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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 13 June 2001

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 13 juin 2001

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 13 June 2001

Mercredi 13 juin 2001

The committee met at 1008 in committee room 228.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr James J. Bradley): I think on the agenda here there's the report of the subcommittee on committee business, dated Thursday June 7, 2001.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I move its adoption, Mr Chair.

The Chair: Its adoption has been moved by Mr Wood. All in favour? The motion is carried. There was nobody opposed, so it's carried.

We're going to go into the appointments review. We also know that we have a response back from Catherine Mustard, the department head of the Public Appointments Secretariat. I think, in fairness to the people who are before the committee, we will proceed with our appointments first, if that is fine with members of the committee.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS
THOMAS SIMPSON

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Thomas Simpson, intended appointee as member, University of Toronto governing council.

The Chair: The first appointment is for an intended appointee as member of the University of Toronto governing council, Thomas Howard Simpson. Mr Simpson, you may come forward, please.

As you're likely aware, Mr Simpson, you have an opportunity, should you choose, to make an initial statement. That's entirely up to you. Subsequent to that, members from each party have 10 minutes to direct questions to you.

Welcome to the committee, sir.

Mr Thomas Simpson: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Yes, it was suggested I make a few prepared remarks and I have some. Maybe I'll take you through some of the highlights of my track record and qualifications and why I want to serve on the governing council.

I was until recently the executive vice-president and a partner of Global Strategy Financial, a mutual fund company here in Toronto. After a dozen years or so of building that successful company, we sold it last November to AGF Management. A fortunate consequence of that is that I have been able to retire early from business.

I suppose the current chair of the governing council, Wendy Cecil-Cockwell, heard I might have some time on my hands. In any event, she called me and asked that I let my name stand for this appointment. As you can see, I responded to my university's call for duty. This would not be my first time on the governing council. I first served in 1979 through 1981 as a graduate student, latterly as chair of the council's committee on campus and community affairs.

I then returned in 1990 and served three three-year terms as a member of the governing council elected by the alumni. I was again recognized immediately for leadership, being appointed as vice-chair and then chair of the council's business board. The latter position I held for four years.

The business board is the board of council that actually sets faculty and staff salaries, recommends tuition fees, determines pension fund and endowment investment policy. It deals with fundraising and other fiscal matters. I completed my term in 1999, with my final responsibility being a member of the presidential search committee, which selected Robert Birgeneau as the university's new president.

I must have done a good job during my time at the university because Rob Prichard, the former president, before leaving office a year ago, called me in the middle of the night to say that the governing council was offering me an honorary doctor of laws degree. I am to receive that degree at convocation next Thursday.

Besides responding to a call to duty, you may wonder why I want to go back on the governing council at this time. Well, I served on the governing council at a time of significant cutbacks in government funding and had to deal with the consequences of managing a university in a downsizing environment. It wasn't much fun, I can tell you. However, we did it, and I think the University of Toronto survived the decade and also came out much stronger for it.

Now the government seems to be prepared to reinvest in post-secondary education, I'd like to be around for the more enjoyable work of rebuilding and advancing the U of T's mission to be a significant public research university on a global scale. With a \$1.2-billion endowment, with new government money, combined with the massive replacement of retiring faculty, I think we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the university in a new image to pursue that mission.

The university made a big difference in my life and in return I'm dedicated to continue to volunteer my time and financial support. I care deeply about the university's principles and its long-term health. I want to ensure that future generations have the same opportunity I did to experience a first-class university education.

As I say, having retired early from business, if appointed I'd devote substantial time being a member of the governing council. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We'll commence our questioning with the official opposition.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Good morning, Mr Simpson. It's a pleasure to have you here.

The questions I have certainly will not in any way, shape or form go to your ability to do this job, because I think you have a significant and outstanding background with the council. The questioning will be more toward the future of the University of Toronto and perhaps in some way other universities in the province as well.

You were recently on the council. May I assume that you've kept up to date, though, with the University of Toronto in particular and its status today?

Mr Simpson: Only through the university publications. I haven't served on any university board or committee for two years now.

Mr Crozier: OK. You did comment that you were there during the downsizing and the reduction in government participation in funding, that you got the job done and that it is now time to reinvest—or there is reinvestment—and you want to be there at that time.

Do you think that the indication of the government's reinvestment is enough?

Mr Simpson: As I said, I haven't been intimately involved in the last two years, so I can't quote figures and so on.

Mr Crozier: That's what I was afraid of, yes.

Mr Simpson: The university's position, in all the years I've been on it, is it's never enough. We always need more. There's a particular challenge facing the university, even in the context of reinvestment from government, that we have a very large increase in enrolments facing us, both from the double cohort and the baby boom echo. At the same time, our physical infrastructure, which was built in the 1960s and 1970s, is deteriorating. It's not the same as University College, built 100 years ago; this plant is wearing out.

At the same time, we have massive retirements. All those professors we hired in the growth periods in the 1960s are retiring, and we have to compete on a global scale now to replace them. Canadians are going south. It's hard to attract US graduates or graduates from anywhere in the world here. So trying to get replacement faculty—these are all challenges. The more money we have, the easier it is to overcome those obstacles.

Mr Crozier: Where, then, do you think the initiative should be for this additional funding? Should it be government? Should it be in tuition fees? Should it be in corporate donations, alumni donations, or all of the above?

Mr Simpson: I think the answer is all of the above. During my term during the 1990s, though, the universities rose to the challenge to raise money from those other sources. We reviewed tuition policy. We created a new tuition policy. We created a new access policy. We brought in the best fundraiser in the country, and we've run the biggest fundraising campaign of any institution in this country. We've raised significant private money. We've brought tuition up to what we think are target levels. I don't see, at least in the regulated programs, that there's a need to increase tuition there. Of the \$1.2-billion endowment, about one-half billion of that is earmarked for student aid, so we've met the challenge of accessibility in the face of high tuition.

As to the capital programs, there are two problems: we need more spaces, because there are more students, and we need to renew the physical plant.

Mr Crozier: The need for more space: is it just that perhaps a greater percentage of the student population is seeking post-secondary education, or is it the double cohort? That is in my view a massive problem. Do you think or do you know if the University of Toronto in particular has started to take steps to meet that problem?

Mr Simpson: Yes. The university is a large place. Some faculties and colleges are larger than some universities in this province. It has the capacity to respond to that challenge, and in particular the University of Toronto is looking at expanding enrolment in its Scarborough and Erindale campuses to take the largest part of that challenge to have increased enrolment.

At the same time, it's building residences in the downtown area to take in more students in the downtown area and meet their needs for low-cost housing.

Mr Crozier: Thank you, Mr Simpson. I wish you well. I think my colleague may have some questions.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Good morning, Mr Simpson. I certainly am particularly interested in your appointment. The University of Toronto is my alma mater, so I certainly do wish you well.

I was curious about a statement that you made in your opening remarks where you indicated that you are aware that the university has a \$1.2-billion endowment and new government money. Can you explain your understanding of what the new government money is?

1020

Mr Simpson: It's a combination of increased operating grants and a commitment to some capital programs. We're looking to the federal government for more research money, particularly to get research infrastructure covered. They are just positive signs. As governments have got stronger fiscal positions, the university is finding more responsive governments for its requests.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I don't know if you had the opportunity to review any of the background material that we as members have been provided, but the OCUFA study has indicated that provincial operating grants provided to universities by this government in the year 2000-01 are in fact 13% less than what they were in

1995-96. It's difficult for me to appreciate how you might see that as an increase in support. In fact, when we consider—this was also part of the chart—the provincial operating grants to universities, in the 10 provinces of Canada, Ontario ranks 10th in supporting the operation of its universities. So I was somewhat curious and intrigued by your comment that you are looking forward to dealing with these new resources. It is possible that they may be coming from the federal government and from private sources, but I think it's important that you would understand they're not coming from the provincial government.

Further to that, I would ask, as a member of the governing body, do you think the university has a role to pressure OCUFA, which is the umbrella agency representing universities in the province, or even directly presenting to the government the importance of investing in post-secondary education for the students in the province and bettering their 10th out of 10 record in Canada?

Mr Simpson: Right. I am familiar with the figures. What you say is true, but what I'm sensing is that there's an inflection point which seemed to climb since 1995-96. There is some sense that—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you think the governing body has a role, though, to have the government understand that they need to invest more in post-secondary?

Mr Simpson: Of course. In my past role, I've attended committee meetings and supported, with Rob Prichard, presentations to various government bodies; attended OCUA meetings and so forth. There's a conflict often with U of T working with other universities versus coming to Queen's Park directly, and we're sensitive to that, but we're here to put the case of the university to government.

Mrs Dombrowsky: One final question with regard to the faculty shortages. You indicated in your remarks that you appreciate that we are now competing in a global workplace to engage qualified people in that particular role. Are you familiar with any initiatives that the university has underway at the present time to address that?

Mr Simpson: Yes. Bob Birgeneau's vision is that we replace the faculty not by trying to hire stars and paying them exorbitant salaries to attract them from the US back to Canada, but to hire young graduates, put them through a rigorous tenure evaluation program and bring them in at a relatively young age when they're highly productive. At the end of his term, he hopes to have a much stronger faculty than we have today. To do that, you have to grow those graduate students so that you can hire them and put them on the tenure track. The initiative for the Ontario graduate scholarships is a good example of trying to get income—\$15,000 a year—to support those graduates.

When we sold our business, my wife and I donated \$1 million to the university. A large part of it went to OGS scholarships for the humanities, so it is an initiative I support personally.

The Chair: We now go to Mr Christopherson of the third party.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Anybody who ends their comments with the sentence, "I donated \$1 million"—it takes me a second to get to the real world.

Just to show you how deep politics is, right off the bat, I like you. You were born in 1954, same year as me, and born in Hamilton. Way to go.

Now, having done the nice stuff, you touched on the issue of the humanities and the contribution you and your wife made, and you are to be commended for that. Forgive me if these questions have been asked before I arrived. How do you feel about the direction of the government seeming to be moving away from humanities and the arts, both in the secondary—because where the students are in their secondary school years of course sets them up for post-secondary—and into the whole university system? We seem to be moving more and more to a corporate-type agenda within our universities, which traditionally and historically is not where we've been. Can you give me your thoughts on that?

Mr Simpson: Yes. As government funding was reduced over the 1990s, the universities sought money from all sources, including the corporate sector. The corporate sector tends to support professional programs and programs that result in more immediate benefits for graduates and so on. On the other hand, the support for research, which is fundamental to the university's mission, is an attractive way for the university to get government money. At the same time, humanities are the core of the university and require support. There's certainly no doubt about that within the university. The champions for the humanities are strong within the university. As I say, with the support for the Ontario graduate scholarships, for example, there's a strong symbol from the government that they support humanities. From the private fundraising from individuals to match those scholarships, I think the university has been successful in emphasizing that support.

Mr Christopherson: I'm going to have to admit I'm a little disappointed to hear you say that, because I don't think there are too many people who would agree with you that the government has made humanities a priority or that they have given too much thought about it.

Just by extension, going back into the high school years, there's an awful lot of high schools now that have no arts program, no music program whatsoever. They don't have anything beyond just the core subjects, and again in the past that's not been the way we looked at education. We looked at trying to graduate well-rounded, holistic individuals. How do we make up for that at the university level when students aren't being exposed and encouraged in their high school years? It seems to me that if you want to stop funding humanities, making it a priority of universities, what you do is you start to dry up the interest and close off the opportunities in their high school years, so they aren't looking for it when they get to university and therefore don't feel that they're missing anything if it's not there for them.

Mr Simpson: I can concur with that. The university can't push string. One of the results of raising tuition in

the 1990s was that a university became a much more customer-oriented institution. Students are demanding positions in engineering and computer science and so on, and they have to have astronomical marks to get access to those. Positions are in the humanities, so there's been pressure from these customers, who are now paying a big share of the cost, to expand in the programs they want to attend. If they come out of high school wanting to attend computer science rather than history, the university can only go so far in responding to that demand.

Mr Christopherson: I started out saying I wanted to like you, but I've got to tell you these are not comforting answers. When you call students "customers," you just lose me totally. They are citizens who are preparing themselves for adult life. They're not customers. The Tories like to talk like that. They talk that language that citizens are no longer citizens, they are taxpayers and they are customers. It's an entirely different way of viewing society and in viewing the parts that make up society.

Mr Simpson: It's not to say that that's my personal view as to what we should do. I'm saying the consequence of raising tuition is that students started to view themselves as customers, demanding more value for money, and the university had to respond to that. As I say, student aid for humanities is the one tool the university has to attract high school students to choose the humanities over other programs. We use scholarship money to attract the best and brightest in the high-demand programs, but that's really the only lever we have if the desire isn't there coming out of high school.

1030

Mr Christopherson: Again, if you've been asked this, I apologize, but your thoughts on the introduction of private universities into the mix.

Mr Simpson: The U of T's position, which may be different from other universities, is that we can take the competition if we're allowed to compete. We don't think any government money should go to the private universities. We don't think any money that is otherwise slotted for student aid to students in the public universities ought to be diverted to private universities. On the other hand, if the private universities are competing with programs the U of T is in, we don't think the U of T ought to be regulated in those programs. We think we have the ability to provide a better education and at the same time provide access to those who aren't able to afford to go to a private university.

Mr Christopherson: There are those who would argue, and I would be one of them, that no matter how you start out, all of the history in the world shows that private universities ultimately end up with their fingers in the public trough. We look to the American example. They've got study after study. They're in there almost as much as a public institution. Do you not think it's a little naive to suggest that 10 years down the road we will still have been able to sustain a position of no public money in private universities?

Mr Simpson: I can't answer that. That's more of a political question. I could say that the U of T, as opposed to some other universities, is less concerned about that risk of where the money that disappears will disappear from.

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time, Mr Chair.

The Chair: The government party has waived its time. Thank you very much, Mr Simpson, for being with us today, and you're allowed to step down.

HOWARD SHEPPARD

Review of intended appointment, selected by the official opposition party: Howard Sheppard, intended appointee as member, board of health for the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee as a member of the board of health for the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit, Mr Howard Sheppard. Some of us served with Mr Sheppard in the Legislative Assembly so it's a double welcome—it's a welcome back, I guess—to a committee of the Legislative Assembly, Howard. As you know, you may make an initial statement should you see fit.

Mr Howard Sheppard: It's a pleasure to be back here and meet some old friends I haven't seen in a number of years.

I'd just like to make a couple of comments, maybe on some of my experience. I lived on a farm in Roseneath. We have four children—two boys and two girls—and grandchildren—three boys and two girls.

A year and a half ago I sold the farm and moved out to Haldimand, but before that I was reeve of the township of Alnwick for six years and sat on different committees at county council and was warden in 1967. Last year they wanted somebody to sit on the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit and I volunteered to sit on it, but then after I moved, and Alnwick and Haldimand amalgamated, I was out of a job—a volunteer job, that was.

I am also past chairman of the Roseneath Agricultural Society and former chairman of the county board of education. That's a long time ago. Three years ago I was chairman of the Northumberland county history book committee, which I found was very interesting. We had 2,500 copies made up and we sold most of those.

When I was reeve of Alnwick township and a member of county council, I sat as chairman of the Pine Ridge Municipal Planning Authority and, as I said before, I was a member of the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

As most of you know, probably from the information you have, I served two terms as a member of Parliament in the Ontario Legislature for the county of Northumberland.

Some of the other things I've done: I was past chairman of the Northumberland county milk committee; a volunteer fireman for 17 years; and a member of the Rotary Club of Cobourg for 13 years, with 10 years' perfect attendance.

Last year, when we were finishing our last meeting in Port Hope with the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit, I think there were five members who were leaving. Our medical officer of health, Dr Alex Hukowich, said there was a vacancy on the board for a provincial appointee, so I thought, well, I'll think about it. I thought about it for a couple of months and then I put my name forward. My mother-in-law was in a nursing home in Warkworth. At the present time I sit on a fundraising committee with Joan Fawcett; Jane Boreham, who is a councillor in Cobourg; and Morris Tate, who is the past chairman of the Cobourg District Hospital board. I think they kind of go hand in hand, so this is one reason I put my name forward to sit on the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

If there are any questions, I will try and answer them.

The Chair: We'll begin this time with the third party.

Mr Christopherson: Welcome back, Mr Sheppard. I also have sat on the district health council in my community, so I have a familiarity with what goes on there and what the issues are.

As you know, municipalities are under a real cash crunch as a result of cuts made by the provincial government, and a lot of councillors are going through the agonizing process of deciding what their priorities are going to be when, quite frankly, they are all priorities. I feel for an awful lot of them in terms of the decisions they have to make. Given your previous role on the board of health, as a councillor, I would assume you therefore consider this to be a priority.

This is just a hypothetical, but to give me a sense of how you view things, if it came down to the fact that the only way to adequately fund the board of health, public health, given the role that public health plays, was some type of modest tax increase—it was either that or you weren't going to be able to deliver the services people need in terms of public health—do you think that's the right thing to do or do you believe that avoiding that tax increase, no matter what, should be the priority and the health unit should just find a way to live within their budget?

Mr Sheppard: I think that would be entirely up to the board, because you would have to find out what the first and primary project was. If there had to be a cost increase, you would consider it, over a lot of discussion, and if that was the right thing to do, you would do it, but one person wouldn't do it alone; it would have to be a collective through the board.

Mr Christopherson: The reason I'm asking is that if you ask the government members, I'm sure to a person most of them would say that you avoid the tax increase no matter what, and they have a whole host of reasons why they can justify that. I just wondered if you shared that same conviction, that avoiding tax increases, no matter what, should always be the overriding priority.

Mr Sheppard: It's like when you drive a car. If you have a flat tire and you ruin the tire, you have to go and buy a new tire. Health is much the same. If you have to do these things, you have to do them. You have to wait

and make a decision when all the facts are put on the table.

Mr Christopherson: What do you think the most important role of the board of health—I call it the public health unit—is in your community? What's the most important role you think they play?

Mr Sheppard: I looked at two things when I sat on the board last year. One was that we had to take care of our seniors, and I was concerned with what's going on in our high schools. They gave us a little talk one day on teenagers being pregnant in the schools and the board was going to do their utmost to try and correct that. They wanted to get it down at least 25% by 2004. Those are my two priorities. The other board members at that time maybe had different priorities. As I said, my mother-in-law was in the nursing home in Warkworth and I'm getting older myself. Those were my two priorities, but there are others.

1040

Mr Christopherson: Just along that line—and I realize it's probably not as prevalent an issue in your community as maybe in some of the larger urban centres, but it's there nonetheless and it's still a policy issue so that's why I'm asking it. How do you feel about the notion of public health units being aggressive in providing condoms free to anyone who needs them, and further to that, the whole question of needle exchange where an addict can bring in a dirty needle and exchange it for a clean one, with total anonymity and without any fear of the law? Both of those policies are in place, of course, by those who support them because the notion of AIDS and any other STD is just not worth the price of not doing it. How do you feel about that?

Mr Sheppard: Our health board does that. They give free condoms. Needles they will not give out, only needles that are not used. I might say one of the other priorities that our doctor has really stressed is no smoking. In Northumberland and Haliburton-Kawartha, right at the present time there's a bylaw being discussed of no smoking in the town of Cobourg and the town of Port Hope, but they're not going to make a decision on it until this fall. Dr Alec Hukowich is very strong against smoking.

Mr Christopherson: With respect to the needle exchange, currently you don't have that kind of policy?

Mr Sheppard: No. We have free condoms, but the needles, no.

Mr Christopherson: How do you feel about that as a policy? Do you think it's worth looking at or is it something that you just personally don't agree with?

Mr Sheppard: I think that I would have to get more information on it and probably have a discussion around the board table about that.

Mr Christopherson: During that discussion, what would you put forward?

Mr Sheppard: I'm all agreeable to give out free condoms, but needles I don't know enough about. That's a different kettle of fish, as far as I'm concerned.

The government caucus.

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time, Mr Chair.

The Chair: The official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Sheppard. You were an MPP before my time in the Legislature, although I have to say on this committee we do see a number of former MPPs.

Mr Sheppard: I have met you a time or two.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Remind—well, I'll have to see you afterwards.

With regard to the role to which you have been appointed on the board of health, you've indicated in your remarks that as an individual you have two very key concerns in your community. The first one that you made reference to was with regard to seniors. When you indicate that you are concerned about that, what are you concerned about, the fact that they are able to access the services they need? You talked about long-term-care facilities. Do you believe that we're meeting the need in that particular regard? The Premier of Ontario has said that seniors are lucky to live in Ontario, yet I have to say I hear from many seniors who would suggest that Ontario has a lot to do to improve their particular circumstances. I'd like to know what your concerns are with regard to seniors.

Mr Sheppard: My concern is that we should give our seniors the best of care that the dollar will provide for them.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The best of care that the dollar will provide. What do you think about drug plans for seniors?

Mr Sheppard: Seniors can get their drugs for nothing, some of them. My wife has drugs. She has to pay a nominal fee of \$5 because we have a drug plan. I sometimes think that people who can afford to pay a \$5 or \$10 fee, there's nothing wrong with it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You are aware, though, that there's a conversation in the province right now among seniors and senior groups who are concerned that there have been suggestions and intimations by the government that drug plans will perhaps be restructured and maybe not even exist. That's the impression out there.

Mr Sheppard: I don't know anything about that at the present time.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have a sense, when you talk about the most depressing health issues in your jurisdiction—I read with some interest a week ago about the fact that Campbellford hospital had to close 10 beds because of the nurse shortage. Has the board of health encountered problems in terms of families being able to access health services because of doctor and nurse shortages?

Mr Sheppard: I see advertisements in the paper asking for nurses and I know the Cobourg area is after two new doctors, because they're hoping to open the tenders for the new hospital at the end of July. Reading a bit in the paper, I think there's a shortage of doctors and nurses right across the province. I don't know to what extent. By the way, I had three sisters who went through to be registered nurses too.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I would suggest that it's significantly pressing when families move into a community, possibly move to Cobourg, for example, and would not be able to access a family doctor. Particularly if they have a chronic health condition, that can be significantly problematic. While it might be somewhat outside of the area of responsibility that the board of health deals with, the board of health does have some responsibility in terms of family health services and enabling families to access those services. I would expect that just as hospital corporations and communities are not able to access professionals to provide those services, boards of health would be experiencing the same kind of challenge. I would expect that's what you will meet in your new role as well. Do you have any sense that was a priority even of the district health council?

Mr Sheppard: I think that it's a priority for all the boards of health to look into that.

Mr Crozier: Good morning. It's a pleasure to meet you again. I will put that on the public record, because we have met before with our common interest in the insurance field, the mutual insurance field in particular.

You mentioned the initiative to have no smoking in public places. I just want to get your opinion, perhaps just as compared to mine. We have much the same issue in Windsor-Essex county. I have had discussions at length with the particular employee of the district health board about this. My view is that when it comes to restaurants and bars, but particularly restaurants, food dispensing businesses, it should be a matter of choice, as opposed to local health council or municipality imposing a solution on the business. In other words, if I'm an owner of a restaurant and I choose to make it a smoking establishment, then anybody who doesn't mind that can come in of their own free will. If I choose to make it non-smoking, the same choice can be made by the public.

My district health council disagrees with that. They think everything should be non-smoking. Do you have an opinion on that?

Mr Sheppard: I've got friends who smoke, and quite often when you go out for dinner you go to a restaurant and you have to go to a little corner where it's smoking only. But our district health council would like smoking to quit altogether in the district. I know my wife just went to a funeral on Monday, a cousin of hers who was only 72, but he was a chain smoker and he died of cancer. They blame it on smoking because he just smoked all the time. He even had a piece of his lip removed a few years ago and the doctor asked him to quit smoking—no. He was only sick three or four weeks and he died of cancer, and they blame it on smoking.

1050

Mr Crozier: Yes, I certainly don't advocate it, and I suppose that argument could move on forever. You'll ask some people who are celebrating their 100th birthday and they say, "What do you attribute your longevity to?" and they say, "It's a shot of whisky and 10 cigarettes a day." I guess it affects us all differently.

But I'm getting back to this idea of choice. We hear a lot these days where government doesn't want to be in

your face. This government, for example, makes quite an issue of red tape. All I'm trying to discuss with you is that government coming in and saying to me as a business person or me as the user of a public restaurant—the local government is making the decision for me and I feel that I'm able to make that myself. I don't know whether I want my Windsor-Essex county health unit making that decision for me. You've said your health council is proposing, it but you're going to be part of that health council so I was just trying to get an idea of what your opinion might be.

Mr Sheppard: I'll tell you, Mr Crozier, I deer hunt and I moose hunt and I've got to say I usually take a few cigars back and have a cigar myself when I'm back in the camp so—

Mr Crozier: You might make a moose hunter out of me if that's—

The Chair: That's the last question.

Mr Crozier: Well, anyway, thank you, sir. It's good to see you again.

The Chair: Mr Ouellette, did you have a question you'd like to ask?

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): No, I think we've waived our time. But how is Mrs Sheppard?

Mr Sheppard: Fine, thanks.

Mr Ouellette: Happy to hear that.

Mr Sheppard: Good. I'll tell her you asked.

The Chair: That's good. I like these social exchanges. Thank you very much, Mr Sheppard, for being with us today. Good to see you again.

Mr Sheppard: Thank you very much.

RONALD BLACK

Review of intended appointment, selected by the official opposition party: Ronald Black, intended appointee as member, Smith-Ennismore Police Services Board.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is as intended appointee as member, Smith-Ennismore Police Services Board, Mr Ronald G. Black. You may come forward, please, sir. As you have heard, we are pleased for you to make an initial statement if you see fit, or you can simply subject yourself to the questions of the members of the committee. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Ronald Black: Thank you very much. Mr Crozier's topic, his question, was interesting to me and you'll understand why in a minute here.

Good morning, Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the standing committee. I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you to review my appointment to the Smith-Ennismore Police Services Board in Peterborough county.

My name is Ron Black and I have lived in the newly amalgamated community of Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield for almost 23 years. Prior to that I grew up in Montreal and Toronto before coming to Peterborough for my first real job at the Peterborough Civic Hospital.

I am currently working in the home care industry for a company called Medigas, which is a division of Praxair

Canada Inc. My current position is as the medical equipment manager for Ontario for the company. My responsibilities basically include the management of all equipment sales activity in our 27 locations around the province, as well as managing our company's proposal submissions for the RFP process for the 43 community care access centres across the province. In fact, the last couple of days I've spent in Toronto at the annual CCAC conference and it was certainly a very interesting conference. The minister came and provided us with a keynote address on the current state of affairs of health care in the province and provided the audience with a reasonable plan of attack, I think, for the shortcomings in the funding that we're going to be seeing down the road. So, that's very key in the CCAC business as a service provider now.

My formal education is centered around the health care field, and I'm a licensed registered respiratory care practitioner in Ontario. Over the past 23 years I've held several positions in the health care field, including director of respiratory therapy for both the former Peterborough Civic Hospital and the St Joseph's Health Centre, now jointly called the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. I was in those positions for over 14 years.

Along with my many years of working in the public sector, I've had the opportunity to work as an entrepreneur in private sector health care. In 1986, along with my wife, Sharon, who is also a respiratory care practitioner, we started and developed a very successful home care company that we subsequently sold indirectly to my current employer, who was a competitor at the time. So it was an interesting set of circumstances.

For most of my life, I've felt it was important to help people and that's probably one of the reasons I went into the profession I did at a young age. Even going back to my younger years, I was fortunate enough to be playing in competitive sports. I often helped out with house league teams and that sort of thing, to give something back to the community. When I finished school and moved to Peterborough, I immediately sought a position on the local lung association board. I served on that board for 14 years as chairman of finance, as chairman of education and for two years as its president. As president, I also served on the governing council of the Ontario Lung Association for two terms.

After leaving the public hospital sector in 1992, I was invited to join the board of the St Joseph's Health Centre Foundation. After leaving the hospital, I felt a need to continue my relationship with the good friends I had made at the hospital, as well as help the foundation embark on a new capital fundraising campaign for some much-needed upgrades to the hospital.

I am currently completing my ninth and final year on the foundation board, as the board allows. I've come away with a high level of satisfaction in that we have achieved several milestones in the fundraising area, and once again are ready to gear up for another capital campaign to build a new state-of-the-art, long-term-care facility in Peterborough on the site of Sir Sandford Fleming College.

The new facility is called St Joseph's at Fleming and will house a centre for healthy aging. It is the first such collaborative effort between a community college and a health care facility in Ontario. I'm very proud of the fact that I served for three years as chair of this foundation, through some very difficult times during hospital restructuring. The challenge of developing a new focus for the foundation was difficult, but as I stated earlier, I leave the board with a new mission in place to develop a new not-for-profit, long-term-care facility that will be state of the art in all respects.

In 1995 the start of my political career came when I got a knock on my door from a neighbour down the concession from me—I live in the township. When I opened the door, there was a friend standing there, a local farmer, who had very poor colour and was almost speechless. He handed me a letter that came from the Peterborough county waste management steering committee that indicated his farm had been selected as a short-listed site for a landfill, for the new mega-dump. This is where my political career started. The farm had been in the family since the mid-1800s and was a century farm, recognized by the historical society in Peterborough county. He asked if I could help him out at a very difficult and emotional time.

After several months acting as the official spokesperson for the local anti-dump committee, I was encouraged to run for council in Smith township. I was elected to a three-year term in 1995 and was acclaimed for a second term in 1998. Through the two terms of office, I was involved in not one but two municipal amalgamations and restructurings. Restructurings seem to follow my career around. The first one was the initial Peterborough county restructuring, which included, I think, going from 16 down to eight municipalities, and our neighbouring Ennismore township merged with Smith township.

In the first round there was one municipality that was an adjacent village to our township that refused to enter into the process, and in my second term as councillor-at-large for Smith-Ennismore the village of Lakefield became, through a long process, part of an amalgamated Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield township. Through both terms of municipal office, I participated in transition committees for both amalgamations and held several positions on subcommittee for various aspects of the restructuring.

In my second term on council, I chaired the fire committee for the township and was the council representative on the Smith-Ennismore Police Services Board. After the contract with the OPP was settled for the last two years, up until the latest election—our term on council ran until the end of the year, being a transition board—I sat for two years on the police services board. I elected not to run in the past municipal election due to time commitments of my current position and to spend more time with my wife and young family.

1100

When I left municipal politics, I continued to have the urge, as I have all my life, to serve the community in

some way. With my position as past chair of the St Joseph's Health Centre Foundation also coming to an end shortly, I believe I will have the time to continue to serve the community on the police services board.

My two years as council representative on the police services board have been very rewarding for me. I felt that it was a great opportunity to make a difference in the type of community we want for our families. I have three small children, ages 12, 9 and 7, and want to make sure they have a safe and positive atmosphere in which to grow up. Our community is currently served very well by an OPP contract arrangement and I believe it is important that this police force be seen as a community policing unit.

Inspector Jack Watkins has provided the community with a solid business plan that focuses as much energy and resources on prevention and education for our residents as it does on responding to and processing criminal convictions. I believe that a community that is well educated in preventing crime and reporting suspicious events will result in a much safer community. Communities that have good reputations for having low crime rates attract young families and much needed business for the municipality to prosper.

We want to create a community where our young people are comfortable with and respect the police, not fear them. I believe that the manner in which the police services board sets its priorities for community policing each year will have a lasting impact on how our community is viewed and how our young people will view policing in their adult years.

As you can see, I have been through many changes in health care and municipal restructuring. As in business, you must learn to embrace change and encourage the development of new, more efficient and cost-effective service models. The current challenges in policing are to develop a service model that has a good balance of enforcement and education. I believe that my experience in the public and private health care sector, my many years of volunteer board experience and my municipal political experience have prepared me well to perform in this appointment. I would like to continue to offer my time and commitment to serve the community of Smith-Ennismore on the police services board. Thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before the board.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. Any questions?

Mr Ouellette: Seeing as you are a selection of the official opposition to appear before this committee, I'm sure the members will understand what I'm referring to. I know the Chair would be very interested to find out, what is your direct or indirect relationship with Conrad Black?

Mr Black: I would love to have a direct relationship with him, but unfortunately I don't. I grew up in Montreal. I'm sure when the time comes, I'll be researching my relationship.

Mr Ouellette: From what I've seen or heard, the selection process that has brought you to this point, as in most of the cases, has made a good choice.

Mr Black: Thank you.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I was interested in your background and the institutions that you've worked with. Of course, I know where the Peterborough Civic Hospital is, but I don't know where the St Joseph's Hospital and Health Centre was.

Mr Black: It was in the east side of the city of Peterborough; it was the town of Burnham at one point. It became amalgamated with Peterborough when they built a bridge. In the old days, it was the Catholic hospital on that side and the public hospital on the other side.

Mr Wood: We'll waive the balance of our time.

The Chair: We now proceed to the official opposition.

Mr Crozier: Good morning, Mr Black. Welcome to the committee. Just so that I can be perfectly clear, under "Related experience," it says you were elected a municipal councillor, 1994 to 2000. There was an election in 2000. Are you still—

Mr Black: No. Sorry, it was the end of 2001. Right?

Mr Crozier: Didn't we have an election? Yes, we had an election last year.

Mr Black: Sorry, it was 2000. I'm ahead of myself.

Mr Crozier: That's fine, just to make sure.

In reading over the research and information material that we have, it seems you have a very interesting situation in your area with the various police services and how they are provided. This is all a result of amalgamation, I guess, that it's gotten this way. You can help me if you've heard of it. There is a private member's bill that has been introduced by the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey that I think applies to this situation, and that is to allow for a hybrid police service where it's my understanding you could still have a police service within the same jurisdiction, one provided by the OPP and another provided by local police services, but under one police services board. Are you familiar with that?

Mr Black: I'm familiar with it. Yes, I am.

Mr Crozier: Could you comment on how that would affect the situation you might be involved in?

Mr Black: It's certainly an option in our current situation with having two police forces in place. I think that type of bill would lend itself more to a larger urban centre surrounded by a more rural centre. In our situation, the village of Lakefield is approximately 12 kilometres away from the city of Peterborough and the city police. The village of Lakefield had its own four-man police force at one time. They sought services from the city of Peterborough police force so now there is a gap in between the village of Lakefield and the city of Peterborough in that the police travel back and forth to perform their duties. It's not a contiguous relationship land-wise. Lakefield is a village of about 2,000 people in somewhat of an urban setting. It has services etc.

I think it would be a difficult situation to manage if it was under one board. Certainly the service standard that was set would be consistent, which wouldn't be a problem I guess. Given that, if the service standard was consistent among both forces, then who you pay the bill to for the officers is probably irrelevant at that point. The

big concern I have would be around assigning the new jurisdictions for those two separate forces.

Currently there is a significant difference in the cost of those services for the two municipalities. The current cost for Smith-Ennismore residents is \$78 per year for policing. In the village of Lakefield, with the city force, I believe it is in excess of \$235 per home. So there is a considerable difference in the costing. If the residents of those municipalities are prepared to pay the additional cost for different policing levels, there is a concern that a semi-urban centre like Lakefield has higher requirements as far as policing the downtown area, the main street and those sorts of things.

I would take it back to the public if I were on council at this point. I would take it back to the public and show the two options, show the pricing, show what level of service we're prepared to provide for each dollar, and somewhat let the public make a decision. If the taxpayers are prepared to pay the extra for that level of service, then fine.

I know certainly that the OPP services many communities of that size quite adequately and I have confidence in both forces. They are both very good services.

Mr Crozier: Was the decision taken to the public in the first place?

Mr Black: In Lakefield it was. In Smith-Ennismore we're in a slightly different situation, obviously. We're already with the OPP. We went out to an RFP, a very public process of selection. The OPP came in with the best proposal and the best price so we contracted with the OPP in Smith-Ennismore.

The Lakefield situation was slightly more complicated because they had an existing incorporated police force. They did go to the public at the time. I don't think there was a whole lot of interest paid to the issue by the public in Lakefield. They decided to bring in the Peterborough city police as their choice.

Mr Crozier: So the difference in cost, one might suggest, is the one that would wake the public up a bit more if they weren't interested in it before.

Mr Black: I'm a strong believer in educating the public around their options. I'm not sure that was made clear at the time. Certainly through the new amalgamation of the three municipalities, the village of Lakefield residents, on average, have seen a \$500 per household drop in their municipal tax burden as a result of amalgamation. So there are some good stories around amalgamation and there are some bad stories are amalgamation. This was a good one for us.

Mr Crozier: I do understand why you were interested in my comments previously, but we'll take those up another time perhaps.

Mr Black: I'm a firm believer in choice too, though.

1110

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Black. I'm just a little bit curious. In your remarks you talked about "We went to the public," and that in terms of a decision about whether to have a local service or go with the OPP, you think you would go to the public. I guess I think

that's sort of the job you're looking for, to make that decision.

When you say you would go to the public, what venue are you talking about? My understanding or impression of gauging what the public thinks on any particular issue or getting direction from them would be by way of referendum. I don't think that's what you're talking about. How do you assess what the public wants in your particular role, when you don't have a referendum, that particular tool?

Mr Black: My particular role now would be on the police services board. I wouldn't necessarily be directly involved in the RFP process for selecting the services. The chairman of the police services board will be a member of the committee, no doubt, or the subcommittee.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I suggest you would have an integral role to play as a member of the board.

Mr Black: Certainly, the chair would be involved. I think that's what's happened in past practice. We would bring things back to the board. I guess you're right in that sense. It may happen by referendum in that situation too. This has become somewhat of a sticky situation.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Has it?

Mr Black: The amalgamation of Lakefield into Smith-Ennismore was not a smooth transition. The members may be aware of Lakefield's proposal to annex a considerable amount of land out of Smith township all the way into the city, to join the city at some point or stay separated for the policing issue as well. It turned out that they did amalgamate with Smith-Ennismore and it has worked out incredibly well. There has been a lot of good feedback from the residents of the village. The big concern around amalgamation is there's always a loss of identity, an identity crisis. Well, the village of Lakefield will always be the village of Lakefield. That sign is never going to come down. It will always be Lakefield. Outside of those fears, the historical significance of municipalities, it's a business, it runs as a business. It has to.

The Chair: The third party now, Mr Christopherson.

Mr Christopherson: Welcome, Mr Black. I notice you were on the police services board from 1994 to 2000.

Mr Black: No, I was on the board from the last two years of my last term, which would be 1998 to 2000. The OPP policing contract issue didn't start until, I think, the year before that, when we had to either contract or status quo.

Mr Christopherson: OK. The way this reads it looks like it was the full six years.

Mr Black: Sorry.

Mr Christopherson: That's OK.

You mentioned the CCACs and your role there, and I know this is not an appointment to that, but it would help me get a sense of who you are to ask you what your opinion is on the current status of funding to CCACs.

Mr Black: We're a service provider to CCACs in the medical equipment rental business for clients coming out of hospital and so on. The expenditures, I believe, have gone from \$325 million to over \$600 million in the last three years. Considerable dollars have been put into the system. The CCACs—and I deal with them all across the

province, from large to small—have put a great deal of effort into developing their programs, their protocols, all of these sorts of things and I think have had an impact on the ability of hospitals to manage the load in the hospitals right now.

Being a business person, I understand that there is just not an open-ended number that we can spend. There certainly are priorities that have to be put in place, but I also think it's possibly time to step back and look at the structure of the CCACs and possibly how many there are, just like municipal restructuring. There are a number of them, and I'm not suggesting that any of them are not performing well financially or are not taking care of business properly, but there are some advantages to slightly bigger organizations; not too big, though, because I'm a firm believer, in our case with Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield, 16,000 people is a good-sized municipality on a rural basis to manage, where people can access a councillor if they need one.

I think it's time to step back, look at what services the CCACs are providing, look at their mandate, look at their mission. They are providing a lot of ambulatory-type services, and I think their initial mission was to provide non-ambulatory services in the home. There are a lot of services that they've taken on that are clients who are walking. Typically, in the past, we'd go to a hospital-based clinic, but the hospitals don't want that role or don't have that role at this time, and the access centres have taken on part of that role. Long term, is that where they should be spending their time? I think that's a philosophical discussion between the government and the CCACs as to what exactly the role is. Redefining the role will help define the funding requirements.

Mr Christopherson: I have to say that I'm a little disappointed. It sounds more like a defence of government policy, as opposed to the reality, at least as I see it certainly in my community and I understand in other CCACs. But that's that.

Being a former Solicitor General, this probably stands out more for me, but as someone who has served on a modern-day police service, I didn't hear you use the phrase "police service." It was always "police force." Words aren't everything at a time of political correctness, but there's a distinct difference between seeing your local police as a police force versus a police service. With that, can you give me what your definition of community policing is?

Mr Black: I probably have used the wrong word a few times, and I think I've made it clear in my presentation that community policing is the important aspect for me: education, prevention, all of those sorts of things.

Mr Christopherson: But what is community policing to you? Out there, what is that exactly?

Mr Black: Community policing is being out in the field, making presentations to school children, to seniors on how to be safe, spending time at community events, getting to know the local people, building a relationship with the local people. I know, certainly in the OPP's case, the days of officers being transferred every other year—it's not there any more. You're getting more

officers staying in the community that they are working in for a longer period of time so they can build those relationships. I think it's building a relationship with the community, a relationship of trust, as I said, where my children will grow up seeing police officers at public events, being seen as somebody who's helpful, not somebody to be afraid of.

You're right, "force" is probably the wrong word to use.

Mr Christopherson: I'm not hung up on it, but—

Mr Black: I've always been very active, even through the waste management issues, around education being a lot more important than legislation in those situations. Fining somebody or taking somebody away is not the answer, because they are probably going to be back again.

Mr Christopherson: One last quick question, if I can. You talked about the people of your community having choice about policing. If one of those choices desired by some of the citizens in a given area was that they were prepared to pay extra to have extra policing—and there are many private policing agencies based in the United States that are now attempting to import themselves here into Canada. How do you feel about that as an option? Do you think that people should have that option if they choose to have a higher level of policing than is the norm in the balance of the community, that if they're prepared to pony up the money, they should be allowed to bring in whatever policing service they want?

Mr Black: That's a tough question. I am a firm believer that if the taxpayer wants to pay the additional costs of providing a service, then if they want street lights, they can pay for street lights. But the general taxpayer in the community shouldn't have to pay for street lights in a subdivision if they have no street lights on their street.

The question around these security-type forces as opposed to a policing service doing certain parts of police business, I don't have a lot of experience and understanding of what those forces are. We haven't seen them in places and communities like ours. They are in Toronto and the bigger urban centre markets. Do they have a role in policing? Possibly. My preference would be probably to have an integrated police service providing all of the services in the community. If a security-type service can show me that they have the required training, the expertise to do the job well at possibly a lower cost, then maybe, but I would have to be shown that very clearly.

1120

Mr Christopherson: I'll tell you right up front that that answer, with respect to you as an individual, I couldn't vote for that. That basically is saying that it's OK to privatize policing and that takes us down the road of privatized education, health care, the whole notion of—I just feel strongly about this issue.

If there's not adequate policing for one part of the community and they want it increased, then maybe that's what should be for everyone else, not sort of minimum policing for those who can't afford it and adequate

policing for those who can. So, to me, I would have been much happier to hear you say, "No, that's not the way to go. We need to make sure that the publicly funded, publicly regulated and publicly managed police service is adequately funded to provide service for everyone, so that that's not there.

I have to tell you, I'm a little disappointed that you answered the way you did.

Mr Black: I think you can certainly set a minimum standard for policing. I think we have that. If a community wishes to have a service of having an officer walking up and down the downtown street, which is not a normal practice at 3 in the morning, to protect the local businesses if they feel that's important—it's not the standard. I think people should have to pay for the additional. But you're absolutely right, the minimum standards for policing should be adequately provided across the community at all taxpayers' expense. But if you're getting a special request for additional policing, above and beyond what is considered normal practice, then I don't have a problem with somebody paying for that.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Christopherson, and that completes the questioning. Thank you very much, sir.

RICHARD FILION

Review of intended appointment, selected by the official opposition party: Richard Filion, intended appointee as member, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound and Timiskaming District Health Council

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Mr Richard Filion, who is intended appointee as member, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound and Timiskaming District Health Council. Welcome to the committee, sir.

As you know, you are welcome to make an initial statement, if you see fit, and then the questions will be directed, 10 minutes from each of the parties represented in the committee.

Mr Richard Filion: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and bonjour à tout le monde.

It's nerve-racking to come here, but to start with I should give you some of my background. I know you have that all in front of you, so I sat down this morning at around 6 o'clock and wrote a few things.

By background, my chosen profession has been the profession of dentistry. I've practised now for over 30 years. Most of my practice was in the city of Sudbury and I have now gone into a sort of semi-retirement, although my wife won't agree with me. I practise about three days a week in the small town of Sturgeon Falls, which is now the centre of the new municipality of West Nipissing.

I sit on the town council in West Nipissing. Last term I was the deputy mayor; this time around I'm a councillor. I have duties regarding my municipal election. I served previously as a councillor of Springer township, which is now part of the municipality.

My duties right now extend to being on the planning board and industrial development. I represent the muni-

cipality on the North Bay and District Health Unit. The latest task that I've undertaken with the municipality is chairing the West Nipissing Energy Services, which are two corporations which handle the local supply of electrical power to the community, and also we take care of the water and sewer utilities in the town. We are looking at expanding into other fields, but that's what I do right now.

I'm also quite an avid hunter, fisherman, camper and all this. I love the outdoors. I guess it's typical of most northerners. As such, I sat on a commission for the government called Lands for Life, which was a planning exercise. I was on the Great Lakes-St Lawrence Round Table. I found it a very rewarding experience to be on there because I learned to work with people with very different agendas. I sort of represented that outdoor use type of thing, but I came to respect a lot about what the environmental people were telling us, what people in business such as tourist operators and loggers were telling us, and I learned all about multi-use for the land. I think that is important.

We also, I think most of all, learned about building consensus among a group, a commission or a board. It served us well. I know it was a very controversial process that not everyone agreed with, but certainly it was one where the public had the opportunity to express their views as to what they wanted to see done with our crown land in Ontario, parks and other protected areas. I was also involved a lot in a template of the elk release program in the Burwash-French River area.

Another area of interest that I have has been in the regulatory body of one of the health professions, that, of course, of dentistry. I was there this morning, as a matter of fact, because I chair the complaints committee. I've been on the Royal College of Dental Surgeons as the northern Ontario representative, elected by dentists, for 16 years. I've served as president of the college. I possess two fellowships, one in the Academy of General Dentistry and one in the International College of Dentists.

That is about it as far as what I do and what my background is.

Why do I want this job? Good question. I think the reason is because society has been very good to me in my years. I'm happy, I've worked hard and I think I've achieved a lot of goals in life. I think in our later years it's a good opportunity sometimes to put something back into the community. I have a big interest in the way we deliver health services. We may not all agree on how we do it, but I think we all know that we have to do the best we can with whatever limits us. That is basically why I wish to sit on this board and to have that kind of input. I've treated patients all my life and I think I can understand the need for a healthy population.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We begin our questions with the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Filion. Very nice to see you today. You are, I'm sure, aware that one of the mandates for district health councils is to advise the minister on health needs and health matters. Right

now, as a citizen of the province, if you were to offer the minister advice in terms of better meeting the health needs of the province, what might you advise?

Mr Filion: First of all, the advice is a collective one that's given by the committee. Personally, if I was to talk to Mr Clement—he came to visit our council just a few days ago—probably I would say stay the course. Let's try to maximize the efficiency of the health services that we deliver in the province. So many things that we can do sometimes—and it's not just dollars. I think we realize this in dentistry. It's an attitude, it's a way of doing business.

Political things set aside, I think we all want to do what's best for the population of Ontario and, as far as I'm concerned, create a more efficient delivery of services and a more balanced one in Ontario.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I must say that I'm somewhat disappointed that you would suggest that the minister would stay the course, particularly in light of the fact of what we hear, what we understand in the national media in terms of the many problems there are in health care—the shortage of doctors, the shortage of resources, the fact that people cannot get health services within their community, the fact that CCACs are not getting additional dollars to provide more services within their communities.

1130

Mr Filion: I guess what I mean by staying the course is basically if the government is trying to make it more efficient, in other words, eliminate waste or things like this in the system, I think this is a good thing. If the objective of the government is to give a better service ultimately, I think that is staying the course. Keep on trying to do a good job.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You also made the comment about a way of doing business. I would suggest that your particular role is to consider the health services that are required within a community and consider ways that those services can be implemented, because many of them are not, and improved for the people. Again, I'm disturbed that you see this more from a business perspective and that you think the minister should stay the course. I know it would not surprise you to understand that would not be the perspective of our party.

Mr Filion: I think you have misunderstood my comments. When I read reports such as the longevity of northerners as compared to the province in general, that we live more than two years less than the average Ontarian, I think this is something for concern and it is something that we want to find the answers to, try to better deliver services in northern Ontario. That's what I really meant by this kind of thing. Our way of doing business is perhaps not in a business sense but rather the way we deliver these services.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You talk about services in northern Ontario. Do you have an opinion on the northern health travel grant and the way it is applied?

Mr Filion: Yes, I think that we have to have this simply because of the vastness of our area. We know

this. Yes, I would like to see the travel grants, for one thing, continued and I certainly would like to see them enhanced and perhaps more specific as to the needs of northerners. I understand that southerners who have to come to northern Ontario for very specific services enjoy a certain advantage that northerners don't enjoy when they come down south. So I would like to see some of these things addressed and perhaps rectified.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have a political affiliation, Mr Filion?

Mr Filion: Yes, I do. I take some interest in politics and I'm a member of a political party. I joined that party.

Mrs Dombrowsky: What party would that be?

Mr Filion: That would be the Progressive Conservatives.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you a member of the executive?

Mr Filion: No.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Have you ever run for office?

Mr Filion: No, ma'am.

Mr Crozier: I want to just pick up a bit on the efficiency answer that you gave and I want to go on record as saying that I want to see the most efficient health delivery system in the world. I support that. I want to see the most efficient education system in the world. I want to see the most efficient Premier's office in the world. That seems to be the continuing reason given for staying the course, as you said. How are you going to determine when we've reached peak efficiency and therefore have to do something else to alleviate the problems?

Mr Filion: I think we're far from having reached peak efficiency in the service—

Mr Crozier: What do you base that decision on? What can you give me as examples of where you think we're far from the efficiency we should have?

Mr Filion: I think the member to your right has highlighted one of them, the northern Ontario travel grants for medical. I think there are other places—

Mr Crozier: But that's going to cost more money.

Mr Filion: Yes, it is.

Mr Crozier: OK, and I'm a southerner who supports that. I have the southerly riding in the province and I support you 100%.

Mr Filion: Thank you very much.

Mr Crozier: But let's get back to this definition of efficiency and how you can give me examples—

Mr Filion: I think if we get into the minutiae of the delivery of services, the very close things, this is where a health council can function very well to identify some areas where efficiencies can be improved and achieved. I think we are all in agreement that sometimes things can be made better.

Mr Crozier: Probably every day everything can be improved.

Mr Filion: That's right. I had to use the system the other day with an accident with my arm and I was very pleased with the system. I could recognize things that could be improved. There were lots of people in the

emergency department waiting for services and that type of thing.

Mr Crozier: But that would take more staff, perhaps.

Mr Filion: That's right.

Mr Crozier: More beds.

Mr Filion: That's right. This is something we have to achieve. We have to examine in terms of the big picture of what we can afford and get the best bang for the buck, sir.

Mr Crozier: You haven't defined that for me yet. Let me ask one more question that relates to your being on the district health council. Did the health restructuring commission come into your area and make some decisions?

Mr Filion: No, sir.

Mr Crozier: They didn't?

Mr Filion: No.

Mr Crozier: Good. So you think, then, that the Minister of Health, rather than listening to an appointed commission, will listen to the district health council when it comes to advice as to how to handle health delivery in your area.

Mr Filion: One would hope so, because I think that as a result of studying the various aspects of health delivery in the district health council's purview, one would gain a certain expertise and knowledge that would be valuable to the minister in making decisions.

Mr Crozier: Do you think it made any difference that the Premier of the province lives in the Nipissing area that the health restructuring commission didn't come in there?

Mr Filion: I don't think so.

Mr Crozier: OK. Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you very much. It'll be the third party.

Mr Christopherson: Thank you very much, sir, for coming in. I have to tell you, you lost me on "stay the course," so perhaps we can make this short and sweet. I can't support this appointment. The last thing we should be doing is staying the course, sir. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you kindly. The government caucus.

Mr Ouellette: Thanks for your presentation today. A couple of things. Following the official opposition's questioning, do you have an opinion whether currently there is adequate funding within the health care system and it just has to be administered in a different fashion?

Mr Filion: I'm not sure I understand your question.

Mr Ouellette: Currently there is \$22.4 billion being spent on health care and a lot of the responses are typically for more funding. I'm not so sure I'm of that opinion, although trying to convince us is a regular occasion. Is the funding being correctly spent on health care? Chiropractors are asking, I believe, for \$85, up from \$70, per visit for everyone to pay. Could there possibly be enough funding in the system if it was being spent in a different fashion?

Mr Filion: This is probably what emanates from doing research as to where the priorities should be in the

health care system and its delivery. I think there's always room for improvement. We're not perfect.

Mr Ouellette: Do you think those priorities you just mentioned have been established or should be established by the Canada Health Act?

Mr Filion: Yes, I think so. I think that, broadly speaking, the needs of Canadians as a whole are pretty uniform, and we are Canadians. There are local priorities as well that should be examined and there are certainly provincial ones. There are local ones. For instance, we see a higher rate of smokers in our area. This was brought out in the health unit in that report on the health of Ontarians, so perhaps that might account a little bit for our lack of longevity. I think, all in all, the requirement that local health issues be brought to the attention of the minister is most important.

I can probably speak more of dentistry than anything else. I treat a lot of native children. It's an area where they're in need of a lot of public health education, not just treatment but also to actually prevent some of these dental diseases. I would imagine that extends over other disease processes as well.

Mr Ouellette: Thank you for your answers.

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The Chair: That concludes the questioning and you're welcome to step down. Thank you very much for being with us.

We're going to deal with a couple of things. We'll deal with concurrences, of course, and then I would like us to deal with the letter we received in response. Thank you, Mr Wood, for assisting us in getting the response. You were kind enough to do so. I may not find the letter is as nice as I want it to be, but nevertheless it was very kind of you to do so, sir.

We'll deal with concurrences.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Simpson.

The Chair: This was Thomas Howard Simpson, intended appointee as member, University of Toronto governing council. Any comment, discussion? All in favour?

Mr Christopherson: Recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

Ayes

Johnson, Kells, Ouellette, Wood.

Nays

Christopherson, Crozier, Dombrowsky.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Sheppard.

The Chair: Concurrence has been moved by Mr Wood for Howard Sheppard, intended appointee as member, board of health for the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

Mr Christopherson: Recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested. Any comment, first of all? If not, all in favour?

Ayes

Crozier, Johnson, Kells, Ouellette, Wood.

Nays

Christopherson.

The Chair: OK.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Black.

The Chair: This is Ronald Black, intended appointee as member, Smith-Ennismore Police Services Board. Concurrence has been moved by Mr Wood.

Mr Christopherson: Recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote is requested. Any discussion before we have the vote? If not, all in favour?

Ayes

Johnson, Kells, Ouellette, Wood.

Nays

Christopherson, Crozier, Dombrowsky.

The Chair: That motion is carried.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Filion.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence of the intended appointee, Richard Filion, as member, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound and Timiskaming District Health Council.

Mr Christopherson: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair: A recorded vote is requested. Any discussion before the vote? All in favour?

Ayes

Johnson, Kells, Ouellette, Wood.

Nays

Christopherson, Crozier, Dombrowsky.

The Chair: The motion is carried.

All concurrences have been carried by the committee.

VACANCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Mr Bradley: I would like to deal with a letter now, because the committee requested a letter on the appointments process that's of some interest. I'm going to take a minute to read it into the record so we have it in Hansard. I think that would make sense so we know what we're discussing in the future, because not everybody will have access to the letter.

It is addressed to the Chair of the standing committee on government agencies. It is from Catherine Mustard, department head, Public Appointments Secretariat.

"Dear Mr Bradley:

"I am writing in response to your letter of May 28, 2001, in which the standing committee on government agencies sought information on the vacancy notification procedure for appointments to agencies, boards and commissions.

"The government in the past published 'The Guide—Agencies, Boards and Commissions' on an annual basis. This guide listed all current agencies, boards and commissions to which members of the public were appointed. It provided members of the public an opportunity to see the diversity of agencies, boards and commissions and to consider opportunities for public service as a public appointee. The guide listed the function, classification, legislative authority, membership, remuneration and term of appointment. In addition, the names of current members and their respective terms were listed. A member of the public could make application for an appointment by completing the application form contained in the back of the guide.

"The guide was first published in 1991 and made available to the public through the Ontario Government Bookstore and the Public Appointments Secretariat. In addition copies of the guide were sent to public libraries and to the offices of members of the Legislative Assembly.

"The final year of publication was 1995. At that time it was determined that the cost of producing and distributing the guide was excessive in relation to its utilization. The cost of publication was approximately \$175,000 annually for French and English versions.

"A major problem with the guide was that it was outdated before it was printed. Terms of appointment identified for agencies, boards and commissions and potential vacancies identified as a result of the terms' expiration date were in many cases filled by the time the publication was released. The province appoints in excess of 5,000 members to over 600 different agencies, boards and commissions. With different terms and staggered dates of appointments, this means that there are over 1,000 new appointments annually and approximately 1,100 re-appointments. In many instances ends of terms were construed as vacancies, giving a false expectation of opportunities available.

"In February 1998 the government decided to make the information contained in the guide available to the public by means of an Internet Web site. Through the Internet more members of the public have more direct access on an immediate basis to the information. At present the only information not contained on the site is the individual names and terms of the appointees. The information provided is always current, as the Web site is updated on a daily basis. It is the intent in the future to add the names of members of individual agencies, boards and commissions and their respective terms (start and expiration dates) to the Web site. The site currently has limited French capability but steps are being taken to translate the remaining information.

"Additionally, the Public Appointments Secretariat produces, on a monthly basis, a six-month projection of

upcoming vacancies. This projection is provided to the leaders of the opposition and to all government members. The secretariat is planning on making the projection, which contains the names and expiry dates of current appointees over a six-month period, available on request to members of the public at the secretariat located in the Macdonald Block. In addition the appointments secretariat will send the projection to all MPP offices each time it is updated.

"I hope that this answers the questions of the standing committee on government agencies.

"Yours truly,

"Catherine Mustard

"Department Head,

"Public Appointments Secretariat."

Any discussions, comments on that? Mr Christopherson.

Mr Christopherson: I haven't looked at the Web site, but can someone confirm that indeed all that information that used to be in the book is now there on the Web site?

The Chair: I'll ask Mr Pond if he might have some information on that. It's just off the top of our heads.

Mr David Pond: As the letter says on page 2, sir, "It is the intent in the future to add the names of members of individual" ABCs. They're not on there today.

Mr Christopherson: But everything else is?

Mr Pond: What's on the Web site are the lists of the agencies, the minister to which they report, a brief summary of their statutory mandate, the remuneration, if any, and the size of the board of directors. But the individuals who are currently serving on the ABCs, as the letter does indicate, are not right now available on the Web site.

Mr Christopherson: The statement is very, very explicit, "In February 1998 the government decided to make the information contained in the guide available to the public by means of an Internet Web site."

Perhaps, Chair, we should ask legislative research to specifically compare what exactly was available in the guide and what is now available on the Web site and determine if there's anything missing beyond what the letter already acknowledges.

Mr Crozier: Yes, I think that would be fine. I visited the Web site a number of times and, really, in its present state the only thing it gives is some general information as to what the boards, agencies and commissions are. It isn't very helpful when it comes to the public being interested in specific appointments.

We've now been three years since the government decided to make the information available. In my view, that would have been adequate time to have all that information there. I think what we should do is encourage the secretariat to move along with that initiative, because without the terms of the appointees it really isn't of as much use as the guide used to be. So I appreciate the intent of the Public Appointments Secretariat.

Additionally, the letter says the secretariat is planning on making this projection of vacancies available. I would encourage the secretariat to do that as quickly as possible, in making it available to the public, not only at

the Macdonald Block, but as I said, through the Web site itself. In the meantime, though, the last sentence of the next-to-last paragraph, where it says, "In addition the appointments secretariat will send the projection to all MPP offices," I take it that that's from the date of this letter on, so that we will receive them without asking for them.

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Either through the Chair we can clear it up, or perhaps through the government members, or I'll write myself to ask if it's the intent that from May 28 on all MPPs are going to receive the projection.

Mr Wood: I suggest that you, Mr Chair, might write and put the request in and when you receive the answer, distribute it to all members of the committee.

The Chair: If I may, I will ask staff to assist me, through what's in Hansard now, in composing a letter to them. Before the letter goes I would like to provide a copy to Mr Wood, perhaps, Mr Crozier, Mr Martin or Mr Christopherson so they could approve the letter before it goes, so it encompasses what the committee wants, as opposed to simply my thoughts.

Another thing I'd be interested in from our point of view as a committee: they mentioned the significant cost of \$175,000 annually. Often with these things when you produce them, it's the first cost that's really the most expensive and after that the cost goes down. I'd be interested in our research looking at the cost and comparing it to the costs of a Web site, for instance. I don't know what the costs of a Web site might be. Our research people may be helpful in providing us with information there.

Mr Crozier: I just have two other I guess requests of the Public Appointments Secretariat. When we get the list of the intended appointees each week, it's faxed to us. I would think in this day and age that it could be e-mailed to us. It seems to me we've made that request and for some reason the secretariat can't e-mail it.

Mr Wood: Why don't we ask them?

Mr Crozier: Yes. Secondly, I would suggest that these projected appointments they're hopefully going to provide to all the MPPs could be e-mailed as well. That's all.

The Chair: Does our clerk have any comment on that at all yet? No.

Mr Crozier: I know the Chair would like that because he wants this information on his laptop.

The Chair: I'd be happy to have it two different ways. I'm like Bert. I like that being delivered in the House, for instance, so it would be nice if it were available both ways. The problem is, electronically speaking—and I think Mr Johnson made a point before—what happens, if your electronic equipment isn't working, is that at least you've had a page deliver something in the House. In this case, at least one of the two pieces of electronic equipment we would hope is working so we can get that information. So it would be very handy to have that information.

I'm encouraged as well, I might add, from the letter, that not just the government members but all members will now receive that information. It's nice in a committee like ours, since we deal with this, that all members would receive this information now. That's very encouraging.

So I will have staff assist me in preparing a letter and I will have it reviewed by each of the three parties.

Mr Ouellette: Mr Pond, the information found on the Web site I believe is comparable or more detailed than what was found in the book in the past, is it not? I thought it was. I thought the information, when I refer people to it—

Mr Crozier: Jerry, really it's not.

The Chair: I'll get Mr Pond to answer this first.

Mr Christopherson: Just on that, Jerry, I first of all asked the question—I think the same question but maybe a little different—but I had asked that the committee request that leg research do just exactly what you've suggested, to take a look at the two and let's make sure they are, but I didn't hear the Chair say that would be done.

Mr Ouellette: I'm like a lot of members. We get people coming in and asking about these and we photocopy that and we tell them on the Net. The response that has come back to me has been that the information has been better from the Net.

Mr Crozier: The terms aren't there, for example, some individual's terms.

Mr Ouellette: Oh, you mean the periods?

Mr Crozier: Yes.

Mr Christopherson: We may have some other matters that aren't before us right now that are important, that aren't there, that should at least be brought to our attention. Or if it's all fine, then great, we can just put the whole issue to bed.

The Chair: We have all of the information then in Hansard and our staff can review Hansard and we'll do this as expeditiously as possible on your behalf so we'll all be satisfied, or at least have the information. If not satisfied, we'll have the information available to us.

Any motion?

Mr Johnson: I just want you to know I just live on that very edge of the electronic—that's why I'm so interested in this particular subject.

Mr Crozier: The leading edge?

Mr Johnson: The leading edge, but my system goes down. Every once in a while I run into a problem in photocopying and faxing from my cell phone in the car. Not all the time, but every once in a while.

The Chair: That's why it's good to have a Palm Pilot with you at all times.

Mr Johnson: Exactly.

Mr Ouellette: I move adjournment.

The Chair: A motion to adjourn is moved by Mr Ouellette, in this case. All in favour? The motion is carried. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

The committee adjourned at 1155.

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