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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

Tuesday 29 April 2014

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 29 avril 2014

**Standing Committee on
Justice Policy**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
JUSTICE POLICYCOMITÉ PERMANENT
DE LA JUSTICE

Tuesday 29 April 2014

Mardi 29 avril 2014

The committee met at 0831 in committee room 2.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

HON. GLEN R. MURRAY

Le Président (M. Shafiq Qaadri): Chers collègues, j'appelle à l'ordre cette séance du Comité permanent de la justice. Je voudrais accueillir notre prochain présentateur, the Honourable Glen Murray, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, government of Ontario, who will be affirmed by our Clerk.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tamara Poman-ski): Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give to this committee touching the subject of the present inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I do.

Le Président (M. Shafiq Qaadri): Bienvenue, monsieur Murray. Vous avez cinq minutes pour vos remarques introductives. S'il vous plaît, commencez maintenant.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will just say bon matin, good morning. I really don't have a statement, so I look forward to the committee's questions and insights.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you, Mr. Murray. I congratulate you on the shortest intro remarks so far executed in parliamentary history.

Mr. Yakabuski, the floor is yours; 20 minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Mr. Murray, for joining us this morning. I'm shocked that you don't have a statement, but you're giving us extra time.

What we're trying to do at this committee is to establish all of the information surrounding the gas plant cancellations and the deletion of emails—I would say, maybe, a cover-up of information following that cancellation.

The mandate, of course, of this committee is quite broad. The reason that you've been brought in is not only because of the fact that you were a member of the cabinet that approved the cancellation and the settlement with TransCanada, but you were also part of the transition team. Correct?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I was on the transition committee.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, the transition committee between former Premier McGuinty and current Premier Wynne.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So we're trying to find out just what the timelines were with respect to when that transition team knew what it knew and how that might affect the investigation into this. Of course, there's been new information since, after the OPP released their ITO, and that has drawn us into a whole new realm here.

You were a leadership candidate for the Liberal leadership.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A very successful one.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes.

Laughter.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, we're going to have comedy out here, are we? Okay.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Of course you were successful; of course you were successful. You parlayed this into a senior cabinet position. Well done.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: John, I would be the last person in the Liberal Party to get advice from on leadership runs, if you're considering. That's all I'm saying.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, we are going to look for some advice here, or we're going to try to find out what kind of advice you got, because—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd appreciate that, but let's just keep leadership advice out of it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —as a leadership candidate, I noticed that during that campaign—and I don't live in the Twitterverse, but we do pay attention to it—you tweeted out something to the effect that this would never have happened, this gas plant cancellation scandal would never have happened if you were the leader. That's something that you put out while you were campaigning to be the leader of the Liberal Party.

It's clear that you had a different opinion on what went down and what happened—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, a point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Mr. Delaney, point of order.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Just to make sure that we stay on track, whatever Mr. Murray's thoughts may have been during the leadership convention has no bearing on the committee's agenda.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, I'll try to establish that as we go on.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Your point is well taken. We just simply once again respectfully request you to please bring it to the mandate of the committee.

Continue, Mr. Yakabuski.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Absolutely, Chair. During that leadership convention or leadership race, you had a differing view or a contrary view as to what happened. I'm going to ask you about your thoughts as the cabinet discussions were taking place, as you were a member of the cabinet that made the decision to go ahead with that cancellation of the gas plants and hereby we have this scandal as a result of that. What was your input at the cabinet table with respect to that discussion? Did you disagree with the decision to cancel those plants during the campaign? What were your thoughts, when that issue was being discussed at cabinet, about what we were going to do with the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First of all, I thought I was here about the transition team and not about cabinet. There are other people who were probably at the cabinet table. I think you've had Minister Chiarelli. A couple of times you've had Minister—

Mr. John Yakabuski: But since we have you we're going to ask you that because you were at the cabinet table—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I know, but my recollections of that are very, very sketchy. It was not one of the files I was working on. I don't remember there was very much discussion of this. I think that part of the challenge is—you made a reference to the leadership issue, and I feel very strongly about this. I see it happening every day on the transportation files when politicians, in the lead-up or during an election campaign, make election commitments, as your party did, as ours did, and as the third party did. I have a strong feeling that all of us should stop doing that—the Tories, the New Democrats and the Liberals—because—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, so—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Let me finish—

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no, no, no. This is not an opportunity for you to—you had a chance for an opening statement, Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm answering your question. My comment in that context that you raised, and I think it's only fair to let me respond to it, is that parties ought to stop making those kinds of commitments because I think that you would know, as a caucus member—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm asking for what your role was at the cabinet table during that—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I've answered that question, I think.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, okay. Thank you very much, Minister. You're saying you had very little to do with the decision that led to the cancellation of the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville, so we're going to move on to that leadership race.

Now, because you had a contrary view—you indicated that in a tweet and probably have indicated it in other ways as well. I haven't gone over all the press clippings during that period, but you did make a number of statements and you took some bold stances during that leadership race that were different from some of your colleagues', or most of your colleagues', I would say.

You had a different view and knew, should you have been successful as a leadership candidate, that you were going to be facing this mess, the genesis of which was in the McGuinty premiership. You would be facing that as the new Premier, should you be successful. Did you ask for a briefing from senior government officials, the McGuinty or the Premier's staff, chiefs of staff or any of those people who were still in place until such time as the transition was completed? Did you ask for a briefing on the gas plant issue so that you could be fully informed as to how you may go forward should you have been successful as the leadership candidate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. The nature of the transition committee wasn't to do those kinds of things. That's not what a transition—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not talking about transition now, sir. I'm talking about when you were a leadership candidate. This is not after you withdrew and threw your support behind Kathleen Wynne. This is while you were a leadership candidate and hopeful to be the Premier of Ontario. Did you not ask for a meeting with the McGuinty team to find out just what you needed to know, all the facts, so if you did become leader and Premier you would be armed with all of the information? Did you ask for a meeting to have a full briefing on that issue?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. I didn't ask for any briefings in the two-and-a-half-month leadership campaign because we were out there trying to get elected and trying to communicate with people. I was travelling the province. In that 12-week campaign, you don't do much other than ride a bus around the province trying to listen to Ontarians and run a campaign. You don't do briefings. I don't know any leadership campaign in the history of Ontario where leadership candidates have asked for briefings from government officials. That would be precedent-setting.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: But while you were considering running for leader, you knew what was going to happen—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As you probably know, I was president of the Canadian Urban Institute and I was working on energy planning. During this period of time—to your party—I met with one of your critics, trying to convince the Conservatives, the Liberals and the NDP that they should integrate integrated planning. I have to tell you, with no party was I successful—when I ran for leader of the party.

I've argued for integrated planning as Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Kathleen Wynne agreed with me, so we're now going into integrated planning.

The other thing I did when I became Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation during this period of time was to try to learn the lesson—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Let me finish.

Mr. John Yakabuski: But you're going way ahead of me now.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You asked a question; let me answer.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I asked you, when you were considering running for the leadership, if you asked for a meeting, and your answer was no.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: But who would? Name one leadership candidate—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not asking who would. I'm asking—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's a little bit—

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Colleagues.

Mr. John Yakabuski: With all due respect, sir, I'm asking if you did, and your answer—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, I didn't. I don't know any leadership candidate, ever, in the history of Ontario, who, in a two-month campaign, asked for government official briefings on matters. I've just never heard of it. I'm not sure how you'd win a campaign. But given my success, maybe I should have taken your advice.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, given that you had such a contrary view to what happened, it was my consideration that perhaps you might have looked into that, to ask those kinds of questions so that you would be—forewarned is to be forearmed, eh?

Anyway, let's move on to the post-leadership period. You were a member of Kathleen Wynne's transition team.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You would have had the opportunity to speak to Monique Smith, who headed up that transition team, on a number of occasions, I would presume.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, probably four or five conversations. She was supporting the committee. She was not a participant in the committee as much as a supporter of it, and she was doing the logistics and organizing. She was making sure the meetings happened on time. She was managing the communications. Monique was not working on policy issues. Our conversations were about when I was available for a meeting.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm going to ask you some of the questions that we hope to get more specific answers to.

During those meetings, I would have to conclude that based on the press reports of the day, the gas plant issue was going to be significant. The transition team—what was your role with respect to meetings concerning the gas plant cancellation issue? At that time, there was knowledge out there, according to Peter Wallace, that there were issues with regard to the deletion and destruction of information that, by law, should have been retained. According to Peter Wallace, the secretary of

cabinet, there was knowledge, at the cabinet and the transition team level, that there was destruction of documents that you were obliged by law to retain. What kind of conversations did you have with Monique Smith on that issue, the gas plant cancellation and the destruction of those documents?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: That was not a subject the committee dealt with, for very good reasons. The committee only had a few months, and the job of the committee was to take the commitments of the party in the last election and—Premier Wynne very generously included all leadership candidates' platforms. So we took all the platforms. We had experts from outside of government who served on that committee. What the committee worked very hard and, I think, very successfully to do was to take what had been an electoral commitment and leadership commitments and make them into government programs and policy frameworks that then resulted in the Premier drafting letters of direction to her ministers to implement the program. That was the job. We were not an administrative committee looking at an administrative process or reviewing an administrative process. That wasn't the nature of it, nor was the composition of the committee appropriate for that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So at no time did this committee talk about the issues that could be damaging to the new government? You sound like you're talking about moving the furniture around and finding out who's going to sit where and shifting some Premier office files. You never, ever talked about the pitfalls that were awaiting you as the new Wynne government, waiting to stare you in the face the minute this Legislature returned? The gas plant scandal was already being talked about. You never talked about the gas plant scandal as part of the transition team and some of the facts that we're becoming more and more aware of with regard to the deletion of government information that should have been retained, as well as the deletion of emails by staff as they were leaving, and some even when they were staying on? This became apparent after we were aware that the figures were completely bogus with regard to the \$40-million cost; the auditor put to rest that story on the part of the government.

You never discussed this issue, as part of the transition team? A simple yes or no will be—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. Actually, I don't get scripted by you, sir, and I'd like a little respect. Three times now you have interrupted me. I was trying to answer that question earlier and I'll tell you how it was managed.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It can be answered yes or no.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. Mr. Chairperson, I'd like to try to get at least three minutes out.

The way that was dealt with was, what lessons has the government learned? Because all governments make errors and everyone—the question isn't whether you're in power. All of us in this room have parties that have served in power and we all, I think, have a generally positive legacy, but every government has made mistakes and I can account them.

What was discussed was, going forward, what are the kinds of things that we want to do differently and what have we done well? So what are the successes of the last 10 years of the Liberal government that we want to repeat, and what have we learned in government?

Mr. John Yakabuski: That would have been a short conversation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, it was a very positive conversation. You come from a very fine party, sir, that built a lot of wonderful things. I can show some respect for past Premiers; I think you could do the same, because we have a pretty wonderful province here, and every political party in the Legislature has contributed to it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, I think we can move on.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: One of the things, for example: We were all asked as new ministers to review all of our files to look for potential problems. Were there infrastructure projects, for example, for me as infrastructure, that may not enjoy community support, that we may want to rethink? And we want to do it early before it costs the taxpayers money.

I canvassed my colleagues, I canvassed communities, I talked to municipal leaders, and there were some projects. One of those would be familiar to you, which was the interprovincial bridge. It was very clear that there was no support for it, that money was being spent on it and that the mayor of Ottawa and all of the MPPs in all parties didn't think it was the right project. So I moved very—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay. The mandate of the committee is not about interprovincial bridges; it is about the gas plants.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, it was. You asked me. I was there; you weren't.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, the mandate of this committee has nothing to do with interprovincial bridges.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I know, but you asked about how this thing was handled. One of the things that came out of those discussions and, you will see, that Premier Wynne directed us to do was to say any major infrastructure project, anything that could have implications or costs, we've got to manage very tightly.

As I said, we handle projects now—the AFP reforms and the way we manage projects. So something like the interprovincial bridge cost the taxpayers nothing. It was managed and it was removed from the capital program—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay. Minister, with all due respect, I only have 20 minutes.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —and that was a lesson, I think, that our party learned.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You had an opportunity to make a statement.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm hearing from you that your party hasn't learned that lesson.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Minister. Did you ever meet with the Premier's former chief of staff, David Livingston?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Not after the leadership race. Not during or after the leadership race, no. Why would I?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Never after the leadership race. Okay.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. He was no longer the chief of staff to the Premier and was a private citizen. Why would I—

Mr. John Yakabuski: So at no time during the transition process?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It would have been absolutely inappropriate for me to do that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, he was still part of it during the transition process.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Actually, he wasn't. He was not working for us; he was concluding his job.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He may well have been, but he was still part of the transition process.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, he was not part of any—let me be very—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, so you did not meet with him?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You asked me a question. I never had a meeting with him. He never met with the transition team to my knowledge, and—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, absolutely—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. What about Laura Miller? Did you ever meet with her during the transition process?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Never met with Laura Miller?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Of course not.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay. Did you have any knowledge of Peter Wallace before the scandalous revelations presented in the ITO in mid-April 2014?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Pardon me?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Did you know Peter Wallace? Had you met with Peter Wallace any time beforehand?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have never had a meeting one-on-one with Peter Wallace, except in discussions outside the Cabinet Office. On matters relating to cabinet, I've never had a sit-down meeting with Peter Wallace about this or anything else. I haven't had a file that's related to his particular authority.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Did you ever, during this transition process, meet with former Premier McGuinty?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have only seen Premier McGuinty at a funeral of a mutual friend, and we had a social conversation. I've never had a discussion. I think the gentleman deserves some private life at this point.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So at no time during the transition process did you meet with Dalton McGuinty.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Is he allowed to say Dalton's name?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, I actually am. He is someone who served this province very well. He's a very fine gentleman.

0850

Mr. John Yakabuski: So you never met with former Premier McGuinty during the transition process at any time?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. We never had a meeting, and he has gone on to his life and I wish him well in it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What was your specific role on the transition team, then, Minister? Were you just one of a number of people, or did you have a specific designated role by, at that time, Premier-elect or Premier-appointed Wynne?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I was very involved in Premier Wynne's leadership race when I exited the race to support her. I was working with her, as she wanted one of her colleagues from caucus to sit on the committee. Partly because I live in downtown Toronto, it was very easy for me to get to meetings. I was available, and I had become quite involved in her campaign, so I was familiar with her program and her platform. I was there to be a bit of a liaison with caucus, but just to work in helping look at integrating all of the different ideas that came out of the leadership campaign and looking at how we could execute that as a government program in our first year in office post-leadership. That was pretty much the job of every other member of the committee as well.

People were brought in because of different expertise. I was brought in to be a person who had some cabinet experience, who understood a little bit about how the cabinet process and caucus process worked.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you. Who on that transition team, then, had specific responsibilities with regard to the gas plant cancellation and email deletion scandal? Somebody must have had carriage of that.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As I said, we looked at energy—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Was Monique Smith the one to deal with that, or was it another member—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, Monique Smith was dealing with the organizational issues supporting the transition team—which were a huge logistical challenge, given that we had people from every corner of the province there—coordinating that, and in a very short period of time.

You have to remember that during the leadership race, I had said that we would end the prorogation and we would be back on February 17. One of the things that I think people don't fully appreciate, and part of the reason we had a transition team, is that that was one of the shortest transitions, I think, in the history of Ontario, going from one Premier to another in a very short period of time.

What we were focused on was—well, the Premier was working on selecting her cabinet, so we would discuss energy policy, but it was really talking about what kind of energy policy we had. We would talk about accountability mechanisms and what we had learned. If you look at the way that the reforms that we have implemented, and the training that's going on on the roles of ministerial office staff and commercial transactions—

Mr. John Yakabuski: So there was nobody that had a specific responsibility for that?

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Yakabuski.

The floor now passes to the NDP: Mr. Tabuns and Mr. Singh, 20 minutes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you for being here.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Good morning. How are you?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Very well.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Good.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm going to ask you a number of questions about whose responsibility, or whose role it was, to receive certain information. I can understand that you may not know, and if you don't know, I'm happy with you don't know. That's a very acceptable answer.

I'm just going to go through a list of a couple of things about that, beginning with—this might be a bit of a longer answer—in terms of your transition team or your transition committee briefings, were you a part of any briefings that talked about the issues that the incoming Premier would have to deal with, just generally speaking? Maybe not about—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A lot of it was around issues of what were the key policy initiatives that we wanted to continue, that the previous McGuinty administration—which I was also a part of—had. This was a chance, because many of us run—I mean, when you run for leadership of a party, you run because you want to support some of the things that your party was doing, but in a leadership race, you want to offer a different perspective and you want to go in some new directions. So a lot of the discussion was, what's working? What do we believe in? What do we want to continue? What should be a significant change in policy and direction, and how do we want to manage our government differently than we have before?

It was a time of taking stock of 10 years in power, which is a significant time to be in power. We have learned a lot; we have a lot of experience. There is some stuff that some of us thought we could do better, that we would have done differently, in hindsight, I think, and some things that we are very proud of.

The transition team brought eyes that were at the table through that process. It also brought people from outside government, who had no experience in government, who could give us a very fresh look. So in a very short number of meetings between the last week of January and the first week of June, we were basically doing that.

For the first couple of weeks, it was really trying to get everything ready to come back to the House on, as you may remember, February 17.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's very helpful.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Is that helpful?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes, that is. Thank you very much for that.

Do you know who was briefed by the outgoing Premier with relation specifically to the gas plant scandal or the deletion of emails? Was there any one individual that you're aware of who was briefed for that, or any couple of individuals who were briefed on that specific issue? If you don't know, that's fine.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. Not at the transition committee, which I was a part of.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. There might have been other individuals, but just not with the—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And remember, at this point, much of what we know now, or what has been in the media—first of all, these are allegations, not convictions, or charges and not convictions. So there are issues out there that are the subject of investigation.

At that time, I think there was a sense of strengthening the role of cabinet, strengthening the oversight of ministers. We talked a lot about that. We felt that we wanted a stronger—ministers wanted stronger oversight and control.

There was also, particularly for the new Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, energy, finance, health—for a number of these ministries, we wanted to increase our oversight and—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: We'll talk about those issues at the end of the questions.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, but the discussions around that, if there was a reference to gas plants or anything at all—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: To gas plants.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —it was more in the, “Okay. We think we can do better. What does ‘better’ look like, and what have we learned?” So it was a constructive conversation, because the entire point of the committee was preparing the Premier and the new cabinet to govern and to figure out substantively on what we were going to govern as a priority, given the leadership race and the new ideas that came forward, and what our style of government was going to be.

We spent a lot of time talking about accountability. We had three former deputy ministers on the committee who shared with us their views of the relationship between management and governance and how you deal with accountability in the very transparent society we live in, and what are the changes. So that was the kind of discussion that went on.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. You mentioned that you did have some discussions about what we would do differently, given the way the gas plant issue had come about. Do you know who else was involved in those discussions about how things should have been done differently?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, the Premier was very involved in that. At the time, Andrew Bevan came to some of the meetings. There were different staff. Some of these people were not yet staff in the Premier's office, because there really wasn't a Premier's office yet; it was being constructed. But there were different—I can't remember all the staff in the room, but, depending on the situation, some of the people were people who had been—most of the people in the room were volunteers.

Certainly for the first few meetings, it was fairly fluid. Once the Premier's office was established a month or two months into the process, we had more regular attendees for that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Was there anyone assigned to the team, or anyone in the team, whose responsibility was

looking at potential scandals or potential issues that the previous Premier had and how you could insulate or separate the incoming Premier from those issues, because she's a new Premier, to say, “These were the past issues. These are the different issues”—was there anyone who was assigned with looking at those two and trying to draw the line between the two?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Not a person. The way that worked was that the transition committee and the deputy ministers had a very thoughtful discussion, and each minister undertook in their responsibilities a quite thorough review.

In my case, for example, with the Windsor-Essex Parkway, which was something where there were rumours of concern in the months after I was appointed, I very aggressively went out and reviewed all of the major projects. Eglinton Crosstown—I went through that. When I sometimes didn't hear things in the ministry, I would bring in stakeholders from outside. I did many, many round tables as a minister over months to do that.

I mentioned the interprovincial bridge. That was one that came up very early on my radar screen as a project that could cost a lot of money. It didn't make much sense and didn't enjoy much support. We were coming to a decision point about whether we spent more money on it.

A lesson learned from past years was, if we're not proceeding with the project, let's get out of the project before there is any cost. A lot of time was spent with Mayor Watson and other officials in Ottawa, as that involved other governments, to have that discussion, and we made a decision together that we would not proceed with that project.

So we were not, as ministers, as aggressive early on maybe in the past as we were in a lot of that. There's a review of the AFP process—a lot of reviews going on—as a result of making sure that mistakes that had happened before would not be repeated.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. So I think I understand that each minister took responsibility for their own portfolio.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And the Premier directed us quite specifically. You've seen the third party—I mean, my staff today is in all-day training on third-party transactions. They are going through a training session all day today—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have another question that I wanted to ask you.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —as a result of that.
0900

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure, thank you. The other question is, was there any person—they could have been elected or they could have been staff—assigned to understand specifically the scope of the \$1.1-billion figure of the gas plant scandal? Was there anyone assigned to that task specifically?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, I think the intention of the Premier at this point was, after some frustration that we were all experiencing on both sides of the House, I think—the numbers that were coming in from different sources were changing rather dramatically. The Premier's

view has been that the Auditor General had to be called in and that this committee's mandate had to be expanded. The view of the transition team was very supportive of the Premier, and our advice was to take a stronger hand in it to try to work in a non-partisan way and to bring the Auditor General in, because it was felt that, at this point, the one agency of government that was most equipped and independent to actually get to the bottom of it was the Auditor General. We had a good history with that.

The Auditor General's report, which I read quite significantly, makes the point that so much of what that number is or could be varies on a number of factors—because I think that's a 20- or 30-year period in which that money would either be expended. She was quite clear in saying that number could be much smaller. It probably wouldn't be larger than that, but it could vary by hundreds of millions of dollars. In the conversations I think many of us had with the Auditor General, she went out of her way to say that there is no such thing as a firm number here, because this is over a long period of time with—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's okay. We'll get into those—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think that the transition team, because some of the people in the room had some financial expertise and knew something about these things, didn't need to be persuaded of that. There was enough expertise in the room that people knew these numbers were very hard to nail down, that the Auditor General should give it her best shot and that we would probably be dealing with a range rather than a specific number.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. Did you have dealings, on a regular basis, with Monique Smith? Was that someone who you spoke with?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh yes, on a fairly frequent basis. But Monique's relationship with me and the team was not about content, but about the incredible logistics that were involved in trying to manage this very large, diverse committee.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. Peter Wallace told the committee that he had briefed Monique Smith about issues of privilege, specifically around the issues of record-keeping and how there were some problems in the Premier's office with respect to that. Did you ever hear Monique Smith bring those concerns back, that there are some record-keeping issues that we need to work on in the new era, with the new Premier—that we need to rectify some of these problems?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. What happened was—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's fine.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I presume she gave advice to the Premier, because what we got as ministers and what we continue to get constantly—as I said, my staff is in training on yet another dimension to this—is a commitment to what I jokingly refer to as “lifelong learning” on data. The complexity in my ministries—I have two ministries. We deal with a lot of commercially sensitive information and we deal with a lot of the personal infor-

mation of Ontarians: their health, driver status. So confidentiality—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I can barely hear—Mr. Chairman, I can't hear the questions because some folks are talking in the corner.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Colleagues, we have a request for silence on the floor, or relative silence.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A lot of what we've been doing is trying to deal with the complex balance of—we're working with the privacy commissioner. Our staffs, for the last year, have been in regular training sessions—as I said, mine is today—to deal with two areas: How do we deal with the balance between commercially sensitive information, intellectual property, and privacy information, the public's right to know and the Legislature's right to know? There's a reason we have a privacy commissioner, because some of these things are very difficult.

I'll say that some of the hardest decisions I make as a minister are around managing those kinds of information and my staff. The kinds of expertise that you need to know how to do this properly and to actually understand what the risks of unintentional or improper release are, are very tough because of social media and the Internet. There's a level of complexity—when I was mayor of Winnipeg, we had the Internet, but we didn't have the complexity. We dealt with a lot of similar commercial transactions. I never went to bed, when I was mayor, worried about managing someone's private information, commercial information or intellectual property in a way that might prejudice their life in a negative way.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Which is good—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Today, I go to bed often worrying about those things, wondering if our systems work.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have another question I wanted to ask you. Did you hear—and if you didn't, it's okay; we can move on to another area—any loose talk or just any discussions about the way David Livingston was conducting his affairs or his business as the chief of staff to the previous Premier? If you didn't hear any concerns about it, we can move on. Or did you hear concerns about that?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: What I often had heard is that—I mean, what I know about David Livingston or what the buzz was—there certainly was a buzz about him. He was an extraordinarily well-respected financial banker. He had done an excellent job at Infrastructure Ontario introducing a new system and, for those reasons, was appointed to the Premier's cabinet. There was no negative buzz about him. I don't know him personally, so I can't really comment beyond that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. That's good.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Quite the contrary, there was no one who was raising concerns about him. I think his reputation certainly in the city with his career in the private sector was considered exemplary, competent management.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay. In terms of this file—and by this file, I mean the gas plant file—who would you say in cabinet had the responsibility of carrying this file with respect to the issue of document disclosure and the issue management? Would it be fair to say that it was the House leader, Mr. Milloy, or was it someone else you would say more so had the carriage of this file in terms of the document disclosure?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, what—can you hear me okay?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes, yes.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay. Well, the way it works is, the minister responsible is the minister who carries the file. I can't speak because I've never been the Minister of Energy, but as Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Transportation I have responsibility—you know, there's that old joke that it's question period and they don't call it answer period for a reason. Today, the amount of authority ministers have relative to their responsibilities is a subject of great parliamentary debate, and one of the stresses on the parliamentary system is that the first watchdog in oversight is the minister.

Paul Thomas at the University of Manitoba writes extensively about this, which is, there's a stress that we, as parliamentarians, have to have a conversation about—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Just can you factor in who the responsible person is—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's the minister—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: But who was it in this case, then? Who was that?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It was still the Minister of Energy, and it would have been. The committee was not a substitute for cabinet. It wasn't a substitute for the ministerial role. We would talk about what kinds of authority should ministers have, which is where I was going, and so the new Minister of Energy, Minister Chiarelli, would have to make sure that he had the support and the resources to be able to deal with the carriage of that information and the transparency associated with energy and a lot of thought—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's helpful.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —and discussions were had with Minister Chiarelli about that, and I think he shared that with you.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you know who Chike Agbasi is? I was going to spell the name, unless you know it is.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Chike Agbasi is a wonderful young man whose family came from rather difficult situations in Nigeria, is a Big Brother, voluntarily teaches fitness courses in the building and is a very decent, remarkable young man—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have no doubt about that.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —who is my scheduler and keeps my head above water, and if anything ever happens to him, I'm in deep trouble.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's good. That's great. It sounds like you have a good relationship with him.

His computer was one of the computers that was allegedly wiped. Did he ever speak to you about this and

say, “Listen, why was my computer wiped? What happened? My computer has been deleted, all the files on it.” Did he ever talk to you about that?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. And you know, I'm very protective of my family and my staff. Chike was a very junior person in the Premier's office and really had no responsibilities at all that were consequential in this case. I don't think he was even aware of that at all and certainly knows—I think probably his knowledge of that—this was the person who scheduled and did organizing work for the former Premier and does the same for me. In my office he would have nothing in his records any different than he had in the previous Premier's office, in managing that. He's a very fine, ethical young man who's a role model for many young kids.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And in fact, he's not alleged to have deleted his—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, I know. He has no knowledge and—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And that's never been my suggestion. I'm just suggesting that his computer was one of them that was wiped, and because he has a good relationship with you, I'm wondering if he brought that up and said, “Listen, Minister, this is concerning. I mean, my computer was deleted. Why did that happen?” Maybe he—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I wouldn't even know. I don't think he was even aware of it. He certainly never raised it with me and—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. That's good enough.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I mean, he's expressed from time to time concerns about what is happening out there because I think he cares about the people involved, but he has never expressed any knowledge, nor do I think he has any knowledge of the events that you're raising.

0910

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. Just turning to your practices in your ministry and as a minister, do you regularly archive your emails?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I actually almost never use emails. Most of my emails are what are called transitory emails. They're scheduling organizational emails. When I said that I lose sleep about these things, almost any consequential or substantive documents, I do not manage; I have my deputy minister and her teams and his team manage those files.

I am very, very cautious about private information. As many of you know, you write me about people who have had drunken driving convictions, who have health issues. There are a lot of files that come into my office, so we try to deal with as little electronically as possible. My MPP liaison person works very, very closely with the responsible officials. I try to keep as much personal information and any substantive information contained in the ministry. I don't think I have turned on the computer on my desk since I have been minister.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay. So you don't check your emails yourself or you don't look at your—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, I have a BlackBerry. The BlackBerrys on here are things like: Chike just sent a

note to me a few minutes ago and said, “I hope you’re on time.”

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Right.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: “You’d better not be late for committee. They’ll be really PO’d with you.” That’s the kind of thing that goes through this here.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That’s fine. So, in general, whenever you receive or send emails that are of consequence, that are important to maintaining the record under the record-keeping act, do you ensure that those records are archived properly or are stored properly?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, but, as I said—and I go back to my city hall days when I was mayor and dealt with a lot of very sensitive issues—I deal minimally in electronic media because I don’t trust electronic media. I think one should use it very sparingly and one should be very, very seriously considering when you have someone’s personal information or commercial information. We have very, very competent people. I have two very large ministries who do a very good job. Most of my work is to forward it to the person responsible, and the files are held by the ministry, so when I leave, those things are consequential.

In the last 20 years, I’ve been CEO of a private company, a not-for-profit, and I’ve been mayor of a city. I can tell you that the diversity of information management today in organizations is radically different from one to the other in what’s kept and what’s not kept. I think it’s something that every organization struggles with, and I tend to err on the side that less is more.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you send and receive emails in a way that’s transparent and subject to freedom of information?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes. I follow all the rules, and my staff is trained in that.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Singh.

To the government side—and I apologize, Minister Murray. There are various debates going on on the optimal positioning of that microphone. In any case, Mr. Delaney.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Chair, and I’d like to thank the minister for joining us during this budget week. Although these are very, very busy times, we appreciate seeing you.

Before I get started, there was a comment made by my colleague from Renfrew that referred to a finding in the Auditor General’s report as “totally bogus.” In fact, the Auditor General did confirm the \$40-million sunk costs: exactly what the minister had said at the time the sunk costs for Oakville would be.

Just before we begin—I know you wanted to get in a little bit of information while you were going back and forth with various questioners: Is there anything you’d like to clarify before I start?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It’s interesting, because every government cancels projects. This committee sometimes,

my dear friend, is behaving like this is an outrageous thing that parties in government shouldn’t do.

The other proposition that concerns me about some of the things I’m hearing out of this committee is that somehow cancelling a project is never going to cost money. Many people at this table historically have been involved in governments that have done that. If I could just offer an example, the Eglinton Crosstown subway was cancelled by the previous government, which was unusual because they promised during the election that they would not cancel it, that they would complete it. They broke that promise and they decided to cancel the project.

They then were asked by the city of Toronto not to fill in the subway hole. They did exactly that. Not only did they fill it in; they filled it with concrete. I discovered, as minister, just last week, that what was supposed to be two months of excavation work—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Point of order, Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I’m sorry to interrupt the minister. I just think it’s important that the committee knows that one of our valued and trusted journalist colleagues has passed away: Jonathan Jenkins. I just want to give my condolences to his family and let the minister and others know.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Ms. MacLeod. On behalf of the committee, I don’t think any of us were aware of that. We appreciate it, and our heartfelt condolences to the family.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: That is very sad, indeed, and I certainly express my condolences to the family.

Mr. Bob Delaney: And we all did very much like him.

I’m sorry, Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: That cost the taxpayers a quarter of a billion dollars, and it has delayed the Eglinton Crosstown seven months. Why you would fill in the subway is beyond me. Unless you have an anger management issue, I’m not sure why you would put concrete there. When I hear these moral pronouncements from the official opposition, this is—

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Speaker.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Point of order, Mr. Yakabuski.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think it is very clear the mandate of this committee is to delve into the issue surrounding the cancellation of the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville. It is not the mandate of the committee to talk about what someone may or may not perceive as the mistakes of a previous government. That is not the mandate of this committee. I think that it would be right for the minister to stick to the mandate in his answers, just as we’re expected to stick to the mandate in our questions.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Yakabuski. Ostensibly, your point is well taken, although I could simply say that the word “cancellation” appears

in other areas, other domains, so perhaps that is the linkage. Continue.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think that this is very much the mandate of this committee. It is to look at the mistakes of previous governments and to lessons learned. One of my propositions would be, if you look at things like Windsor–Essex, if you look at things like the inter-provincial tunnel, this government has demonstrated that it has learned the lessons of the history of this province.

One of the lessons that I, quite frankly, have studied quite closely is the Eglinton Crosstown, because it's now a \$5-billion project, which is hugely consequential. We lost 35,000 jobs, and many of us in Toronto believe that the Don Mills commercial lands did not get developed because that transportation infrastructure never came in. I'm hoping that the committee is going to look at this whole history of what causes governments to cancel that, because if you were outraged at the gas plant issue, you should certainly be even more outraged at the quarter of a billion dollars that was wasted on the Eglinton Crosstown. Where this is different is, this wasn't a promise made by all parties; it was the reversing of a promise made by all parties, because every party in that election said they would complete the Eglinton Crosstown. It didn't do it. There's a complete lack of accountability.

If you run for office on the public trust and you promise to do something and you don't do it—in this case, all three parties promised to do it, and we did it. If you're asked not to take on additional costs by filling it and then you put a concrete bunker down there that costs a quarter of a billion dollars in throwaway costs—this has been the problem.

To have moral authority or integrity, I think you have to hold yourself to the same standard. I'm quite happy to articulate the last 30 years of cancellations. People are suggesting that a government that got elected to fulfill a promise and executed that promise is somehow held now to a higher standard than others are prepared to hold themselves. As we're in an election, I can tell you, as the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Transportation, I hear political promises being made that I doubt are viable by the opposition parties, and if they are true commitments, they are going to result likely in cancellations. This is not a practice that has gone away.

One of the things that our government has done is that we have spent a lot of time costing and managing and reviewing projects. I would say quite candidly that we have learned those lessons. I'm hoping that this committee, that has now had 89 witnesses, 135 hours of discussion, at one point is going to say, "Enough is enough." It's quite transparently clear that the government has already taken the kinds of actions that I hope this committee does.

I disagree with the honourable member from Renfrew: That's exactly what this committee is supposed to be doing. It's supposed to be looking at the mistakes of past governments, and I think it could look at many others that are much more instructive than the gas plants issue.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Minister Murray, we accept your remarks and we thank you for the

recount. But I would just, once again, invite you to please speak to the mandate of the committee.

Mr. Delaney, go ahead.

0920

Mr. Bob Delaney: It sets the matter of the planning, commissioning, cancellation and relocation of infrastructure projects in some perspective. I do thank the minister for his very fulsome explanation.

The opposition has asked you here today because clearly you were a member of the transition team, and you've spoken quite a bit to this. Would you expand a little bit with the committee today on the workload involved in making the transition from one Premier to the next?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It was quite huge, especially after a number of us got our assignments, because you've got to remember that all these people were working. They were volunteering their time away from their families. This was a lot of people from the private sector, from labour, from environmental community groups, from the farm communities—because the Premier, as you know, made a commitment to be the Minister of Agriculture and Food. So there was a lot of time spent integrating things, because—I'll give you an example. Time was spent looking at: How do our large institutions buy more local food? That was one of the things. We had people who understood the health care procurement system in government, and people from the farm community, looking at how the purchasing power of the public sector could drive more food. There were things that were really looking at: What were major initiatives where the Minister of Government Services and the Minister of Agriculture would have to work together, and what were the kinds of priorities and what were the kinds of things that should go into minister's mandate letters to ensure that they were reflected?

A lot of time was spent on accountability. I talked a little bit about that. I went through all of the projects and said, "Is there a project that we've committed to not proceeding with or proceeding with that ought to be rethought?" I think one of the lessons of not just the subject of this committee but of many past governments is commitments that are made during elections, where people, I think, aren't fully aware of the consequences of getting into government, and they make a costly mistake. We looked at a lot of the major projects, whether it was Windsor, whether it was the tunnel in Ottawa, and also reviewing those that were—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Just lean back a little bit from the mike.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm sorry. We spent a lot of time doing a very thorough and systematic review. A lot of work was done in training staff on how to manage that. We had a number of people who had some expertise in information technology and talked a lot about the need for training of staff and ministers and folks in that. A lot of time was spent on: How do you govern to a higher standard of accountability? Because I think the feeling was that we were now in a very different world of social

media. There was a day when conversations, telephones, and written mail were the totality, and that was 10 or 15 years ago. What are the best ways for governments to manage information in a transparent way, but also in a way in which you can protect private information and you can protect intellectual property rights and you can protect commercially sensitive materials? A lot of time was spent on how ministers do that, and that continues to this day. I don't think that we, quite frankly, fully understand, in the public sector. I think many people in the private sector—banks, particularly; large hospitals—are all struggling with these issues. What do you get rid of to protect people and what do you keep for public accountability?

Mr. Bob Delaney: What were your personal experiences during this time?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's a very exciting time. I have to tell you, I was learning a lot through the transition committee. It was an incredibly bright and talented group of people whom I'd never had—the great privilege of politics, I've always said, is what you get to learn and from whom you get to learn it. The tone at the committee was that this was the first woman Premier of our province. For the women on the committee, it was extraordinary, because the first-person experience was very different. We were very much consumed with the idea that within about two or two and a half weeks, the Premier had committed us to being back in the Legislature; there would be no extension of the prorogation. So we had less than three weeks to get our poop together, so to speak, and we were working very, very hard—day, night and weekend—trying to get the government program together, realizing that there would have to be a throne speech and a budget very quickly thereafter.

I think you see it in things like high-speed rail and regional express rail. A lot of the seeds of what you now see in the government's program were put on the table by some very dedicated Ontarians through that process. It was, and continues to be, a very exciting time to be in government.

Mr. Bob Delaney: There are allegations about who knew what with respect to an administrative right to some computers during the transition period. Do you recall any meetings during the transition period where administrative access to a group of computers was discussed?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It was never discussed. The first time that I ever heard about it was when I picked up a newspaper and saw it on the front page of the newspaper. This was not something that was part of a conversation; nor was anyone even aware of it. The OPP investigation had not begun. I don't know anyone who was aware of that. It certainly was never a topic of conversation at the committee.

Mr. Bob Delaney: When secretary of cabinet Peter Wallace was invited to testify before the committee for a third time about two weeks ago, he talked about that transition period, and he said it was a very, very busy time. You talked about it as well and talked about some

of your experience. We asked Mr. Wallace a question about the division of the offices, as Premier Wynne was not officially sworn in, nor did she take office until February 11. I'm going to read a couple of statements, because I need these statements to preface the question I'm going to ask you.

He said, "I know that there was a transition suite associated with the incoming Premier. I know there was a suite dedicated to the offices of the outgoing Premier."

Could you tell the committee what your experience was? Was this the organization, of the two separate offices?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It was very separate, and it usually is. I had been through one other transition when I was the incoming mayor of a large city and there was an outgoing mayor. I know that many of my colleagues have been through that. There is not a lot of communication between those two folks, for a number of reasons. It's a very sober and sensitive time for people. I think all of us will leave this place at one time. It's a time of reflection. Generally, you trust the outgoing administration to take care of business; at least, that certainly has been my experience through that. The incoming administration operates separately. When you have the short time frame that we had, you are very possessed of the responsibility to look forward and govern. You don't have a lot of time to spend looking in the rear-view mirror. Any of us who have been through transitions—and I've been through more than one of them—know how that functions.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Okay. When Mr. Wallace was here he confirmed that he had not briefed Premier Wynne on the deletion or handling of emails or electronic documents from the former Premier's office. He also confirmed that he had not briefed Premier Wynne's transition team or the Premier herself on the requests that Mr. Livingston had made.

To this end—and I'm just going to beg your indulgence to go through a couple of things that happened in the committee—there was an exchange in the committee between Peter Wallace and the opposition from Mr. Wallace's last appearance here.

The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton asked, "From February 7 until today, have you ever briefed any political staff about the deletion of emails, wiping of computers or the special administrative right provided to David Livingston?"

Mr. Wallace responded, "I know absolutely that I have not provided any briefing to the Premier."

During that appearance, the member for Nepean–Carleton asked, "Did you not find it necessary at any point in time to go to Dalton McGuinty or to Kathleen Wynne to explain that this was happening?"

Mr. Wallace said, "I did not."

Were you ever briefed on this issue?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. I have all my briefing books as minister. Deputy ministers and senior officials determine the content of that. For a new Premier, I don't know how they possibly do that, because I know, as a minister with two ministries, that it was two months of

briefings—two months, several days a week. I went through thousands of pages on hundreds of projects, and I have one small percentage of government. I think that what Mr. Wallace said is quite accurate. The Premier would probably have been overwhelmed. Remember: She didn't have the same lead time that other Premiers had. She only had until the 17th. She had to be up in the House, and then she had to figure out her briefings after that.

The content of what is critical in material: These kinds of issues, I would presume—though I can't say, because I wasn't in the room—would have been for the new Minister of Energy, who would have been briefed on the matters that related to his file. I'm sure that the deputy minister there and the minister have already appeared before the committee, so you would probably know more about the contents of those briefings, but they would be assigned to ministries, just out of the pure practical reality of the number of critical issues that the Premier would deal with that would become consequential or difficult if they were not dealt with.

0930

When you go through a transition—you've now had a period of several months where you've had a Premier exiting, so a lot of decisions get parked, right? Probably from October on, the previous Premier was not making a lot of commitments. So when you immediately become a minister or Premier you're dealing with six months, often, of decisions that have been delayed. So that would have been an incredible time for the Premier. I would not have imagined, during that particular period of time, that there would have been a lot of time to sandwich in issues that were not 24-hour, urgent, have-to-make decisions.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Okay. I think that removes any ambiguity in that.

Let's talk a little bit about some of the openness measures. Again I'm going to give you a little bit of a preamble on this. The release of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's report prompted some significant changes across the breadth of government. The report this past summer on document-retention practices by the government—which was another item on which the Premier moved to lead the way—gave direction to all political staff on the need to be responsible and diligent on retaining documents pertaining to government business, and it also ensured that new training procedures were put in place.

As I'm sure you're aware and have put into practice, our government implemented mandatory record-keeping rules and mandatory staff training, and new rules limiting political staff involvement in commercial third-party transactions.

Last October, Premier Wynne made a public commitment to introduce new rules to clarify political staff involvement. In fact, the Ministers' Staff Commercial Transactions Directive clarifies the responsibilities of political staff while preserving the integrity of the government decision-making process. You may also recall that the directive was approved by cabinet and rendered effective on April 1, 2013.

Following this—and here's the question—an all-staff email was sent by the Premier's chief of staff, Tom Teahen, to ensure that all staff was aware of their responsibilities under the new directive. In your ministry, have you trained your staff on this directive?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: They have been in constant training. They're in a training session today, interestingly, which has made this morning a little crazy, but they're learning the new rules for commercial contract negotiation. Today, they're in an all-day training session with people with legal expertise on what the relationship is between political staff and officials of agencies and ministries in dealing with matters of contracts—

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): One minute.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —and what they can do that is binding. These are a complex set of relationships and a very substantive matter.

They've also all had training on transitory emails versus others in archiving, so it's a constant program that continues.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thanks, Chair. I'll stop here on this round.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Delaney. To the PC side: Mr. Yakabuski, 10 minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Chair. We'll just go back right into it, Minister.

A couple of things: Someone on the transition team would have been made aware, and then would the team, including yourself, have been made aware, of the responsibility to retain records?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, because everything that we've been doing has been relating—I just explained that. There has been constant training, and there was discussion about how you manage projects—what had we done well that we need to keep repeating doing? And there was a discussion—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Did someone specifically made it clear that records must be retained? Was that part of the transition team's direction?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It didn't get into that level of minutia because these were fairly senior executive people involved in this. It was about the kinds of things that ought to be put in directions to ministers, which since have been, and the kinds of training.

I will tell you, in the discussions that I had over coffee with some of the folks on there—I got into a discussion, because it's a particular interest of mine, about the issues of privacy, intellectual property and commercially sensitive information. I think that there is a whole world of expertise and challenge—there isn't an organization in our society right now that isn't having some challenges getting it right. So obviously the kinds of expertise that we need, the kind of training that we need—it was talked about in broad strokes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Minister. We understand that, but we only have 10 minutes. We can't get into long answers for short questions. Your scheduler, J.D. or what—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: His name is Chike Agbasi.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chike—his computer was wiped. His computer was one of the ones that was wiped.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I've been told that. I don't know. I don't think he would have known. He had left the office quite promptly thereafter. He did organizational work for the Premier and logistics work for the Premier. He was in a clerical, administrative, junior position in the Premier's office. So he wouldn't have been part of any other discussions at that level.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, I'm not saying about discussions. But we would have no idea at this time, then, what would have been on his computer. That's gone.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, you're asking me a question, and I don't know. I trust the OPP, I trust forensics, and I trust the—

Mr. John Yakabuski: But you spoke about the integrity of this gentleman and everything else, and I'm not questioning that. But at this point, the fact that that was one of the computers that was wiped clean—we have no idea what information was on that hard drive.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Actually, I think the Auditor General's report was insightful. I have a lot of trust in the OPP, and I think we should let them do their jobs.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, well, thank you. But we have no idea what was on that computer at this point, and it's not going to be found, because it was wiped. It was one of the hard drives that was wiped.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I didn't know that you were an information technology expert. I can tell you, having been a mayor, I've seen a lot of white-collar crime reports. If I were you, unless you have that expertise, I would not—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Maybe if you could let me ask the questions, you might be able to do a better job of giving the answers, but you're interrupting me in the middle of a question.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, now you know what it feels like.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, it is my 10 minutes.

What was the date of the hiring for people in the new Premier's office?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't know. I'm not her chief of staff. You'd have to ask Kathleen. I'm not sure how that's relevant, but we all went through a process of trying to get very talented people to work for relatively low wages compared to what they could make somewhere else. I'm sure she had the same challenge.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, so you don't know the date of hiring of people in the Premier's office. I'm going to go back to something that you said in the first round of questioning. You talked about one of the things you were doing in the—I'm paraphrasing you, because I don't have, obviously, Instant Hansard. One of the jobs of the transition team was to see what went right, what went wrong and how we might change things. One of the things you were doing was drafting ministerial letters for the ministers that—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, we weren't.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, something to that effect. You were drafting—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay, so I want to be clear here, Mr. Chair. Your party, recently, when I did an interview—

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no. This is a question—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, but this is an issue of integrity, and it's a point of privilege. I'd like some assurance from the Chair that the records of Hansard will be shared, because here's a problem I'm having—and this is my reputation as a witness here, because I am a citizen. As an MPP, I don't have the protection of the courts or the law.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chair, this is—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like not to be interrupted.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —not going to be using my time for this.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Because unless you want a lawsuit from me, then you'd better listen.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, now you're threatening people and members of this committee?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, I'm being very clear, because here's the challenge—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, I think you'd better settle down.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Chair.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Now you're threatening me with a lawsuit?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, I have a point of order, and I would just like to—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chair, I'm asking a question, and I'd like the opportunity to ask the question.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Ms. MacLeod, point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I invite the witness to answer questions. He's allowed to do that. We do have privilege in this committee, number one. Number two, members of our caucus, the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, will not succumb to any more threats from the Liberal party—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Chairman, is she making a speech or what?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —whether it is from the Premier herself, this minister or the Working Families Coalition.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We won't be muzzled.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you. We accept your point of order. We'll remove the aura of threats.

Mr. Yakabuski, I offer the floor to you. I would respectfully ask all my colleagues to please conduct themselves in a parliamentary manner, but also allow each other to both pose and respond to the questions.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not threatening anybody.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): You have five minutes and eight seconds left.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. The way I heard it was that there were directions with regard to ministerial letters. My question would be: What ministerial directions or what information was given to the potential incoming Minister of Energy with regard to the

gas plants? You said that you wanted to know what things were right and what were wrong. Clearly, there was no question that the gas plant was one of the things that was wrong. It was causing you a great deal of problems. So what advice, what letters, possible letters, if that's not—you tell me what was said. We'll all review—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, I will tell you what was said, but—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not done—we'll all review Hansard later. But what direction was given to the Ministry of Energy and/or the potential incoming minister as to what they should be aware of with respect to this gas plant scandal? That was part of the transition team. So what direction was given?

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Hon. Glen R. Murray: The direction that was being discussed was—we were not writing mandate letters for ministries. Committees don't do that. Only the Premier does that, and that's confidential and that's up to her prerogative. What was discussed at the committee are what are the kinds of things that the government must exercise great concern over.

The reason I raise this issue is because we're in the process here—and I appeal to you as a colleague. The issue came up recently where I had clearly done an interview where someone had suggested that I had suggested that there were health and social services cuts to fund transit. In the interview, I said—I gave a one-word answer to the interviewer and the answer was no. The question was asked again and it was no, and members of your caucus repeated something that wasn't true, that somehow I had said yes. That was not true. So when I answer a question—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It was in the media, sir, so that shouldn't be—that's another discussion for this—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, no, it is, because this is a reputational issue. This is the question that was asked on CFRB. The host: "When you say that the general revenues currently go into things like health care and education, does that mean there will be cuts in those areas to pay for this?" Murray: "No." It goes on twice: "No." So I give very clear, singular answers, Mr. Chairperson, and I'd like some assurance that there is going to be—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chair, this is not answering my question. This is a diatribe about what he doesn't like being said.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —some accountability for people to actually tell the truth.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Colleagues, I am prepared to recess the committee if we cannot come to some measure of cordiality and—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, the minister can't go on—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, then stop misrepresenting what those of us are saying when we testify and we give you answers.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Chair.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chair, he is challenging a member of this committee. I have not been—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member for Nepean has been sued enough times. She should have learned something by now.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —I am asking a question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Colleagues, colleagues. I'd respectfully ask all members to please adopt parliamentary language. We all are under parliamentary privilege.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, he's accusing a member of committee of misrepresentation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I am.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): I appreciate that, and that's—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You're saying things that are not true, and I've just read the facts—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I asked you to clarify that. I said I was paraphrasing.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —so maybe you can apologize to me for misrepresentation of my views.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Colleagues.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, I said I was paraphrasing.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And I'm waiting for an apology, my dear friend.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): You've got three minutes left.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Yes, Ms. MacLeod, a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I would ask that the witness stop implying unparliamentary motives toward my caucus colleague and our entire caucus. He was invited here to shed some light on the committee's mandate. He is refusing to do that. But he does not have to engage in accusations and threats toward my colleague or my caucus.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): To echo that, Ms. MacLeod—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm not engaging in threats.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a point of order; you don't have a response.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): I would invite all members to please adopt parliamentary language and positioning.

Mr. Yakabuski, your three minutes remain.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to make it clear, Minister: I never said you said this. I said that I was paraphrasing. I gave you the opportunity to clarify what you said.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: So that is not what I said.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, thank you very much. But it is not an opportunity to go into some diatribe about your hurt feelings about something that was said a couple of weeks ago.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, it just has to do with integrity, which is the subject of this committee.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Of which you have accused me of not having, so thank you very much.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have accused your colleagues of saying things that you know are not accurate.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Now, Mr. Peter Wallace would have met with Monique Smith on a number of occasions during this transition period. While he didn't directly talk to them about the deletion of emails, it seems to be, in the Hansard from Mr. Wallace's testimony, that he covered a lot of things. For example: "Of course, they would have dealt with the issues that were vital and in front of this House, including issues of the privilege of the Legislature...." That's part of his testimony at this committee.

Would it be reasonable to expect that the transition committee, in the conversations with Peter Wallace through Monique Smith, who was sort of the liaison or the chair of that transition team, would have been well aware that there was a huge concern on the part of the secretary of cabinet with the way this whole email deletion, hard-drive destruction scandal was being played out with respect to David Livingston and his request for special administrative codes—to be able to do that—and then using Laura Miller and her boyfriend, Peter Faist, as, I guess the facilitator—

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): One minute.

Mr. John Yakabuski: She was the facilitator, and he was the guy who actually did the deed. There was clearly a tremendous amount of discomfort on the part of Peter Wallace, and that would have been relayed, I think, pretty clearly to Monique Smith as the chair or whatever of the transition team. Were you people made aware that there was a level of discomfort on the part of the secretary of cabinet, who is the highest-ranking civil servant, with how this whole thing was happening in regard to destruction of documents?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, no, because I think Peter Wallace answered that question for you, which is that he did brief those people on it. I mean, you're talking about one of the most respected public servants, who gave you an honest answer, and hopefully you'll accept the honest answer that he gave. I have nothing that I can add to that except to say that anything that I have been told or saw was completely consistent with what Mr. Wallace expressed to the committee. And he would know.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Minister. I only have about 15 seconds left, and I don't have time to ask another question. Thank you very much for coming in today.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Yakabuski.

To the NDP side: Mr. Singh.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much. I'm going to ask you some questions, sir, about the transparency of infrastructure projects. You would agree with me that you try your best, obviously, to make sure that the infrastructure projects in Ontario are managed in a transparent manner, right?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In terms of the gas plant scandal, there's been some issue with respect to questions around

full transparency that was not satisfied, and, as you've testified, you're currently trying to make amends for that and make sure that things are done—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think we're governing—the Premier said very clearly that she wanted more openness. She widened and expanded this committee.

But I'll give you an example of some of the frustration we have. You're asking me a serious question and respecting the process, and, sir, any answer I've ever given to you, you've accepted as truthful, and I've never had you saying something contradictory. This has become a bit of an insult to those of us who serve in the Legislature who don't have the protection of the courts, because the official opposition has done nothing but talk and joke through it, and quite frankly, don't do that—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Chair, a point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Ms. MacLeod, a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the excitement of the witness. That said, the mandate of this committee is not the lawsuit by Ms. Wynne to myself and our leader, Mr. Hudak. The mandate of this committee—

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I would like to allow the witness—I've never experienced where a witness has tried to cut off a member on a point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Point of order, Ms. MacLeod. The floor is yours.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think it is important that you reiterate to the witness what the mandate of this committee is, and that is the review of the matter of the Speaker's finding of a prima facie breach of privilege, with respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates and to consider and report its observations and recommendations concerning the tendering, planning, commissioning, cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants.

I would ask you, as Chair, to ensure that the witness, who is tending to veer off into other directions, focus himself and encourage his own sense of discipline to follow the committee's mandate. If he's not able to do that, perhaps he should just be quiet.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Two things: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, (a) I thank you for the reminder of the mandate; and (b) I would like, if possible, to remove a little bit of the nuclear-radiation-level hostility that seems to permeate this room so that we can return not only to the mandate but to parliamentary conduct. If I cannot get that, I will adjourn the committee. Period. So forewarned.

Mr. Singh, the time is yours.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you. So we've heard—this is the allegation, and this, obviously, remains to be proven—but the concern that people have is that the government put its own political interests ahead of Ontarians' interests in the gas plant scandal. That's the allegation; that's what people are concerned with.

We're hearing that the same thing may have occurred in Windsor with respect to putting the political interests

ahead of Ontarians' interests. Can you speak to the fact that people might be wondering that it doesn't seem to be that the government has learned any lessons from this?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm not sure what you're saying. This is another thing that causes me concern, because one of your colleagues—there is a note that was written by the deputy and by officials that very clearly said that there were no briefings of the minister. As a matter of fact, on that case, as a result of the review, I immediately started meeting with stakeholders about concerns, because this, in none of my briefings, was raised. When I started to hear from people outside of government that there were concerns, I immediately—once I secured that it was something more than simply gossip or rumours, because as anyone knows, you hear people complain about people who win, the people who lose contracts, that there was some merit to that—I immediately went to the deputy. The deputy told me very clearly—this was the first week of June—that she had heard no such thing and was not aware of any safety concerns at all. And I said to her, "I'm hearing something different. Can you please investigate?"

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In two weeks, she undertook an investigation. She briefed my staff on June 14 and me on June 19 to say that it wasn't conclusive; that there may be some validity to some of these concerns. On June 19, upon being told, I immediately halted, ceased the installation of girders and then quickly called an independent inquiry, because at that time, many senior officials and experts in the ministry—and the contractor—were saying there was no problem here.

As a matter of fact, as you may remember, we did not actually know there was a safety problem. I was not satisfied, as the minister, with the first round of evaluations because the testing was done by the project company. I said that was improper, in my mind—or insufficient, maybe, more than improper—and I ordered independent testing, which happened in August, as a result of a direct ministerial order to do the destructive testing.

When we opened up the sixth girder, that's when we discovered there was a safety problem, but that was three months of hard work. We didn't actually know and we had no evidence, but we immediately set in motion—and I think that is an example of exactly what we're talking about. That was the first time a minister in maybe 40 or 50 years has ever ordered an independent review to determine whether or not there was a safety issue. I'm very proud of that, but it was very hard. I've often said to people that I'm sure I would have faced criticism for the cost and expenditure if all six of those girders had come back fine, and I would be in the House, no doubt—and that was why I raised the issue about the integrity of our own process. When a minister gives an answer that is truthful and honest, backed up by bureaucrats, as we did with that note from the deputy that said, "I had no knowledge of it"—and she will testify to that, as will both deputies, because they had no knowledge of it and

there's a good paper trail there—I am continually challenged.

So if you want to criticize me and think that I didn't do my job there, then you should produce evidence. I found in the last month on two separate occasions, when I knew things to be explicitly true, backed up by evidence, there were colleagues of mine in the Legislature who continued to say the opposite, even when they were handed copies and transcripts that demonstrated that. That's a problem because I think we're called honourable members for that—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: We'll get into that.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And I think that has to do with the fundamental trust that we have in the committee process, because I have no appeal to courts. I have no appeal to the law and I have no legal protection. I don't even have the protection of the Charter of Rights—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure. You answered the question—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm sorry for making a point of it, but I don't think you realize how vulnerable we are as ministers before these committees.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you so much for answering the question.

I want to ask you, prior to 2013—since the privacy commissioner came in and talked about record-keeping, it's got a lot of attention now, but prior to 2013, were you aware of the Archives and Recordkeeping Act? Was that something that you were familiar with? Or were you, like us, drawn to its attention by the Information and Privacy Commissioner?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: In my ministry, because I've been a minister for most of my time, we have a legal unit. When I said that part of the reason I take almost all electronic material that comes in that is not transitory—and I put almost all of it into the hands of the responsible person, because then I know when it goes to correspondence, when it goes to legal, it immediately is under the hands and guidance of the law department in the unit, it is immediately under the hands of the correspondence unit that knows that.

While I have, I think, a very broad understanding of the archives and rules, and certainly my staff has been trained, I will never have the details particular to the ministry and to the sensitive issues of privacy like people's motor vehicles. I want to make sure that there's a competent professional who has been doing that for years—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: So I have been doing that.

But, you know, the issues of sensitivity—we have privileges as members, but we also have vulnerabilities. I made a comment about I can't actually sue anyone. But people on this committee can exercise the same power over my life as a minister—and Minister Bentley and others have experienced this. I actually can't sue a member the way some people have been sued successfully for things they've said. So I don't have the dependence of character—and I think for many of us who appear before these committees, who are being very forthcoming, who

have given I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of pages of documents—and there's nothing I won't answer. I meet with many of your colleagues privately and work very hard with them, and expect that when yes is yes and no is no and it's backed up by evidence, that that's accepted and people do not knowingly misrepresent that, which I think has been happening too often lately.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's fine. Thank you so much for that.

I just want to go back to Monique Smith and some of the questions I had around Monique Smith. She was obviously the lead of the transition team. You indicated that in terms of record-keeping problems that existed with the previous Premier, it would have been Monique Smith who would have been the person who was briefed on that. Do you understand that Monique Smith would have then communicated these issues around record-keeping to the Premier?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't know; I really don't know. I know that most of what Monique did was logistical and management. You can imagine with a volunteer committee.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We didn't have the benefit yet, because the Premier was not the Premier, so we did not have the full resources of government there. It was basically a couple of people that the Premier—I don't understand the transition, but I think Peter Wallace could probably answer. There is some provision when a new Premier comes in. There are some resources available, but they're limited.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: So Monique was really working organizationally. You have to remember that the big focus of this committee was to get ready for the 17th, for the House returning, and to integrate the leadership candidates' views of what was happening and to think about that. It did not write letters, it did not prepare documents, it didn't do any of that. There were minutes taken, I think, of some of the ideas, but they were just lists of the ideas and how things worked.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: You indicated just before my previous round of questioning that you assumed that Monique Smith would have given advice to the Premier. Just to be very accurate, you didn't say that you knew for sure. You assumed—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have no idea. I would not know that because I was not in any of those meetings.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do you know if anyone, with certainty, provided—

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): One minute.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh:—information or updates around the record-keeping and the lack of record-keeping with Premier McGuinty to Premier Wynne?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Well, previously to the events that this committee is looking at, record-keeping was pretty routine. I mean, I never as a minister in any of my ministries had any issues come up with record-keeping. I

actually found the government systems pretty reliable, and the information I was given about what to do was pretty straightforward. Now we have much more active training, much more specific direction. The Premier, when she came in, said that she wanted to raise the bar on the level of accountability and authority, so I as a minister undertake a lot more scrutiny of files systemically in a way that I have to report in regularly on, so all of these training systems that are in place are part of that more aggressive approach. And, to be quite frank, the Premier did this before we had the issue of the deletion, so when these instructions were being given, it was prior to the stories of the deletions.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you, Mr. Singh. I do thank colleagues for the return of peace in our time. I just want to inform committee members that according to standing order 16, the Chair is able to suspend committee hearings at an indefinite period for what is termed “grave disorder,” and so, essentially, I could prorogue the committee, if necessary.

Having said that, I now return, for the final 10 minutes, to Mr. Delaney.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Chair. I, in my time as a committee Chair, remember similar briefings.

Minister Murray, 130 hours of testimony, either 89 or 90 witnesses—we're not exactly sure—close on half a million documents to date. Any closing thoughts?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And an Auditor General's report and now a police investigation. I mean, at what point is this an actual inquiry? What is left to know, what is our job to do it, and at what point do we let the police do their job?

There's also people's reputations. I've been in private and public life for 30-plus years. When I make mistakes in the House, I try to apologize for them, and that's a good thing to do. But there is a committee process here, and we have the same authority as a court of law, and the least protected people are our own colleagues when they appear here, because there isn't an appeal, and, as was pointed out by some of you in the House, the actions a parliamentary committee can take are equivalent to a court. You could disbar a lawyer. You could effectively cause penalties and harm to people's careers and reputation. I just want to tell you, Mr. Chairperson, I have been concerned increasingly about that, as I think people want to come here without fear that their reputations would be damaged and the natural justice process is there.

I think there's a lot of information here. I mean, 89 witnesses—I don't know how many more you're going to hear from. I'm not sure I was particularly useful today, because I'm not sure what I have to tell you that's helpful. And dragging a whole bunch more people in here—I think you've invited the entire transition committee—I'm going to suggest to you that there wasn't much there. As a matter of fact, I don't think I even heard the words “gas plant” in any kind of context that would be relevant to this committee.

My concern is, the official opposition is proposing to cancel 142 kilometres of rapid transit tracks. They're

proposing to cancel a whole bunch of green energy projects. There's going to be costs associated with that. If there's been any lesson to do that, it's that politicians and their election teams should be very careful during election campaigns about what they commit and understanding the consequences.

I can tell you, as Minister of Transportation, that what the Conservatives are proposing is a nightmare of lawsuits and throwaway costs, and they only have to look to the Eglinton Crosstown line and a quarter of a billion dollars to understand what that means. That was a project in early-stage development. The 142 kilometres of rapid transit projects that they're proposing to cancel are going to make anything like a gas plant issue look like a minor footnote in history, because the legal ramifications of a \$5-billion Eglinton project being cancelled at this point, again, are a nightmare. They cancelled three of them last time and they're now committing to cancel them again.

So I would ask, what is going on in the Tory caucus and in their transition team—because I know they're already measuring the drapes—as to what preparation they're having to manage the cancellation of those plants—the things they want to cancel. Because I don't think they've learned anything.

I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Minister Glen Murray. Chair, we're done.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you, Mr. Delaney, and thank you, Minister Murray, for your presentation and presence. You are officially dismissed.

The committee does have a motion before the floor. Mr. Tabuns, I'd invite you to present it, please.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Singh will be.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Mr. Singh. Sorry.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'll be moving the motion. I move that when a witness slot is left vacant, starting when this motion passes, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you. Are there any comments before we move to the vote on this motion? Seeing none, all in favour of the motion?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Hold on.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Sorry. All right. Mr. Delaney, comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, a brief recess—10 minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): A 10-minute recess. We're coming up to question period, so just be aware.

The committee recessed from 1001 to 1008.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): The committee is back in session. We have a motion before the floor. Are there any further comments on the motion? Seeing none, we'll proceed to the vote. All in favour of the motion—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Recorded.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Recorded vote.

Ayes

Singh, Tabuns.

Nays

Delaney, Del Duca, MacLeod, McNeely, Thompson.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Calculating roughly, I believe that the motion does not pass.

Is there any further business before this committee? The committee is adjourned. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 1009.

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Mr. Jack MacLaren (Carleton–Mississippi Mills PC)

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans L)

Mr. Rob E. Milligan (Northumberland–Quinte West PC)

Mr. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord L)

Mr. Jonah Schein (Davenport ND)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

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Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Bramalea–Gore–Malton ND)

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth ND)

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson (Huron–Bruce PC)

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