



# Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

39th Parliament

## JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P. - RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE

Opposition Day Debate

September 30, 2009

### Electronic Health Information

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, that certainly took me by surprise. I would have expected that members from the government side would want to speak to this motion as well. But you know, quite frankly, they're embarrassed. They're embarrassed by the inaction of this government when it comes to accountability. They've seen the headlines. They've heard the stories. They've seen all the reports. They've listened to the questions. Their heads have been down.

The Premier and his ministers continue to try to block FOI requests and to avoid answering questions. I know the member from Guelph said that if we want answers, we have question period. Well, that is a joke. That's a farce. We don't get answers in question period, and the people of this province deserve answers. That is why our leader, Tim Hudak, brought forward this motion. I want to speak to the motion.

The current circumstances do not allow the Auditor General to compel people to testify. I know the member from Willowdale was challenging that. He's a lawyer; he should understand these things. He should know how this place works. The Auditor General cannot compel people to come and testify. The committee in its current form, without this motion being approved and passed by the Legislature, can't compel them either, and it cannot compel people who are no longer employees of eHealth or no longer members of the board.

If we're going to unravel this gigantic ball of intertwined snakes that is eHealth and the scandal that this government is embroiled in and trying its best to wriggle its way out of, if we're going to get to the bottom of this and clear up this slithering mess, the Legislature is going to have to be given the power and the weapons to attack it. Currently we don't have that. That's why we've asked this body today-and I'm appealing to every self-respecting member of the government side. There can be no greater priority for every one of us who is elected to represent constituents and stand in this assembly than to get to the truth so that the people of Ontario will have the information they so justly deserve.

You know I'm correct in this and you know that our leader, Tim Hudak, is correct in tabling this motion. The best way to get to that is to allow the public accounts committee to investigate this whole mess. There are so many unexplainable or hard-to-fathom twists and turns that are involved here. It's like a mystery. Why do we have, for example, Geoff Smith and Khalil Barsoum, by cover of darkness, with no press release whatsoever,

resigning from the board of eHealth? Well, under the current circumstances Geoff Smith and Khalil Barsoum could not be asked questions before the committee with regard to their role and their knowledge and their ties to the Liberal Party, and their ties to IBM, which as we heard just recently in information leaked by the Toronto Star, received a \$30-million untendered contract.

This scandal is enveloping everyone, and the only way we can get to the truth is to have the public accounts committee fully investigate what has gone on. This motion is very well researched and thought out, allowing "That any witness compelled to appear before the committee may attend with counsel and shall be required to give testimony under oath pursuant to section 59 of the Legislative Assembly Act." We will have the strength and the tools to get to the truth. Without this, we will not have it, and the only people who will be able to deny us this resolution today, this motion, are the people on the government side of the House. We already know that the third party is supporting it. We've tabled the motion. If they deny it, then they are denying justice and truth to the people of the province of Ontario, and that would be a travesty.