose three hours of your potential day.

Now they're paying from the minute—when you're scheduled to go up, if there's a reasonable delay, we get paid a holding time, which is not a lot, but at least it pays to have our crews and everybody on standby, and it's something. Before, you never got a delay until after you were wheels-up on your first leg.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** This was something you brought to their attention?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It's very pronounced in Moosonee because we have the helicopter hops. Most places don't have that, but being the hospital on Moose Factory Island and everything—had to do a hop. Nothing could ever happen until the helicopter moved.

Staffing issues on the helicopter were a big issue for a while as well, because they'd have a flight the next day from Moosonee to Kingston booked for us, but for some reason the helicopter couldn't go, and they didn't have the boat in the water or the ice road wasn't in, and that call gets scrapped for us for the day. So we don't get called out of the barn, we don't go to work, we don't make any money that day.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** But since you've been able to communicate—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It seems to be getting better.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Okay. I'll just turn it over to my colleague. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Mr. Mauro?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you, Chair. We're going to try to save a bit of time, so if I'm going beyond five minutes left, if you'll just give me a little nod or a wink, I'd appreciate it.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Sure.

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**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Mr. Cox, thanks again for being here.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** You're welcome.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** You had quite an incredible journey to get to Queen's Park today, and we appreciate it.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I've never been, so I guess we'll say it was worth it.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Yes. Well, take a little time and walk around. It's an impressive place.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, it's an absolutely incredible building. It is.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Tell me a bit about the name "Wabusk Air." What's the—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** "Wabusk" is "polar bear" in Cree.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** "Polar bear" in Cree. I thought there might be a—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes. In 1995, we started out. I started the business—one airplane—all by myself, and here we are today.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Your opening statement captured, I think, where the committee has been for quite some time: There were problems, and now it has gotten better, which—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It's certainly not perfect, but definitely better.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Sure, and it never will be. I would tell you, as sure as you're sitting here today, in five years there will still be things that people would consider can be done to make it better. But we're happy to hear that it has improved significantly under the new administration.

By your definition, you described your operation—I think Ms. Gélinas asked you a question, and I was asking other deputants the same question in weeks past, about the percentage of your business that is allocated to Ornge ambulance. I think you said a quarter to a fifth?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** A quarter to a fifth; that's correct.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** So for the rest of it, you are charter, you're a passenger carrier, you're a freight carrier, you're doing everything else.

I'm interested in when Argus—that's doing the audits, the compliance piece on behalf of Ornge, at no cost to you—they visit your operation, and they audit the piece that is Ornge.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Actually, I think I see where you're going with it.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Yes.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** The rules and regulations are the rules and regulations, whether you've got a cow in the back or whether you've got a patient in the back or whether you've got pop and chips or whatever. Our rules are our rules. It doesn't matter. They're auditing us to Canadian aviation regulations standards.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** No, I understand that. I am going slightly differently. You're kind of on to it. Your aircraft aren't all the same.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No. That's correct.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** The aircraft that is dedicated to the Ornge work is obviously configured differently than the non-Ornge aircraft. So, when Argus shows up on behalf of Ornge to see that you're compliant, they're focusing on the aircraft that are dedicated only to Ornge—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Not so much even the aircraft; the rules and regulations and the standards.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay, so your entire—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They'll look at the airplane; they'll have a general look. They will check our maintenance schedules on the equipment that's dedicated for the contract. Like, for the LifePort, there's a maintenance schedule to it.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** So it's less about the aircraft, but it is about the aircraft.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It's a little bit about the aircraft. It's mostly about compliance with the rules and regulations.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Of Ornge.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Of Transport Canada. Ornge doesn't give us a set of—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay, well, that makes my point. That's kind of where I'm trying to get, I guess, is that because you're—and then Transport Canada still comes in.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's correct.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** And so—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** If you're asking if Argus is a redundant and unneeded—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** He's like an Italian; he's never going to let me finish. But I love it. I love it.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Okay, I see where you're going. I'll—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** No, you got it perfectly. That's exactly what I'm doing.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Okay, so it's a nice tool for us. Is it really needed? No.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** But I wasn't going to suggest that, though. We're on the same page, but just slightly different again. I wasn't going to suggest that the work of Argus is redundant. But what I was going to conclude is that, with what's being done from an oversight perspective now, as an Ornge contractor and as a regular carrier subjected to Transport Canada regulations, you in fact have more oversight than somebody who's not doing Ornge work.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** We'll save our 10.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Okay, very well. We'll move to the opposition. Mr. Klees?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Thank you.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I've been warned.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I've been warned.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** You've been warned? Oh, have you? By Mr. Derek Wharrie, by any chance?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** By who, sorry?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Mr. Wharrie.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No, Derek's good. He's all right.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's widespread, Frank.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I think Mike and I are going to take you for a beer after. He's a real northerner, Mike. I think we're going to take him out for a beer.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'll give you five minutes to tell me what you've been warned about.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I'm just joking.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** All right. Well, let's get to work. You indicated that the audits by Argus aren't paid for.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** By me, no.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** You don't have to pay for them.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's correct.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have an email here that was sent by Mr. Ryan Kahl. Do you know him?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** He is the northeast-US/Ontario/Quebec/Newfoundland/Europe/Asia/South America sales manager for Argus. Here's an email that was sent to one of the other SA providers. It's dated July 13, 2012. It says, "I'd like to touch base with you regarding an opportunity to add Argus platinum rating audit to the Ornge audit we will be conducting at your operation. Argus rating brochure is attached"—I have a copy of it here. I'm sure you have one, too.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No, I don't, actually. I've been verbally told by when to do it, that we have the platinum status. I have not got the certificate.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Interesting. Here's what it says. Maybe you're getting a special deal. I don't know.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I'm not paying anything. You can go where you have with it. I'm not paying; I wouldn't pay for it. What that whole platinum thing is, when you bid on work in the US, if you don't have a rating from Argus, basically, especially if you work for the government, you will not work for them. In Canada, it really doesn't mean anything because they're not even really a Canadian company.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** So here's what the email says about this platinum rating: "Argus auditors would be on-site performing the Ornge audit. I can offer"—and I won't mention the name of the airline; actually, I will table this with the committee so you'll know. This happens to be Thunder Airlines—"the opportunity to add on Argus platinum rating at a significantly reduced price." Here comes the deal—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I haven't seen it. They haven't offered it to me. They haven't made it to me yet. It might come.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Here comes the deal to Thunder Airlines, to the point that was made earlier, because I think it's important that this committee understands the integrity of this platinum rating: "The prestigious Argus platinum rating is an independent third-party quality and safety review of your operation for global buyers of air charter. To complete the Argus platinum rating, we will need to add on one additional audit day on to the Ornge audit. There are some costs to Thunder Airlines for the

additional time on-site. The audit cost is \$3,250 US, with zero additional auditor travel expenses (typically, the two-day Argus platinum rating audit is \$8,950 plus audit-or travel expenses)—so you're getting a real deal here.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely. I'm not paying it, but sure.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** "In addition to the \$3,250 audit fee, there would be a \$150-per-month check data fee for maintaining and distributing your data associated with the Argus rating.

"I'm sure you probably have some questions regarding the Argus audit standard and the platinum rating requirements. I'm available for your return.

"Regards,  
"Ryan"

The reason I wanted to just put this on the record is because it seems to me that we have here a rating agency, a for-profit company, that makes its business auditing operations such as yours. The fact that I, as an operator, can actually buy the prestigious platinum rating—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I wasn't aware of that until you just said that.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** What does that tell you? Would you buy it?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No, because for me—look at where I operate out of, for starters, which is Moosonee. My clientele there is my clientele. My clientele has been using me for 15 to 20 years. I didn't ever have that plaque hanging when I started with one airplane. I own eight or nine airplanes now. I didn't have that plaque hanging on the wall then, and I am where I am. I'm not spending three grand or five grand. I'm not spending 10 bucks on it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Sure. But in your opening statement, you made reference to the fact that you're going to be getting—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It's funny you say that. My chief pilot called because he was not going to be able to make the Argus audit, and he was able to shuffle his schedule so he could get out there. He actually flies part-time for the OPP as well. They told him that from our last audit last year—all he mentioned is we had the platinum status. That's what I'm going on. That's why I said I only have it verbally. I do not have it on paper. Maybe that's the lead-in to their sales pitch when they show up here this time. As of now, I can 100% say to you I do not have or have not been offered to buy platinum status.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** All right. And you've told us that you're not going to buy it.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I'm not going to buy it anyway, no.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** All right. Reference was made by Mr. Mauro to the Transport Canada inspections and audits that they do. MNR does audits as well, correct?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely. They usually inspect a new aircraft when it comes online if you want to do government work.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** So, typically, Transport Canada and MNR do what would be referred to as operations audits.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes. They can. I've never personally had MNR—they've inspected our aircraft. We've never had MNR actually do an audit on us, but they have inspected aircraft to go to work, say, for fires in the summertime. They've inspected aircraft, and they usually don't get an audit. They don't do an audit on your books. They do have the authority to if they'd like.

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**Mr. Frank Klees:** When was the last time that you had a Transport Canada audit?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Two years ago.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** What were the findings of that audit?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I know we had quite a few findings.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Can you give me an example of some of those findings?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** A lot of it was quality assurance, new stuff that was coming out, the quality assurance SMS. Transport Canada was very vague on whether they were actually ever going to implement SMS and stuff like that, so it was hard to get to know whether you were going to need to do it or not. It's still kind of up in the air. We have SMS, but we don't have SMS as per the other air operators like Air Canada and big companies. We do it in the same style, but it's not the same.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** For the benefit of those who may not be familiar with SMS, that essentially is—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Safety management system.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Right. That actually is delegated to you as a carrier, to conduct your own audit. You fill out a checklist. You send it to Transport Canada.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No, you keep it on file. They come and they review it when they do their audit.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** So you don't even have to send it up?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Are you required or is there a requirement that you send that to Ornge?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** So Ornge doesn't even ask you for a copy of your SMS audit?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Do you think it would be wise if they did that?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They should, yes.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Okay. Does Ornge audit you for compliance to the contractual obligations in your agreement with them?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I don't know. Not 100%—no, I don't know.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Have they ever?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** That's the testimony of other SA carriers as well, which, quite frankly, is disturbing to me, because you have extensive contractual obligations under your contract, and one would think that Ornge would be interested in ensuring that you're actually in compliance with those standards. Wouldn't you think so? Would you agree?



**Mr. Paul Cox:** Sure.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** But they don't. Can I ask, how close are you located to an Ornge base office?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Base office?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Yes.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Five hundred feet.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** One would think that it might be convenient to walk the 500 feet over to your operation and—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I don't know if the guy there is qualified to do it. He's running his own show. Listen, I don't know. You can speculate all you want on Ornge with me. I don't run Ornge.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** No, but you do work with them and for them under contract.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I work for a lot of people.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Pardon?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I work for a lot of people. I'll work for anybody who will hire me and pay me.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Let's talk about that. We understand that you respond to an RFP. Under the terms of that RFP, it's my understanding that your aircraft is required to have TCAS—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** TCAS and TAWS, yes. We turn into a pumpkin either at midnight tonight or midnight tomorrow or whatever the date may be, because our 180-day grace period is up. We're scheduled to go in to get an avionics upgrade, but it's hard to get into an avionics shop.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Sorry. You know what? I missed all of that. Can you help me to understand what you just said?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** As of tonight at midnight, it has been 180 days from when we signed the last contract with Ornge, and it's actually the first new one where there hasn't been an extension. I believe it's either tonight at midnight or tomorrow at midnight that our 180 days is up on the extension to have this equipment installed on our airplane.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Did you get it installed?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I just told you. The 180 days is up. I'm scheduled to go in, but I haven't been in yet. So no; they're going to park us in a day or so.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** They're going to fire you in a day or so?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They're going to park us. We'll go back online when we get the equipment put in the airplane, I'm sure.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** So it has been 180 days.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** They awarded you a contract. You've been flying without this equipment.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It was in the contract that we had 180 days to do it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Okay.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Why haven't I done it?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Yes.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Because I've had a guy in one of my airplanes gear up, a 12,000-hour pilot, two crew—for some reason he decided that he wasn't going to put the

gear down that day, so we've been short an airplane. We've bought some airplanes. In the whole turnover to replace an airplane, we have not had time to pull one off-line to send to the avionics shop. That's the dollars and cents of it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Why do you think Ornge is requiring this equipment?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** When they bought their Pilatuses it was standard equipment, so the equipment list came out of the Pilatus. It's not mandatory by law for a 703 operator to have this equipment. It's suggested that terrain awareness is most effective in mountainous terrain. Ontario is not mountainous terrain. Therefore, that's why it's not the law through Transport Canada yet.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** But obviously Ornge considers that it is important. After all—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Well, I think what they—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** —you're in the air ambulance business.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Sure.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It's not just your life. It's not just a—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** We have redundant systems. We have a radar altimeter; we have altitude alerters. It's not like we're just flying around—we fly air routes with minimum altitudes. Everything is done to rule. Everybody else in the country gets the job done safely every day, the way they've done for 30 years. This stuff here is nice, and we're going to put it in because the contract says we have to. But let's be realistic: 90% of the country is flying around without it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The reason that Ornge requires this is that TCAS actively interrogates other transponders to look for a possible traffic conflict—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's correct.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** —and recommends evasive action, right?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Sure.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** One would think that in an air ambulance operation, that would be very important.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** You would think it. But do you know what? When you're flying IFR, you're in controlled airspace. You've got airspace 500 feet below you blocked and 500 feet above you. You are always protected; you're in a radar environment. The controllers know where you are all the time, under IFR, and you are controlled. It's a backup to a backup.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I tell you, I'd want the backup to the backup—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Sure, whatever.

**Mr. Frank Klees:**—if I was a passenger, especially in an air ambulance.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** If it was that important, then Transport Canada would have it—it would be the law.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, it's the law with Ornge, because they've put it in there as a requirement.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** There you go. I said we're going to do it; I'm not denying the fact. I don't know what you want out of me. Don't beat a dead horse. I'm telling you—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Please. I'm not trying to be difficult—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Well.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Here's my point. My issue is not with you. My issue, quite frankly, is with Ornge and Ornge management. Because if, in fact, they are saying this equipment is critical and they make it a condition of the contract, then, quite frankly, I wouldn't be giving you 180 days to install the equipment while you're flying my patients around. I'd be saying, "Get the equipment installed. We're going to inspect it, we'll make sure it's there and that you're complying, and then I'll give you a contract."

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I can appreciate that, but I think that somewhere along the line, somebody realized that the list of necessary equipment that they said you had to have in an airplane changed, and it all came on the day they ordered their Pilatuses. And then, "Okay, what standard are we going to set for everybody?" So they bought these airplanes. Here's what they had; here's what everybody has to have.

So somebody else did the work for them. Yes, maybe it was poor management or whatever. Maybe that's why they've deemed it's not so important. Maybe somebody realized somewhere along the way, "We can give 180 days to get this done because we arbitrarily said this equipment had to be in there." For us, it's \$200,000 a copy per airplane to upgrade.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** And, of course—

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** You have two minutes left.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Okay.

A number of the other SA carriers have it installed, and the concern is that there's not a level playing field. What other SA carriers are saying is, "If I had to go out and spend this money in order to get this contract, why should I be disadvantaged against another carrier who is able to carry on without it?" That's the issue.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I agree. And hence the 180 days—I didn't put that in there. That's there; I can't do anything about it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I understand.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** And when, at midnight tonight or midnight tomorrow or whenever, our 180 days are up and they tell us we can't play again until we're good to go, I honestly respect that. That's the contract.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I hear you. Here's my question: You get grounded at midnight tonight and, all of a sudden, you're not available for an emergency call. What happens? And how responsible is it of Ornge that they haven't inspected you prior to the deadline at midnight tonight, to know that there's someone who is going to be able to fill in for the carrier who is now all of a sudden grounded?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Actually, we have been in correspondence with them since we've seen the difficulties when we bought our replacement airplanes at the end of August. We have been in correspondence, saying that we're

getting close and we're probably going to run through the deadline.

So they know, and I'm hoping they have a contingency. There's always another carrier sitting, just waiting to have some gravy. That's what it's going to be for somebody else. They're going to come in and take our work for a while—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, we hope so, sir.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I'm sure they will.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** We'll move on to the NDP. Ms. Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. I just want to—did you want to ask a question?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** First, I just wanted to let you know that my son is in the AMT course up at Canadore, so if you're looking for some help in a couple of years—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** There you go.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:**—I just thought I'd put that in for my son.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Good stuff.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mind you, my wife refers to the AMT course as the ATM course, because every time she goes up there, it costs us some money.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** For sure.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** The average audit, whether it's done through Argus or Transport Canada—are they comparable, or are they just totally different?

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**Mr. Paul Cox:** Transport is a little more hound-dog-ish. It depends whether you've got a maintenance audit or a commercial and business audit, whether one's on the side of maintenance or the side of pilot regulations. They're broken into two separate sections. The maintenance stuff is more getting focused towards the quality assurance and SMS, basically the policing of yourself. What they do is they come in and audit our audits. Whereas the commercial and business side, that side of Argus is pretty much the same. Argus is probably a little more thorough on the maintenance side for the whole system. Like I said, Transport Canada is a little more based on the quality assurance, and then there's the safety management system. They're close.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** So if you had to differentiate between Argus and Transport Canada, how much under Argus is specifically Ornge concentrated? How much of it is specifically geared to Ornge which is not—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Really, nothing specific, because even Transport, when they come in, they'll look at anything. Equipment in the airplane has to be in there under an STC, a supplemental type certificate. Transport Canada will look at the same records. Basically, that is the same. There is no deviation between Transport Canada and Argus in regard to Ornge.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** All right.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Could you repeat the price of a TAWS? How much did you say it's going to cost you?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It will be \$200,000 an airplane. We're putting TAWS and TCAS, but we're putting a whole

bunch of other stuff in. The problem is, if we put those systems in, they need systems to run them. You can either have one that's going to last 10 years or 20 years, so we're putting stuff in that's hopefully going to stay compliant for 20 years. You could probably do it bare bones for \$80,000 to \$100,000, but it's going to cost us \$200,000.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Wow, okay. I want to take you back in time to when Dr. Mazza was running Ornge. Did you know the man?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I knew him. I've got friends who know him, have maybe sold him a boat or two and knew who he was and what his lifestyle was.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In the field, what is their impression of him?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Visions of grandeur. I don't know how else to say it. He had a plan to take over the world, and if he had kept it running, he probably would have done it.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How would you describe the new CEO of Ornge?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I've talked to him a couple of times. He seems like a down-to-earth guy. I haven't met him yet. I really don't know. He seems decent; that's all. You can talk to him.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Who is your primary contact at Ornge?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Right now it would be Ainsley Boodoosingh, I think is his last name. We have a few. It depends on what area you're going to. There's safety, which is another guy, but if I have a question about the contract or a question about something, I would go—I used to go to Ted Rabicki. I believe it's Ainsley now.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, the person who replaced Ted?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Replaced Ted, yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Are you able to compare your relationship with Ornge before and after?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No. Ainsley has just got in there. Ted has only been gone two or three weeks. I haven't accomplished anything with Ainsley yet, so I won't be able to tell you until I do.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. You live and work in northern Ontario. You service a number of fly-in-only communities.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's correct.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Do you figure that the government of Ontario does a good job of providing equitable access to the residents of Ontario that you also serve? Could we do better? Are we doing a good job? This is what I'm after.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Everything could be better.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Where I sit, let's put it that way, it's rail against air, I guess. The big question is whether Ontario Northland is going to be sold. We're off the topic of airplanes, but it's an essential service. I think, honestly, if the government steps away from that, they should be accountable and have to run it like a business. They're

working at it a little bit now because they don't want it to be sold, I think, from what I see.

We need essential services like that because if somebody gets in there privately, basically you've got a monopoly. With the airlines, there's three or four airlines. With rail, you've got one rail, and if you get the wrong guy, it could be devastating to the small communities.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Basically, if the train wasn't there, you wouldn't be there either because—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I wouldn't be here either, no. I had to spend my \$50 or \$75 or whatever it was to come down on the train, just like everybody else, and I own a bunch of airplanes. So what does that tell you?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So if I flip it around the other way: I asked you, could we do better? We could always do better. Do you see abuse, or do we do too much? The people who you fly as primary care, did they need to fly? Could they have been handled a different way?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Well, I don't really know. We've got the whole issue of the patient transfer, so that definitely could be better right now because at Moosonee, we have our own special issues. Or town board right now, I don't know where their heads are at. They pulled out our public docs. I don't know if you guys have got any of that, but Gilles is down here, so you might have talked to him. He had to go up and get up some docs. But we've got 60- and 70-year-old people who have to go every day to an appointment or whatever to Moose Factory. There are no docs to go down.

We do need a little bit of intervention there to provide service to Moose Factory and to Moosonee people, because they've got to go over as well. Just for somebody to leave Moose Factory to come and catch a train, they've got to take a boat taxi and then get off on the rocks in the mud and carry suitcases and carry stuff. I don't know what can be done, to be honest, about that, but that stuff could use a little bit of attention.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** We're out of time, so we'll move to the government.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I might have got off topic on you. You wanted to talk about airplanes, but—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's okay.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Mr. Mauro.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Mr. Cox, you've been in the business for a while. When did you say you started?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I started my own business in 1996.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** And you always had some air ambulance work?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** When did you start—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Our first contract was probably six years ago. Don't hold me right to that.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** So right around Ornge? Before Ornge? Just after Ornge?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Actually, our first contract would have been at the inception of Ornge, I think.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** In 2007.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** In 2007, from Mr. Wharrie.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, okay.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** But you started in 1996, and up until that point, the only audits you had were from Transport Canada?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's correct.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay. I want to talk a little bit about this platinum audit piece and the email that was referenced by Mr. Klees. From that particular carrier, one could be left with the impression that they didn't have a lot of choice in terms of whether or not they wanted to spend the money to get this designation.

My question to you on the audit piece through Argus and this platinum designation is—you don't need it. You don't have to pay for it if you don't want it. Not having it doesn't prevent you from bidding on work for Ornge or for anybody else, from making you eligible for any contract. You simply can tell Argus, "I'm not interested in a third day and your \$3,000. Thanks for coming out. Next plane out."

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, to be honest, I was surprised when she said it to Ryan, my chief pilot. Like I said, when Wendy had mentioned to him, we were not even entitled—we knew how we did on the audit last year when they went through SA and we did meet or exceed. They go through the exit briefing, and they tell you where you stood, but they don't tell you anything over all that. We don't see the final report because it's proprietary to Ornge, because Ornge has paid them. So we've never seen our final score from them or whatever. It went to Ornge, and we've never seen it. We didn't have access to it.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Yes, of course. Argus does the audit; they give the information to Ornge.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Transport Canada does the audit; they give the information to Ornge.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Transport doesn't offer it to Ornge. Transport gives it to us, or they do whatever with it.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Gives it to you.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay. My point, though, to underscore this, is that as a carrier under the SA agreements, to bid and be able to provide work for Ornge, you don't need this designation.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No, because I believe we actually worked the first two or three years before we ever had an Argus audit.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Well, that was the point of my first question, but you seemed to imply that you only started around Ornge, so there wasn't really a pre-Ornge experience for you when it came to this sort of—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** That's true, but our very first contract, like I said—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Oh, it has happened under the new administration.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** It happened through the extension of the second or—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Gotcha. I got it. Okay. Well, that's good to know.

Regarding the avoidance system, if I understood this TAWS—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** TAWS is terrain awareness.

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**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Training awareness?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Terrain.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Terrain awareness. That's what I thought.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** For example, when you hear, "Pull up! Pull up!"

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Right. So it's about mid-air—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No, that's TCAS. That's collision avoidance.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay. It's terrain only.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** One is terrain; one is collision. There are two separate systems.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay. The system is expensive and, as you've mentioned, it's being done because, in fact, Ornge has raised the standard of care, I guess we could say, on the aircraft significantly, because the Pilatus planes have this as a standard part of their equipment, and now they're bringing all the other carriers up to their level.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Except they forgot the second engine, but yes.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay, fair point. But nevertheless, they're raising the bar, it's fair to say.

There was an implication that there's a bit of an uneven playing field for those who have the equipment and you who do not, and that you have somehow gained an advantage. I guess I could understand—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Everybody had until today to get it done.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Exactly; that's exactly where I'm going with this.

The other SA carriers—five total, four besides you: Can you give me a sense, if you know, and it's possible you won't, of their opinion or appreciation of whether they feel that the TAWS is necessary? Is there any industry—you've clearly articulated that you think it's overkill, I think it's fair to say, but I understand that from Ornge's perspective, it's a backup to a backup, as you've said. Do the other SA carriers have an opinion on it?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I don't know.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** You wouldn't know. Fair enough. But in terms of a level playing field, that was left hanging as a comment. I want to be clear that everybody had the same six months, once it was decided.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** The contracts all read the same, as far as I know. I only had mine, but—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** So here's the last one—and Mr. Klees made a point that I thought was absolutely fair right at the end. It was a point that I was going to ask if it hadn't been raised by him. When you stand down tonight, whether that's going to take two days or eight days for you to get that equipment installed, what's going

to happen to fill the gap when it comes to the provision of air ambulance out of your base?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** They'll bring somebody from Timmins, or they'll do whatever.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you. So there will be other aircraft, whether it's Ornge aircraft, a Pilatus or somebody.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** See, we're not dedicated. Don't confuse standing-offer with dedicated. We have an obligation to Ornge that promises us 600 hours a year. We fulfill that 600 hours a year; anything over that is fantastic. We're not dedicated. Do you know what I mean? We're not—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Yes, I do.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** We're standing-offer. We're standing-call, so—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** You're on standby.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** We're not getting paid when we're not flying, so it may be inconvenient for somebody coming from somewhere else.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** So the point I want to be clear on here is that, because you're standing down to have this aircraft upgraded, there is not going to be a gap in the provision of air ambulance service.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** In service? No.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Okay. We'll save some time, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Okay, very well. Mr. Klees, you have a couple of minutes if you want to ask some questions.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** With all due respect, I don't think you're in any position to say whether there's going to be a gap or not. Isn't that true?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Sure. That's fine, yes.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** You had the Argus inspection. As you say, that report goes directly to Ornge. Have you had any feedback from Ornge on that inspection?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Never?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** No. I just assumed that, if it was bad, they would have told us.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Either that, or nobody's looking at it and it gets filed.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Would you not think that it would make sense—I mean, if I was in your position, I would at least appreciate getting some feedback from Ornge on this audit.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Absolutely, but—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Good or bad, right?

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes. We—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** But—

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Yes, sir? Go ahead. I didn't mean to cut you off.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** And again, I want to make it very clear that the target here is not the front-line people who are delivering services, whether that's pilots or carriers, or whether that's paramedics. My concern is that the problem that arose with Ornge arose because of a lack of oversight and a lack of accountability at a number of levels, starting with Ornge itself—their management—going to the Ministry of Health. What I'm seeing, unfortunately, is that there continues to be this laissez-faire culture. It seems that we have not learned many lessons.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** I can honestly say that—look how long it took us to be here.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Right. Thank you. I appreciate you coming forward. I appreciate your honesty. Hurry up and get that equipment installed.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Thank you, sir.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** Thank you very much. NDP, you've used all your time, so you have a few minutes left—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** We're good? Okay. Thank you very much for making the long trip down from Moosonee to be here.

**Mr. Paul Cox:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** I hope you get some sleep tonight.

*Interruption.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Those bells call us back to school.

**The Chair (Mr. Norm Miller):** We are adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1455.*





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