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## **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

**Wednesday 2 May 2007**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Office of the Premier

## **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Mercredi 2 mai 2007**

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Cabinet du premier ministre

Chair: Tim Hudak  
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Tim Hudak  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 2 May 2007

Mercredi 2 mai 2007

*The committee met at 1559 in committee room 1.*

## OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop):** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We'll call the meeting to order. We're here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Office of the Premier. There's about three hours and 13 minutes remaining. We finished with the third party yesterday; we'll go now to the government side. I'd like to welcome once again Minister Smitherman, the Deputy Premier; Tony Dean, the secretary of the cabinet; and Shelley Gibson, the director of corporate planning for the government.

First of all, welcome, everyone. I'd like to now turn it over to the government side.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Mr. Chair, just one small note: Just as yesterday, when we do get around in rotation to the third party, we have answers to some of the questions that he posed yesterday. We'll provide them at that time.

**The Vice-Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

One thing: I heard heckling today that there might be bells this afternoon. If there are bells, we will, if it's all right with the members of the committee, proceed through the 30-minute sections until there's five minutes left on the clock, and then we'll adjourn and go do the vote. Okay?

Thanks very much.

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** Is that the normal procedure for when we're having bells?

**The Vice-Chair:** I'm told the committee tries to work through it, if possible. Yesterday, the first round, I adjourned the committee and we recessed until the bells were over. But in the past, the committee has, in fact, worked through that. But we do have to leave you time to get up to vote and all that.

**Ms. Smith:** That would be nice.

**The Vice-Chair:** So five minutes, if we do 25 minutes—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Plus to make up my mind which way.

**The Vice-Chair:** Right: what the decision's going to be.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Just wait until the Premier calls.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Just say, "Opposite Runciman," and I'm okay.

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you. I have a question for Mr. Dean. I wasn't here yesterday—I know; I'm sorry, Minister—but last week when I was here, you talked a little bit about the just-in-time world that we live in, that we're all using our BlackBerrys and that things happen quickly. I think it was around service delivery; you were talking about government reaction times and how that impacts on both the budget and how we acquire services.

You talked about how that has modernized the agenda—sorry. As part of the modernization agenda, you spoke about the policy set within the Premier's office and through the Cabinet Office on addressing or on adopting this just-in-time philosophy. Maybe you could speak a little bit to that for us.

**Mr. Tony Dean:** Sure. We touched last week on human resources, on service delivery, both external and internal. Obviously, one of the sustaining core businesses of any government is developing policy and providing policy advice to the government of the day. That's occurring, of course, in a context that is becoming more complex. It's happening locally, it's happening globally, and sometimes at the interconnection between those two worlds. There are changing expectations on policy-makers as a result of that. There is a thirst from the public and from the media for quick answers to often complex, difficult and long-standing problems. That means we have to get better and better at the business of policy development.

We've learned a number of things over the last few years, and we're constantly assessing and changing the approach that we take to developing policy. We learned in Walkerton, of course, that not only can one be surprised by big public health issues, but we also learned how difficult it is to make good policy, if you like, quickly, in the absence of good science and research and data.

Research and information, generally, is absolutely critical to any good policy development; it doesn't matter what it is. If you have good intelligence, good information, it will drive good policy options. Those options speak for themselves. So when I talked the other day about the importance of an enterprise approach to information technology and information management, there's an obvious connection between modern and leading-edge, responsive IM/IT and our ability to develop good policy.

We've learned about risk-based approaches to policy and regulation, where we're focusing government's limited resources on those areas where there is the highest risk and the best public value for the money that's expended, and we're doing that in the world of inspections and enforcement as well. We're learning that policy is not the business of any one ministry anymore, if it ever was, that developing policy cuts across the interests of several ministers and ministries and requires what in the UK they've called a "joined up" or horizontal approach to policy development. We develop policy now across a growing number of ministries.

I think we need, actually, to look beyond those boundaries and start to think about developing policy and regulation across jurisdictional boundaries as well. I'll use the example of environmental assessment, where we find both provincial and federal approaches and regulations and inspections and enforcement personnel that surely could benefit from some rationalization. We find as well that we tend to—as governments provincially, we're all facing similar issues, but we gather research and develop policy separately. So one of the things I've been encouraging my colleagues across the country to do is to share that policy research and some of the policy solutions that we develop.

We're also coming to the conclusion—and this has been the case for the past several years—that you can't make policy and regulations that will stay in place without change for 10, 15, 20 years. We're making policy and regulations that are much more responsive to geographic and sectoral concerns and issues and problems and opportunities, and we monitor them closely because we find that we have to adjust them over time in response to changing conditions.

The profession of policy development has changed a lot. It's an integrative role. Policy developers now in government have to take very large amounts of information, collapse that down very quickly and work to develop sensible policy options. That also means working with our fiscal and communications colleagues so that policy work, fiscal analysis and communications analysis are lined up and are moving through the process together.

If there's one huge change that has occurred internationally in the world of policy in the last number of years, it has been the focus, yes, on research and good policy development, but also how one implements that policy on the ground; that is, how do you make policy changes and regulatory changes bite and make a difference for people outside of government? We've had some mixed success at this. This is an area that our political colleagues obviously have become very, very interested in, because political manifestos generally tend to have become much more specific, outlining not just public policy objectives but numerical targets and results. People want to be measured against the promises that they make. We found Tony Blair to be an early proponent of this, championing a sort of results-based approach to government, and that's something that in the last three or four years we've seen in Ontario as well, with the

Premier's approach to his results teams, and we heard the Deputy Premier talk about those yesterday. I won't talk any more about that.

I will say that one of the single biggest breakthroughs I've seen in the last few years has been our ability to find ways to effect change in the broader public sector. Historically, central governments, state governments, provincial governments, are quite proficient at making policy and passing laws and making regulations, but connecting those through to real change on the ground, particularly in the broader public sector, is very, very difficult.

This administration chose two of the toughest sectors, in fact, to effect change in—the health and education sectors—and has, I think, made some significant breakthroughs. I won't say any more about that, because we have one of the people who led some of those changes sitting next to me.

What have we learned about driving policy out, particularly into broader public sector organizations? It takes top-level leadership from the Premier and from the responsible ministry. It takes top-level public service leadership. It takes the creation of an effective moral rallying cry to institutions outside of government to join together with government to achieve certain outcomes. It takes getting some heavy hitters in from the sectors to work with you, people like Alan Hudson in the health world and Michael Fullan in the world of education, conducting baseline measurements so that you know what the current state looks like and so you can measure progress. And, of course, it takes building budgets around key policy priorities, which we've talked about earlier in these proceedings.

For all of these reasons, a lot of jurisdictions are putting time and effort and resources into developing their policy staff and their policy capacity, and we're doing that here in Ontario as well.

**Ms. Smith:** Maybe I can just follow up on that. You talked about integration with different jurisdictions. As well, you talked about looking to different jurisdictions on their policy development.

The Premier spoke today at the teaching awards of excellence celebration over at the ROM and talked about meeting with the Minister of Education from Great Britain, speaking to the fact that, as a government, we had looked at other jurisdictions in developing policy and now other jurisdictions are looking to us and about how proud he was that the Minister of Education from Great Britain was actually going to be adopting our turnaround team strategy in our Learning to 18 model over there and that we had really become leaders in the field, which is great.

**1610**

The other side that I was interested in that you were just speaking about was the rationalization and integration with other jurisdictions that are our neighbours and talking about the Ministry of the Environment. You were talking about the overlap on the enforcement side.

I'm interested too in the rationalization or in the coordination with other jurisdictions. In my particular

area, we have the Mattawa-Ottawa River, which connect and which bound both provinces, Quebec and Ontario. We have a mill on the Quebec side and we have water issues on both sides of the river as it comes down. There's some concern in our community around what's going on there, but again it's another jurisdiction that really has control over the source, if it is a source.

I just wondered if you could expand on how our government is looking at integration with other jurisdictions both from a policy-producing side, and I think you touched on that a little bit, but maybe the nuts and bolts a little on that, and then also on the integration on the enforcement and compliance side.

**Mr. Dean:** Sure. Let me first say that it was a great example of the UK education minister coming here. I think it hasn't been too many years ago that we were looking at the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore—right across the Commonwealth—for leading-edge practices. Not just the UK but all of those jurisdictions are now coming to Ontario to look at how we are doing this, and that's true of our colleagues across the country as well.

Interjurisdictional sharing, collaboration, is absolutely critical. We're at a point where, in my view—and not just my view; the view of many of my colleagues in this business—no government can do anything well on its own anymore and shouldn't be expected to do well on its own anymore. It takes working across boundaries, working together towards a common cause, and that I think is true about getting anything tangible done.

We have made some big progress in the last three or four years. The corporate tax agreement with the federal government will see us moving now to one common tax form for both federal and provincial purposes and one set of auditors. We are taking two systems and moving them together. In this case, we're moving our corporate tax administration and compliance out to the federal government. In the other direction, of course, we've taken on labour market development services as part of the labour market development agreement.

Another area we're taking a look at—and this flows all the way through from policy development through regulation development through enforcement—is the world of meat inspections. It's kind of interesting to note that in Ontario, on any given day in a meat processing facility, it's possible, depending on the work conducted and, if you like, the geographic dispersal of the product, to be inspected by a federal, a provincial and a municipal inspector. That does not make a whole lot of sense.

We have been chatting with our federal colleagues about how we can work to rationalize the regulatory approach to meat facilities, how we can rationalize our enforcement approaches, and we have lots of ground to cover there.

That's just one example of how, from our front counters delivering services separately, we're bringing them together through ServiceOntario and Service Canada counters.

We need to have a discussion about critical areas, and we are discussing, particularly with the federal govern-

ment, particular areas, such as our approach to environmental assessment. We are discussing our approach to inspection, investigations and enforcement.

Just on that, investigations and enforcement, we actually have 13 ministries in Ontario who are in the business to some degree or another of inspecting, investigating or enforcing, and we have brought the staff of those ministries together. We're now doing common training, common risk analysis, risk assessment. They're sharing data. When a potential hazard is identified by an inspector in one area that falls into the jurisdiction of another, we are now able to share that information. There was some legislation that was passed recently that enabled that sharing of information.

These are terrific breakthroughs, but it's really sensible to think about lining up resources, lining up strategies and lining up service delivery in a way that makes sense to citizens, to customers. That's what we've all been trying to do. We've been trying to put ourselves in the shoes of citizens and customers of government services and asking, "What makes sense to the customer in terms of what they want from government?" Of course, what makes sense for most people is that they don't care which level of government provides the service, they just want it conveniently. They want it—if they can—over the Internet. They want it from one government office that's local and accessible, or they want it through one telephone call.

Gone are the days when people are content to walk from office to office, or to make telephone call after telephone call until they find the right place. We're moving in the right direction and we're making some very big improvements.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much. We have about three minutes left in this round.

**Ms. Smith:** I know that some of my colleagues have questions, but because we only have three minutes—you touched on the inspection and enforcement component, and the coordination of the 13 ministries. In some of my work in the long-term care field, we've benefited from that shared knowledge base and it's been very helpful. I just wonder if there is any movement afoot to expand that to some of our other jurisdictions? I'm thinking of the public health inspectors or building inspectors at the local, municipal level. Has any work been done on doing knowledge sharing with those levels of government of the expertise that we've been developing in risk management, risk assessment and inspection and compliance?

**Mr. Dean:** There has been some work. My sense is that that is very much the next frontier. We have to go there. There are examples of that sort of collaboration. The best one, the area where we've had the biggest impact in government, has been in the world of health and safety, which used to be considered to be just the domain of the Ministry of Labour. We saw several years ago a rallying cry there to everybody in the sector—local governments, the WSIB, local health and safety associations and municipal governments—to rally together around a concerted focus to reduce workplace accidents

and lost-time injuries. There have been massive improvements in that area that would not have been possible without that collaboration across boundaries. There are many more examples and there is lots of fertile ground to do much more in that way.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much to the government side. Now I go to the official opposition.

**Mr. Runciman:** How much time, Mr. Chair?

**The Vice-Chair:** Twenty minutes.

**Mr. Runciman:** Thank you. I am a substitute today, so I may be covering some of the ground that's already been discussed. Minister, it's good to see you here. Obviously, things are going well in the Ministry of Health that you can afford us this time. It's much appreciated.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I appreciate your endorsement.

**Mr. Runciman:** I'm sure you do. I'm just curious as well, Minister, since we have you here in your capacity as Deputy Premier: Do you have an assigned budget that falls within the Premier's estimates?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No. Indeed, as best as anyone knew, any time there's been a Deputy Premier in Ontario, there's never been any additional compensation or budgetary line associated with it.

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Would you like one?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No.

**Mr. Runciman:** Is there a job description?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, sir.

**Mr. Runciman:** What did they tell you when they offered you this title?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** That it would provide an opportunity, especially on those days when the Premier is not able to be present in the Legislature, to have a consistent voice available for the government.

Our tradition before that had been to rotate that responsibility amongst a number of front-bench ministers. It was felt that it would be more appropriate to have some consistency in messaging available.

**1620**

The only other thing that has really evolved is that from time in time, in circumstances when the Premier is unable to attend an event, I seem like a more appropriate substitute, I suppose. I've been called upon to sub in for a few more events, including one that I had the privilege of doing alongside the swearing-in, the renewal—I'm not sure how you say it—of deputy ministers. So it's been a number of occasions like that.

**Mr. Runciman:** How much time would you devote over a week to this responsibility?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's really, in a certain sense—the envelope of time is what the envelope of time is. Some weeks it's not even particularly—I'm going to be in question period anyway, so I just wear a different hat, so to speak.

**Mr. Runciman:** Okay. I want to talk about a couple of things. These are just things I'm somewhat curious about. I know there was some criticism a year or so ago about the Premier going to a political function, I think it

was, obviously when they can find a government function—and this is not just this government; I'm not being critical. I'm just curious about some suggestion that he avoided gridlock by flying to Hamilton. I don't know if you recall that—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I recall that very well.

**Mr. Runciman:**—taking a government plane to fly to Hamilton so he could avoid gridlock. I think shortly thereafter there was a similar situation flying to Peterborough. Are those costs reflected in the estimates in terms of the use of the government plane by the Premier and/or his staff? Do they show up somewhere in the estimates?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think that Cabinet Office might be able to help us with that.

**Mr. Runciman:** Okay, I think it would be helpful if we could have that information provided.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** As a general matter, and then we can look to see what detail is related to the specific circumstances that you mention.

**Mr. Runciman:** Primarily the government aircraft but also OPP aircraft as well, if that could be incorporated, if indeed the Premier has used either the helicopter or their planes.

How many vehicles are assigned to the Premier's office?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We can determine whether there are any particular vehicles that are assigned, but obviously the Premier's transportation is provided by the OPP. To the best of my knowledge, they're generally reluctant to speak about matters related to the security, just in the public sense. Obviously, from an estimates standpoint, the OPP budget would be a matter of estimates in another government ministry. You would know that very, very well.

Cabinet Office will certainly get us an answer as to whether there are any other vehicles there. We did have a chance in earlier discussion to talk about the service line expenditures in the Premier's office, so there is in the Hansard from earlier estimates some description of the service line expenditures from questioning from Mr. Ferreira, just for your information.

**Mr. Runciman:** Okay. When you talk about the number of employees working within the Premier's office, are there others who are not captured by those statistics who are being paid through other ministries of the government who are actually carrying on responsibilities for the Premier's office?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No. That was the practice of previous governments, to be very blunt, to have a little bit of difference in terms of the number of people showing up in a phone book versus those who are on staff. Again, we've had quite a substantial amount of questioning.

The Premier's office staff is a complement of 61 individuals. It's paid from a global staffing budget in the Premier's office which, as in past tradition, is made up of the printed estimates that are here and an apportionment of some costs that a variety of—I believe it was 12 line

ministries that also contribute something to the cost of operation in the Premier's office. This has been a long-standing tradition. But the count of 61 is a full and complete count of those in the Premier's office.

**Mr. Runciman:** Okay. I appreciate that.

This is where I'm probably going to be covering some ground that has been covered before with respect to the OLG situation and the scandal there surrounding winners being ripped off of their winnings. I'm sure, Minister, with respect to the Premier's office and whether or not there's any connection, the fact is that there's a lot of attention paid to the point that individuals who attended a meeting—Mr. Warren, Mr. Guy and Mr. Kinsella—all have some connection, especially Warren and Guy, who were former employees within the Premier's office. I guess that people looking at this from the outside have to wonder if the Premier's office, or someone within the Premier's office, was aware of that meeting and the purpose of that meeting.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think you're going to have to be a bit more specific with me in terms of which meeting it is that you're referring to.

**Mr. Runciman:** This was a meeting where they made decisions with respect to how to react to media stories regarding this. We have to assume, since we're not getting any explanations otherwise, that this was done to protect the government. When you have three individuals who are very much involved in the political party, what would their reason be otherwise?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** That meeting, as best as I'm aware, was called by OLG themselves and, to the best of my knowledge, involved no individuals who were in the employ of the Premier's Office.

**Mr. Runciman:** That wasn't my question. My question was: Was anyone in the Premier's office apprised of the meeting and that this was going to occur and the justification for it?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I will ascertain to get you an answer to that. I wouldn't know that off the top of my mind.

**Mr. Runciman:** I'd also like to know, if indeed they were made aware of the meeting, if they were apprised of the results and the decisions taken at that meeting.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** In a certain sense, we're all apprised of the results and decisions that were taken because it informed the action plan, which has seen, as an example, KPMG taking a very active role in helping to reorient the mission of the organization. Subsequently, of course, we've all had a tremendous amount of additional information related to the thorough investigation that the Ombudsman was involved in.

**Mr. Runciman:** There was some suggestion at the time that one of the key recommendations coming out of that was to diminish the validity of Mr. Edmonds's claim and his story surrounding that. That's one of the media reports, in any event. I think it would be interesting to know if the Premier's office was aware that that was one of the results coming out of that meeting.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** That's pretty speculative by nature, obviously, but as I said, I'll seek to ascertain

whatever I can in terms of knowledge of the meeting or outcomes related to the meeting.

**Mr. Runciman:** How much time do I have?

**The Vice-Chair:** You have about 12 minutes.

**Mr. Runciman:** My colleague may have some questions as well.

Let's talk about the recent problem confronting us in this place, and that is the grants that have been the subject of question period over the past week and a half, monies that were handed out to a variety of organizations, the minister has indicated, without any application process, with no formal approval process and no follow-up audits. Was the Premier's office aware of this granting process and the lack of monitoring with respect to approvals and follow-ups?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I wouldn't have information about that. It's the kind of thing that I could take note of and seek to get information back. I believe that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration itself has been called for estimates as well, which would be an opportunity to review things from their end. I can seek to see if there is any information on that and report back to this committee.

**Mr. Runciman:** I appreciate that Citizenship is coming before the committee, but I think that would be important information in terms of what role, if any, individuals within the Premier's office played in terms of the decision-making process.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** To draw the member's attention to a matter that we discussed over the course of estimates—I can't remember which day; it might've been yesterday—talking about the way that, in different circumstances, Premiers' offices or Prime Ministers' offices are seen to have a tighter grip and exercising control where everything is run through centrally. I've spoken about my own personal circumstances, where I could tell you that I've been given a tremendous amount of—trust, I suppose, is the best way to put it—to run the affairs of my ministry. This is the operating norm in terms of our government, but if there's more specific information, I'll seek it out.

1630

**Mr. Runciman:** I would suggest that perhaps the trust was misplaced with at least one of your colleagues, if that was the case, but we'd certainly appreciate getting that information in a timely way.

Could you perhaps also speak to the relationship between the Minister of Finance and the Premier's office? I know it obviously has to—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The minister or the ministry?

**Mr. Runciman:** The Minister of Finance particularly, especially given his political role. I think it's of interest, the fact that he has also taken on the responsibilities as chair of your re-election campaign. I'm just curious about that relationship. Do they meet on a weekly basis other than the cabinet and cabinet committee meetings? From the perspective of someone sitting in the opposition benches, when you look at some of these decisions—we're talking about a significant amount of money,

\$30 million at least in this fund, and I'm being polite—we also saw, during the introduction of the budget, where there was a surprise announcement, not incorporated in the budget papers, of \$50 million to Magna, which apparently was some sort of last-minute discussion. I guess I'm curious just in terms of how much authority the Minister of Finance has within this government versus the Premier's office because, if you'll recall, when you were first elected there was some concern that the Premier perhaps wasn't in charge and that the individual who was given credit for your election by many people was actually the individual making significant and substantive decisions in terms of how the government proceeded. I'm curious about that relationship—if you can perhaps expand on it or talk a little bit about how it works.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Well, sure. That spin about who's really in charge is no more sensible today than when it was levelled. Obviously, as you well know from your length of experience and service here, Premiers and finance ministers by necessity have to have good relationships. It's pretty crucial. I think that you would acknowledge that in environments where they are not on the same page it proves very challenging for governments. So I don't think there's any doubt whatsoever that they enjoy each other's trust; they enjoy each other's confidence. I can try and get you a sense of how often they're able to enjoy each other's company, recognizing the nature of the schedules that we are all involved in. But yes, I would imagine that it's fair to say that the Minister of Finance and the Premier of the province of Ontario have a very amicable and close working relationship, by absolute necessity.

**Mr. Runciman:** Yes. You talked earlier about trust and the relationship you have with the Premier and the degree of trust that he places in you in terms of the decisions you make that impact on the ministry you're responsible for. As someone who has served on the executive council with three Premiers, I guess I find it somewhat puzzling, to say the least, that any minister of the crown would be given, let's say, a \$30-million bank account and just allowed to make individual decisions on who he felt deserved monies that came out of that bank account. Is that the kind of trust you're talking about in terms of the Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I must confess, with your experience as a minister in mind, I don't really understand why you would find it extraordinary that ministers are entrusted with the capacity to make decisions. In part, maybe I could just say that there was a year, I think it was 1999 or it might have been 2000, when the government of Ontario's resources were very good. We had a very powerful year of economic growth. A decision was made by your cabinet to use a year-end funding mechanism to put very substantial SuperBuild investments out in a variety of accounts of hospitals, including hospitals that at that point might have had projects coming, but really it was just an opportunity to allocate some resource that was available—the same thing, I

might say, that you've been criticizing us around. I don't know, from the experience inside your government, but maybe you know whether the minister of the day—I think that was Elizabeth Witmer—made those decisions on her own, whether the finance minister made those or whether the Premier's office made them. I don't know. I assume in a circumstance where in my ministry there is a resource, an investment available, people are going to be quite deferential to the perspective that I can offer as a minister, recognizing that the information comes in to me. I think that's about as much as I can offer.

**Mr. Runciman:** I can respect people being deferential to the minister in terms of his or her advice on these kinds of things, but it seems to me in this case the situation was that the minister was handed a significant amount of taxpayers' money and then was allowed to make individual decisions, apparently, unless there was some other connection which we've been unable to determine because no one is answering the questions with respect to how this money was assigned to a variety of organizations. Despite your suggestion that there is some sort of an analogy to what has happened in the past, I doubt it. I don't think there would be any comparable analogy with respect to the assignment of these monies and the way they were handled.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I notice you used the expression "individual decisions" several times. I noted last week that your leader made a speech to the Toronto Kiwanis and he said that in the future, in his government, ministers will no longer have the capacity to make decisions. The bureaucrats will have to make the decisions. You really should take a look at it—

**Mr. Runciman:** I guess.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** —because the way it was suggested really ran counter to my understanding of the way things work. If we could draw on something you and I have had the opportunity to exchange ideas around at least four or five times, you have a local project that's very distinct as a local initiative related to the historic role of psychiatric health service delivery in your community. So your community is working appropriately. They're working up a fantastic idea. It's a one-off. It's not the same in most other communities in Ontario. But under the new John Tory model of allocation of resources, if we were to want to do something in Brockville, as best as I can understand what his position has been, we would now say, "Well, there's \$20 million that we wanted to invest in Brockville, but before we do it, we need to let the whole province of Ontario know that we are going to do this thing in Brockville, to see if anyone else has a stronger case to make around it or so we could slice it and dice it and divvy it up."

So just this individual piece—I believe you're pressing forward with a case that doesn't really bear up to the way that you had the privilege of exercising responsibility and as I'm called upon to do on a very constant basis. Members will approach me with one-by-one localized circumstances, and in the new model of doing things according to your leader, ministers will not be able to even address those points.

**Mr. Runciman:** I doubt that.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'll get you a copy of those. I was quite astonished by them too. Perhaps they should have been vetted.

**The Vice-Chair:** We're out of time on this particular round. It's now time to go to the third party.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Would you like to get some of the information from your questions of yesterday?

**Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston):** Sure. I would welcome that.

**Ms. Shelley Gibson:** I have some of the information from our end for the committee's pleasure. I don't have all of it, but we're still working on that.

You asked for a list of the ministries being charged for the Premier's office staffing costs and you asked for 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Just to take you through the list for 2004-05: Attorney General, Community Safety and Correctional Services, Economic Development and Trade, Education, Energy, Environment, Finance, Management Board Secretariat, Health and Long-Term Care, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Natural Resources, and Northern Development and Mines. So that's the 2004-05 list, which if you refer back to yesterday's response, you'll see is almost identical to the 2005-06 list, with the exception of the name change for Management Board Secretariat to the Ministry of Government Services. So that's one answer for you.

You also asked for a breakdown of the cost charged to each of these ministries. I'm still working on that piece, so I'll come back to you on that.

We talked a bit about the services line at yesterday's session. We're still working on information around the hospitality and catering services that you were looking for. As you can appreciate, we actually have to pull out every individual invoice from that period that was paid against the services line so that we can get the level of detail of which ones specifically are catering, hospitality. I think those were the specific criteria you were looking for, so we're going to have to get back to you on that.

You also asked for a list of vendors. Similarly, we're pulling together that list and we'll get back to you.

**1640**

I believe you also asked us yesterday for the last day of work for Jim Warren. Mr. Warren's last day of employment with the Premier's office was February 10, 2006.

That's the response to a number of your questions from yesterday, and the rest we're working on.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Very good. I look forward to the responses.

My first question today: With regard to the salaries and wages line, from the 2005-06 actuals to—and I realize these were interim actuals—the most recently completed fiscal year, there's quite an increase: \$220,000, more than 10%. Why such an increase from one year to the other?

**Ms. Gibson:** I'm sorry. The salary and wages line, you're saying, is an increase?

**Mr. Ferreira:** The 2005-06 actuals—

**Ms. Gibson:** That's page 14 that you're referring to?

**Mr. Ferreira:** Page 14: \$2.15 million. The interim actuals for 2006-07: \$2.37 million.

**Ms. Gibson:** The interim actuals—at the time that the budget was produced, we estimated that we were going to have a balanced budget, so the 2006-07 estimates are that same figure, \$2,369,100. So we were projecting a balanced budget for that period. We're hoping that the figures are actually going to come in less than that, but the 2006-07 year hasn't been closed yet. Hopefully, the figures will be lower, but we are definitely in line with the estimates.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Do you have partial actuals for 2006-07?

**Ms. Gibson:** The books aren't fully closed yet, but we're very hopeful that—

**Mr. Ferreira:** Are you able to tell us how much has been spent as of a given date?

**Ms. Gibson:** I can go back and look as of a given date, but those obviously wouldn't be final figures, because the fiscal year hasn't closed.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Why would the estimates, then, have been \$220,000 more than the actuals from the previous year?

**Ms. Gibson:** We estimated that we were going to spend what we said we were going to spend when we produced the estimates for 2006-07. I'm not sure why they would be specifically more than the actuals. It could be attributed to staffing transactions in 2005-06. There might have been less staffing.

**Mr. Ferreira:** It was my understanding from questions earlier that the staffing levels have remained fairly static. Was this—

**Ms. Gibson:** I believe the specific question you asked previously was around the issues staffing, and that has remained consistent.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Has the 61 head count changed very much over the past couple of years?

**Ms. Gibson:** I would imagine it has, but I don't have that information with me—just like staffing in any office does fluctuate.

**Mr. Ferreira:** The \$220,000, more than 10%, seems a fairly substantial figure. Could you get back to us and let us know how that figure was arrived at?

Now, on the transportation and communications line, the actuals for 2005-06 were \$216,000. What exactly does that include, what kind of expenses?

**Ms. Gibson:** Transportation and communications generally, as a standard account, is things like cellphones, BlackBerry charges, travelling expenses, telephone charges like your desk phone and your voice mail, the telecommunications charges. That's generally what those types of expenses are.

**Mr. Ferreira:** When you say travel, is that travel for the Premier, for his staff—

**Ms. Gibson:** That would be for the Premier and his staff.

**Mr. Ferreira:** So all those employed in the Premier's office.

**Ms. Gibson:** If there were travelling-related charges that were supposed to be in transportation and communications, that's where they would be paid out of.

**Mr. Ferreira:** And that would include things like accommodations, travel—air travel, ground travel, all those? There was quite a substantial drop; you were estimating to spend only half from one year to the other. What would account for that estimate of a 50% decrease?

**Ms. Gibson:** I don't have the specific figures at my fingertips, but I think the estimates have remained fairly constant, because that's an average operating cost for an office this size. So the actuals may fluctuate, depending on each year, but the estimates are fairly constant.

**Mr. Ferreira:** What was the estimate for 2005-06 on that line?

**Ms. Gibson:** I don't have that specific figure with me, but I could go find that for you, the 2005-06 estimate for the T and C line.

**Mr. Ferreira:** You'll get back to us on that, then?

**Ms. Gibson:** Yes.

**Mr. Ferreira:** With regard to the Premier's travel, air travel that is provided by—is that the OPP?

**Ms. Gibson:** I'm sorry. I don't know the specifics of how his travel arrangements are made.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We have questions pending on the issue of travel. I'm not sure whether any of the Premier's travel is done by the OPP other than ground transportation. So when I refer to travel and the OPP, I'm talking about ground transportation. I believe government services has two—I believe it's two. The Ministry of Natural Resources operates for government service two turboprop aircraft that have been long-standing. An earlier question that we'll get an answer to is the way that those aircraft are utilized, because that was from a question posed earlier by Mr. Runciman.

**Mr. Ferreira:** And the cost to operate and maintain those two turboprops, out of which ministry does that—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The Ministry of Natural Resources is the operator.

**Mr. Ferreira:** And does the ministry bill the Office of the Premier or other ministries for use of the—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I can answer to the other ministries part. I'm not sure whether there's any—

**Mr. Ferreira:** The health ministry: When you use one of those planes, what happens? What's the billing practice?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** They offer a cost estimate. There's an approvals process for the utilization of the aircraft. It's guarded quite closely, of course. We have to submit a proposal: We give an outline of the flight that's required and a cost estimate for the flight is provided, and the Ministry of Natural Resources bills the line ministries for that service.

**Mr. Ferreira:** And it's reasonable to expect that the Premier's office would operate in the same fashion when it comes to—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I don't want to speculate. I've already indicated that we'll get an answer to those

questions for the committee, because I'm just not certain—

**Mr. Ferreira:** Mr. Dean, would you know?

**Mr. Dean:** I don't know offhand. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Ferreira:** You'll get back to us on that. These two turboprops, when they're not in use, where are they housed?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I believe at Pearson airport MNR has a small operation, but I don't know whether they hangar two aircraft there or one perhaps in Sault Ste. Marie, but we'll get you the answer on that as well.

**Mr. Ferreira:** And when it comes to the—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** And the other thing I could just tell you about the operation of that, I know that kind of the pecking order is that the Lieutenant Governor is first in line and—

**Mr. Ferreira:** He has first dibs.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes.

**Mr. Ferreira:** If both planes happen to be in use and air travel is required, what happens then? Is there a private contractor that provides—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The Ministry of Natural Resources, in a circumstance like that, would assist a ministry, if they needed to, to organize a charter service of, typically, a very similar aircraft. I know from personal experience, I did have the advantage of MNR's organization of a charter when they were unable to provide—because I was making a Saturday flight to North Bay—or was it a Sunday? It was Father's Day.

**Ms. Smith:** Sunday.

**Mr. Ferreira:** It was a Sunday. When the Premier conducts international travel, a turboprop can only get him so far. For example, the trip to India and Pakistan early this year, how was that travel done?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Well, a turboprop aircraft has very relatively limited capabilities.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** So maybe if you were making a flight into an adjacent community like in the continental United States, it might be practical, but beyond that—

**Mr. Ferreira:** But in the case of long-haul travel—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Commercial would be the answer.

**Mr. Ferreira:** The Premier would buy a seat on an Air Canada jet, and his entourage?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes. To the very best of my knowledge, yes.

**Mr. Ferreira:** And all of those expenses would be reflected under that transportation line item? Perhaps Ms. Gibson—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** If the activity is organized on behalf of a government ministry, we'll have to look and see. For instance, if it's a trade responsibility, I'm not sure if there's any distinction in the way those matters are dealt with, but we could certainly make sure we're clear on that.

1650

**Mr. Ferreira:** Would it be paid out of the Premier's office and charged back to the relevant ministry, or would the relevant ministry immediately take care of the bill?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** That's what we'll seek to find out for you.

**Mr. Ferreira:** I wonder about that, because there's another line there, "Recoveries from other ministries." What is that line, exactly?

**Ms. Gibson:** Specifically in the estimates briefing book?

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes, page 14, my favourite page. I've got lots of scribbled notes on it.

**Ms. Gibson:** Your favourite page. I should mark page 14.

**Mr. Ferreira:** You should. I've got some Post-it Notes if you want some.

**Ms. Gibson:** There we go. That's reallocations? Oh, sorry: "Recoveries from other ministries." I see what you mean.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Recoveries, yes. In the 2005-06 actuals, there weren't any.

**Ms. Gibson:** I can check into that. I believe that's a strict financial term, so it's a different type of recovery, as opposed to a journal recovery. But I can reconfirm exactly what that financial term means. I thought you were referring to the explanations page.

**Mr. Ferreira:** No, page 14.

**Ms. Gibson:** No, I mean the explanations that are on page 14.

**Mr. Ferreira:** A question that I think would be of tremendous interest to at least a few hundred, if not a few thousand, of the Deputy Premier's own constituents: Does the Premier fly out of the island airport on his travels?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I would think that from time to time the Premier and others using the King Air service fly in and out of the island airport. Of course, the island airport is a primary hub for air ambulance services as well.

**Mr. Ferreira:** What's King Air?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** There are two King Air aircraft. That's the name of the aircraft.

**Mr. Ferreira:** The MNR's two aircraft.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes, the turboprop aircraft.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Would it be possible to come back and let us know how many times the Premier and members of his staff flew out of that island airport?

**Ms. Gibson:** The island airport?

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes, the Toronto City Centre—

**Ms. Gibson:** Okay, I've taken a note of that.

**Mr. Ferreira:** On the "Services" line, I understand you're still working on pulling together the receipts and the breakdown. For the 2005-06 actuals, do you have that breakdown of how the \$95,402 was spent exactly? You had listed off—

**Ms. Gibson:** I gave some examples of types of things that would be in the "Services" line.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Right: Pitney Bowes, Compass Group, insurance—

**Ms. Gibson:** Yes, but you asked very specifically for the details of the \$95,402 and specifics around the hospitality and catering, so we're going back to pull all those invoices out to get you the details that you're looking for.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Again, I'm just curious. How are these expenses tracked? How are they filed? It seems to me that it wouldn't be too cumbersome a process to pull out a file and say, "We paid out this much to Compass Group in 2005-06." Again, we're talking about a fairly modest budget of less than \$3 million in total.

**Ms. Gibson:** It's true that it is a fairly modest budget. I can't speak to specifics of the records management related to the financial files, but the high-level information is pulled out at standard account level, which is what you see here. So we do have to go back to the files and actually pull out all the individual invoices. They may not be filed by services. They may be filed by vendor, they may be filed by—I'm not sure of the specifics of how they're filed, but I do know that to get the hospitality and catering information, particularly, we have to go back and actually pull all the individual vendor invoices, because to speculate—for example, I mentioned Compass Group. If I said, "Compass does meeting rooms," they might also do hospitality and catering. So if I didn't include them in the hospitality and catering list just because I assumed from their name that they were a meeting group, then I'd be giving you inaccurate information. That's why we're going back to actually pull the invoices, to make sure we can get you full information.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Right. We want to ensure that you're able to give us completely accurate information. I can appreciate that.

"Supplies and equipment": Could you let us know what that includes? Again, I see there was an estimated substantial cost savings from the actuals in the 2005-06 actuals. What does that cover?

**Ms. Gibson:** A number of the cost savings just in general that you've seen over the other direct operating—so all three lines—are related to government efficiency measures that have been implemented over the last several years. The Premier's office is in fact no different than my office or any other office in the Ontario public service where we're trying to support modern, more efficient ways of doing business, so we have—

**Mr. Ferreira:** But you're needing more staff to be able to pull off that efficiency, just by looking at the top line.

**Ms. Gibson:** I'm not sure that's entirely correct, but to answer your specific question, that's why it looks like there's a reduction. We've kept the lines as close as possible to previous estimates, but we are very hopeful that when the figures come in, they will be less, because we have implemented a number of efficiencies across the Premier's office, Cabinet Office, all government ministries, in support of some of the horizontal exercises to try and save money.

**The Vice-Chair:** You've got about three minutes left, Mr. Ferreira.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Thank you, Mr. Dunlop.

**Ms. Gibson:** Did you also ask, Mr. Ferreira, what types of things were in "Supplies and equipment"?

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes.

**Ms. Gibson:** Okay, sorry. I missed that piece of your question. So it's things like purchasing office equipment, printed stationery and office supplies, and I think that's why obviously it's a fairly modest budget when you compare it to the others. It's basic office machinery and equipment.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Right, office supplies and the like. But I'm just trying to figure out, if the actuals in one year were \$63,000—and you don't have the estimates for that year, do you, for any of those lines?

**Ms. Gibson:** No, not the 2005-06.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Could you get us those estimates for all those lines?

**Ms. Gibson:** Yes. I'll add that to the other question you asked.

**Mr. Ferreira:** It seems odd to me that one year it would be \$63,000 and then the projection for the following year would be only one third of that. Aside from efficiencies, any other possible explanations?

**Ms. Gibson:** I can look into the details of that. As I said, if we're looking specifically at the changes, for example, between the 2006-07 and the 2007-08 estimates, most of the changes that occur in the lines are as a result of some of the ups and downs from efficiencies and some of the changes in the statutory appropriations. Going back to previous years, I would have to look up that information about what the changes were year to year in each of those three lines.

**Mr. Ferreira:** The transportation and communications, the services, and the supplies and equipment.

**Ms. Gibson:** That's correct. Those three lines I'll go back and look up for you.

**The Vice-Chair:** If you've got a quick question—

**Mr. Ferreira:** A quick question. Could you also come back to us with the employee head count for the past three years?

**Ms. Gibson:** The head count for the past three years?

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes, please. Sixty-one is the present head count?

**Ms. Gibson:** That's correct.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Ferreira. Now we'll turn to the government.

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I, like Ms. Smith, missed the other day, but I was here the first day and was impressed with the knowledge that was explained to us about the Premier's office.

My question is for Mr. Dean. I have never seen anybody so enthusiastic about their portfolio, ever in my life. I was excited by some of the issues that you spoke about the other day. But my question was with regard to the ministry overview that's in the Results-based Plan Briefing Book. It speaks about the Cabinet Office being the

Premier's ministry and it talks about the Cabinet Office and how it liaises with the Lieutenant Governor. I think most of us don't really know how that liaison occurs. Is there an issue that you can kind of walk us through, how the Premier's office works with the Lieutenant Governor's office, what kinds of decisions are made and how that works?

**Mr. Dean:** As you know, to start us off, the Lieutenant Governor is the Queen's representative in Ontario and is the person, really, who is the final approval authority for all of our legislation and most of our regulations, constitutionally a very important role. In my role, for example, I would ordinarily meet frequently with the LG. The LG takes on some special projects. One, of course, has been his literacy campaign, which has been hugely important and has made a big impact: again, a partnership across a number of boundaries. But more commonly, we would set up appointments at least two or three times a week to visit the LG to approve his authorization for the business of cabinet, for regulations and for pieces of legislation requiring his signature. He, of course, is involved in the proclamation process of pieces of legislation and he is also involved in the process of introducing new administrations and indeed new ministers. So where there is a swearing-in ceremony required for a new minister or new ministers, we would ordinarily liaise with him on those matters. It's a very close working relationship. He has a very professionally run office. My office is the main point of contact with the LG's office. If there is a need to coordinate the involvement of the Premier and the LG in an event, which is often the case, there will be liaison directly with the Premier's office.

**1700**

More broadly, I think it's important to think about Cabinet Office as the Premier's ministry. As other ministers have ministries supporting them, the Premier's ministry is Cabinet Office. So for purposes of policy support and advice for purposes of communications support, administrative support, support around the machinery of government, the operation of cabinet and cabinet committees themselves, we play obviously a very, very important role. One of the elements of my job, of course, is the cabinet secretary and I'm responsible for ensuring that the decision-making machinery works well, that due diligence is given to important decisions that go to cabinet. And of course I'm responsible for communicating cabinet decisions out to the public service.

So it's an exciting job, a job that I'm privileged to have an opportunity to do, and we've got a really highly motivated group of people working in Cabinet Office. I think they do an absolutely splendid job, and developing and maintaining a strong professional working relationship with the Lieutenant Governor and his offices is just one small part of that.

**Mrs. Jeffrey:** Thank you. I think Mr. Patten had—

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr. Patten?

**Mr. Patten:** Yes; thank you.

So we've talked a fair amount about the Premier's office as it regularly, theoretically operates, and because

the Deputy Premier is also the Minister of Health, one thing that may be helpful for people to know is the interfacing of the Premier's office and your ministry. But I'm thinking in times of crisis. We've all heard this, you know, that government is too slow, that it can't respond quickly. I'm thinking particularly of a situation: the evacuation in Lebanon, people coming to Canada. The Canadian government was involved. I can recall you personally being involved. The Premier's office obviously was there; the Premier made statements. That relationship of especially urgency—at some point the Premier's office has to say, "Listen, we're going to respond this way or that way." You've had first-hand experience relating to that. Could you give us some sense of flavour as to how that really works?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Two or three points I think might be helpful: First, obviously we came to office as a government following on SARS, a blackout etc. I think those sorts of things really challenge an organization like government to where a whole bunch of ministries might have a piece in the play. Someone's got to be the wagon master and make sure that there is order around the nature of the response. So one of the things we have now is a cabinet committee on emergency management, and part of it has been to test drive—we've actually gamed out some scenarios just to test drive our own internal communications mechanisms. If the nature of the matter is that you have to provide people with confidence about the response and communicate in a timely way with these 24-hour news cycles like that, government really has to find ways to be adroit.

But the Premier's office obviously—we had some questions earlier in this process about the function of the issues manager. I think in a circumstance like the evacuation of Lebanese Canadians, as an example, there were a bunch of ministries that had a piece to play. The Cabinet Office and the Premier's office together quickly assessed the circumstance. Our ministry was asked to step up to the plate because we had an emergency management capacity that was well in place, but several other government ministries—Citizenship and Immigration, Community and Social Services, and Intergovernmental Affairs—all had a piece in this. Intergovernmental Affairs had to liaise with the feds etc. You know, the Premier's office—another way to refer to these, sometimes we call them "those central agency people," and there are expletives that follow but I won't say those because they're unparliamentary. It's in those challenging circumstances where it's possible that there are four or five ministers or ministries sitting there and saying, "Okay, we should do this, do something." It's necessary, of course, to make sure that the central agency pulls everybody together and dictates how the plan is going to go forward. The situation in Lebanon was one of those where that was done, I think, in a very timely way.

I think for all of us in politics we go back to situations like the response in the United States to things like hurricanes. We've all seen that the public expectation of a well-coordinated and timely response is well established,

so we've been trying to live up to that in the Premier's office. From an issues management standpoint, it helps to make sure that everyone is on their p's and q's.

**Mr. Patten:** You may have a response to that, and also the secretary of cabinet. When you go through experiences like that, presumably there's a review: "How did we do?" I recall in particular the unfortunate period during the SARS experience—I'm anticipating this, and it may sound like a leading question; it isn't—when the attempt was to strengthen the role of the chief medical officer, for example, and to allow the chief medical officer, in the job description, some authority related to protecting the public in the case of certain outbreaks or certain catastrophes, however they may play themselves out. My question is, is there a built-in review or is that something that is instinctive? Who takes part in all of this if it happens? Can you comment on that?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I can say as a Minister of Health, because we've had the work going on with the recently passed Justice Archie Campbell, that he produced reports, and they are voluminous. We've been digging to try and keep up with the recommendations and implement them. One of the first things we did was pass a bill that gives greater independence to the chief medical officer of health. Indeed, the Legislative Assembly at present is involved in a process of helping to guide in the selection of a replacement for Dr. Basrur, which is a very challenging role. Obviously, those are big shoes—they're not literally big shoes—to fill.

In terms of a review, I mentioned a minute ago that the Premier created an emergency management committee of cabinet. I have the privilege of serving on that. At our meeting about two weeks ago, there was a report reflecting on the response we'd had to the circumstances in Lebanon. So, yes, there's an attempt made to try and look back and refresh. The language that I use a lot is "apply the lessons learned." If you're forthright about taking a look at it, invariably there are ways that you can do a better job as you go forward, and we should seek to be continuously improving in those processes.

**Mr. Patten:** Good.

**Ms. Smith:** Just to go back to Mr. Dean, not to show favourites, but we were talking about learning from other jurisdictions and from our international colleagues. I understand from one of my colleagues that you spoke yesterday about being out of the country in October as a juror of an international policy competition. I just wondered if you could speak to that a little bit, about your role there, and also the role of the province and our policy-makers in these international forums.

1710

**Mr. Dean:** Certainly. Obviously Canada, and I think predominantly Ontario, is seen around the world and held in very high esteem and highly trusted, and we are asked to regularly accommodate visiting delegations and sometimes go to share our expertise with, in particular, emerging democracies. There are lots of examples of that.

In the CAPAM example—this is the Commonwealth Association for Professional Administration and Manage-

ment—every two years some 50 or 60 Commonwealth countries come together to share information, to hear presentations, to hear best practices, and there is also this international public service competition. I was asked to be a juror this past year, and—a couple of things. First of all, I was asked to speak at the conference about Ontario and its modernization agenda. I can tell you that every single Commonwealth administration there was gripped by the work that we're doing in Ontario, on the service delivery side, on the policy implementation and delivery side, and particularly in the area of human resource development. So one stands with a great deal of pride representing this province at international events of that nature.

One of the other nice parts about it, though, of course, is that we're sharing knowledge with countries that are not as well resourced and endowed as Canada. We do have a role, and it's a historical and very important role, that this province and this country play on the international development scene.

The winner of this competition this year was a small project in Indonesia which involved taking Internet technology to a very remote mountainous region of Indonesia that is ordinarily accessible only over a number of days and through a variety of transportation means. An enterprising university project had taken satellite-based Internet technology to a very isolated community and in a very short space of time you had government services being provided, including some remote health care technology, but also opening up education for children in that community in an absolutely new way.

What did I and my colleagues in more developed countries learn from that? The fact that we're now seeing emerging countries leapfrog traditional forms of technology and going right to satellite technology. It was absolutely remarkable to see the impact that that initiative had but, most of all, a huge privilege to be able to take our experience in this province and share it with small developing countries from around the Commonwealth. It's hugely appreciated, and I think we can all take a great deal of pride from the work that we're doing together here in Ontario.

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you. How much longer do we have?

**The Vice-Chair:** You have about six minutes in this rotation.

**Ms. Smith:** At that particular conference, was Ontario represented as—you obviously spoke on behalf of our public service. Were there other public service initiatives that were represented in the competition or on the agenda as speakers? What other areas are we seen as leaders in?

**Mr. Dean:** There was one—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** And were they as gripping?

**Mr. Dean:** One of the finalists was, interestingly enough, a federal-provincial Crossing Boundaries initiative. This is an initiative that is housed here in Ontario and it's an initiative that promotes collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries. This was very highly thought of by our colleagues across the Commonwealth and I

think fell just narrowly short of being in the top three. But I can tell you that anything that Ontario or a Canadian jurisdiction takes to those sorts of fora grabs attention. People want to know more about it. Again, we talked earlier about the UK. I've been involved in sharing some of the work we're doing on modernization with our UK colleagues. Originating in that country, I always feel a particular degree of pride when we take something new and better to our colleagues in Whitehall. I have increasing opportunities to do that given the work that we're doing on the leading edge of public service reform over the last number of years.

**The Vice-Chair:** You've got about four minutes.

**Ms. Smith:** Four more minutes?

**The Vice-Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Smith:** Perhaps, since we've talked about the international spectrum, you could talk a little bit on a national basis. You talked about the project that did go to the international conference, where it was, I take it, a federal-Ontario initiative. What about province-to-province? Obviously, we participate in a number of tables at the political level, but from a public service perspective, what kind of initiatives are we involved in or taking the lead in through the jurisdictions here in Canada?

**Mr. Dean:** I'll give you a couple of examples. One of course is a very graphic and important example, the Quebec-Ontario labour mobility initiative, which is very important in terms of competitiveness. It's an exercise, an initiative that has spanned a number of political administrations, but we've seen some very big breakthroughs in that one recently.

From the public administration perspective, my colleague cabinet secretaries get together a couple of times a year and we share information and best practices. In fact, there was a meeting yesterday which occurred while I was at this table. One of the neat things we've done recently is to establish a national policy and research website so that in fact you can post a policy initiative or a particular area of policy development on that site and obtain very quickly information from across the country so that we're not reinventing the wheel every time we start a policy initiative. There's a lot of excitement across the country around that.

But again, I would say that our provincial colleagues look to Ontario for leadership. They look to Ontario for best practices, and many of the things we do here are picked up and emulated across the country. That's obviously a source of great pride and inspiration for my colleagues who work on and champion those initiatives. I will say, though, that public servants everywhere, at the federal level, our colleagues in BC and Alberta, are recognized internationally as leaders as well. We do some things well; others do some things better. We've got lots to learn from other jurisdictions, and we're always on the lookout for people who are doing something a little better than us, because we want to emulate those best practices as well.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Dean, and to the government caucus. We'll now spend the next 10 minutes with the opposition caucus questioning.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** A 20-minute rotation?

**The Vice-Chair:** We're going to adjourn at 5 to go and vote. We have a vote coming up. You'll do 10 minutes after the vote.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I have just a few questions. Thank you for joining us today. You mentioned that the Premier's office has 61 staff. How many people in this room are members of the staff of the Premier's office?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** One, to the best of my knowledge.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** So are these members of the public? They've got badges—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** That's a question I—this is a public meeting open to whomever, but there is one person here from the Premier's office, Mr. Aaron Lazarus. The woman beside him is my issues manager from the Ministry of Health. Not to be rude, but I don't have clue who the rest of these people are, but I believe they're very welcome.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I'm sure they are, but I don't either. I was curious as to whether they're all on the Premier's staff or not. So no one else is on the Premier's staff here. One member of the Premier's staff.

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**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, not to the best of my knowledge.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Because they didn't look like interested members of the public. They looked like they were taking notes and involved in the process.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Yes, they sure did.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Oh, yes, I'm good with that.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I believe they've been gripped by what they've heard.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Probably they were gripped.

You talked about the Premier's travel and his transportation earlier when my colleague was asking about it. First of all, can you provide us with the names of everyone who has travelled with the Premier in the past year?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You mean like the delegation that was on the India-Pakistan trade delegation?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** And also when he's travelling with OPP escorts.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We've already had a variety of questions from your colleague about transportation matters and we'll seek to provide—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** If we could have the names of everyone who has travelled with him in the past year.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The practicality of that I'm not certain of, but we'll endeavour to get what we can.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I understand that it's not your field, but if you could at least endeavour to. Maybe Mr. Dean can say whether that's possible or not.

One thing I wanted to ask about: You talked about the fleet of vehicles that the Premier has. How many vehicles does he have?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** No, I talked about a fleet of vehicles that the Ontario Provincial Police has.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Yes. You can't tell us how many they have to ferry the Premier around?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Firstly, my history tells me that the OPP does not typically encourage discussion of their security measures for public officials. That is the first part, which I said earlier. But yes, we're going to seek to get you as much of that information as is available.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You see, when the Premier was addressing the media after the federal budget when they talked about the rebate for fuel-efficient vehicles and the taxes on gas-guzzling vehicles, he was asked about his own fleet. He deflected the question by saying his fleet is E85. I'm wondering if you could provide us with the gas receipts for the fleet of those vehicles to see how much of that fuel is E85, which I know is not widely available. But it would seem to me that he was implying that they rushed that vehicle down to the one or two E85 stations to fill it up and that those vehicles operate on E85 fuel. He was implying that he doesn't use regular unleaded gasoline with a possible 10% content of ethanol. Could we get those—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Well, I don't know that we can because you're posing questions about vehicle operations of the Ontario Provincial Police.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I understand.

**Mr. Patten:** Take the subway.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** That was yesterday.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** So within the limitations that I've already expressed, we'll—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Because it was the Premier who made the statement. Basically he was implying to the press—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The Premier would be speaking to the people of the province of Ontario giving them, I think, the benefit of the doubt about the vehicles that are used for the purposes of his transportation, among other things. You and I know well that over a good period of time now, at least for the last 15 years or so, the OPP, rather than a private citizen, has been providing the primary responsibility for ground transportation for the Premier. Within that limitation, we'll get you whatever information is available. It may be that you're asking about the detailed estimate and operation of the Ontario Provincial Police. I'm not sure what we'll be able to provide on that front but we're going to look into it for you. No problem.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You will provide what you can?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Thank you very much. I will pass it to my colleague from Whitby–Ajax.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax):** If I could address my first questions to Mr. Dean: Yesterday, when we were discussing some freedom of information requests, I believe you indicated that in each ministry there is a coordinator who takes in all of the requests and then determines what to do with them. We talked about it in a variety of situations. I'm wondering about any that might be considered to be politically contentious. Would that be

the coordinator's responsibility to flag those freedom of information requests and to deal with them? What would normally happen in that situation?

**Mr. Dean:** Well, politically contentious—my own sense, my own knowledge of this is that there are freedom of information requests that might sometimes raise corporate issues, and to the extent that a corporate response or perspective is required that, that might be flagged a little bit more broadly, but I don't think a solely political filter is applied to these things, if that's what you're asking.

**Mrs. Elliott:** If something was identified as a corporate issue, then how would it typically be handled? What would the coordinator typically do with a question of that nature? What would typically happen at that point?

**Mr. Dean:** I imagine that if the scope of the request arguably went beyond the confines of the institution, usually the ministry or in some cases an agency, it would be flagged for other organizations that might have responsive documents or information.

**Mrs. Elliott:** Would a request of a corporate nature typically make its way to the Premier's office?

**Mr. Dean:** To the extent that the Premier's office might be a responding organization, yes. But other than that, not typically.

**Mrs. Elliott:** It would then make its way up within the ministry to which the request had been addressed?

**Mr. Dean:** Yes.

**Mrs. Elliott:** I understand that in April 2006, there was an e-mail that was sent to three individuals in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the e-mail advised that a freedom of information request had been submitted by the CBC, looking at the question of insider wins at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. I'm not sure whether this question should be directed to you or perhaps to the Deputy Premier. Did the Premier's office become aware of this freedom of information request either at that time or any time thereafter?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I had the chance yesterday to put on the record the issue of awareness related to the matter and talked about that in relation to the pending presentation of the Fifth Estate piece. To the best of my knowledge, the transmission of information that's been discussed from the agency and within its reporting responsibilities was a matter that remained there, to the very best of any information that I have. So it was in the fall, in the run-up to the presentation of the Fifth Estate, that awareness was first created, because of the transcript that was created, I believe, from the questions and answers of the OLG official who appeared in that piece.

**The Vice-Chair:** I think, with that, we can recess and come back immediately after question period.

Thanks very much, Mrs. Elliott. Thanks, everyone.

*The committee recessed from 1730 to 1740.*

**The Vice-Chair:** We'll reconvene the meeting. I understand the NDP does not really want to use its last 10 minutes today.

**Mr. Ferreira:** Yes. I prefer to have a full 20 on Tuesday when we reconvene after today's proceedings.

**The Vice-Chair:** Okay. So I'll turn it back over to Mrs. Elliott. She has 10 minutes left in her rotation.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Are we adjourning at that point, then? Is that your plan?

**The Vice-Chair:** That was my plan, yes.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Okay.

**The Vice-Chair:** Unless the government—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I just wanted to make sure I understood what all that meant.

**The Vice-Chair:** So we've got 10 minutes left.

**Mrs. Elliott:** If I could just follow along, Deputy Premier, with my previous question with respect to the freedom of information request coming to the Premier's office, would you be able to undertake to see whether that request was actually received in the Premier's office?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Which one was that? I'm sorry—

**Mrs. Elliott:** The freedom of information request in April 2006 with respect to the insider wins at OLG.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** If it was received in the Premier's office?

**Mrs. Elliott:** Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** This was a freedom of information request related to the OLG?

**Mrs. Elliott:** Yes. Could you undertake to check to see if it was ever received and provide us with copies of any correspondence in relation to it, if it was received?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Sure. I must confess, in saying yes, that I don't understand why it would it have been, but yes, we'll undertake to see if it's there.

**Mrs. Elliott:** Okay, thank you.

Again to the Deputy Premier, I'd like to move forward now to August 2006. We've been advised that there was a meeting that happened in late August 2006 about the issue of insider wins at OLG. The report was that Mr. Wilson Lee, who of course works in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, attended this meeting and advised the meeting that the Premier's office saw the issue of insider wins and the CBC program as nothing more than a communications issue. After this was raised in the House, we got some different stories about it, one from Mr. Chin, who said there was no recollection of a meeting happening, and one from Mr. Lee who said that a meeting may have happened. Can you comment, Deputy Premier, on whether such a meeting actually did happen, to your knowledge?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I can ascertain to find out. I've heard so many—I've heard this presented in a different fashion as well, so we want to make sure that I offer that with complete clarity. So, yes, I'll get back to you and offer whatever information I can learn about the nature of that—whether that meeting took place—and report back.

**Mrs. Elliott:** And you can confirm whether it did or it didn't.

Do you have any idea how there would have been a discussion about it just being a communications issue, as opposed to anything more significant, and were you aware of any discussions of that nature in the Premier's office?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** With the other question pending, I'm then actually into a circumstance where I'd be speculating. So I think it would be better if I didn't do that. I don't have enough information to be able to offer even an informed judgment and I would just be speculating. I don't think that's helpful.

**Mrs. Elliott:** All right, that's fine. Then, similarly, there's also a report of a meeting happening on October 25, 2006, which Mr. Guy attended, as well as Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Lopinski. Was your office aware of any such meeting? Similar to the previous question: Were you aware of it in the Premier's office?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** This is a meeting that I believe I have spoken about in estimates, if not earlier today, then maybe it was yesterday. All I know about that meeting is that it's a meeting that was called by OLG and that as best I can determine, what came out of it was the action plan that included the work of KPMG. Seven points, I think, were associated with that. That's the information I have. I don't know what else would be available.

**Mrs. Elliott:** Would you be able to determine from the records whether the Premier's office was aware of this meeting taking place in advance of October 25?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We can certainly search to see what information would be available, but I could imagine in a circumstance dealing with my own ministry that in lots and lots and lots of circumstances we're working away on issues and there isn't a formalized mechanism by which we let people—you know, say we're calling together some people to work on this, that or the other thing. We'd be doing that constantly without any line of communication or proactive information stream. But we can certainly see if there is any further information particular to the nature of that meeting.

**Mrs. Elliott:** I guess this is a somewhat similar question: any communication that there would have been between the Premier's office and the ministry of infrastructure renewal with respect to OLG from the time that the CBC program aired forward.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think the issue of communications from the ministry, when it's the ministry communicating—it would be more appropriate that they would be communicating, perhaps in the mechanisms that Mr. Dean has spoken about before. I'm not sure whether he might have something more to offer on that. You were looking at it particularly from the time after the airing of the Fifth Estate piece?

**Mrs. Elliott:** Yes, and more generally, what was the reaction of the Premier's office, and what happened as a result of that reaction?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think the actions that were informed have been discussed quite openly and relate to

the seven steps, and the KPMG piece most certainly was significant amongst those. We could perhaps give you more—I know Minister Caplan has spoken quite a lot about those particular steps, so I'm not sure if you're looking for more information on that.

**Mrs. Elliott:** Specifically the correspondence, notes of meetings, anything else that happened after the program aired and the Premier's office became aware of the situation, and communications with the ministry thereafter. Similarly, Mr. Dean, the interaction of your office as a result of the CBC program. I think you've already indicated that you sort of let the process happen after that. Is that correct?

**Mr. Dean:** Yes, that's correct. As I said, by the time I was back in the country, we had the Ombudsman fully engaged and one doesn't want to do anything other than to support that process and prepare to do whatever comes out of it. So that's correct. I think I've been as fulsome as I possibly can in that area.

**Mrs. Elliott:** How much more time is there?

**The Vice-Chair:** I've got about three minutes left.

**Mrs. Elliott:** With respect to the interaction with the Ombudsman, Deputy Premier, can you let us know what kinds of communications, if any, the Premier's office received as a result of his inquiry?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes, of course. We'll add that to the list. Mr. Dean will correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that at the point in time that the Ombudsman initiates an investigation, inquiry, the development of a report, they're dealing either with the agency directly or with the line ministry, not back to a central agency of the government. So in a circumstance where the Ombudsman might be doing a review of something pertaining to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, all of his dealings have been with my ministry, as opposed to working through central agencies. I assume that's the way it's dealt with at all times, that the relationship the Ombudsman establishes is not with the central agencies but rather with those that have—unless it was perhaps something that they had direct responsibility for. More typically, they'd be dealing with the line ministry that was responsible for the agency or the agency directly. So I don't think there would be anything but, again, we'll take a look and if there is anything, we'll bring it back to the committee.

**Mrs. Elliott:** Very good. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair:** Anything else?

**Mrs. Elliott:** No, I think that's it for today. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair:** Okay. We don't have any more comments from the official opposition, and the NDP will begin at the beginning next Tuesday after petitions.

Thank you very much for your co-operation this afternoon. Thank you, Minister, and Tony and Shelley.

We're adjourned until next Tuesday after petitions.

*The committee adjourned at 1750.*





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