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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 20 November 2002

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 20 novembre 2002

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 20 November 2002

Mercredi 20 novembre 2002

The committee met at 1004 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Vice-Chair (Mr Michael Gravelle): I call the standing committee on government agencies meeting of Wednesday, November 20, 2002, to order. I believe we have some business to attend to before we get to our appointments.

I'm looking for a motion to adopt the subcommittee report of November 7, 2002.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): So moved.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood moves adoption of the subcommittee report of November 7, 2002.

All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

We also have the subcommittee report of Thursday, November 14, 2002.

Mr Wood: So moved.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood moves adoption of the subcommittee report of Thursday, November 14, 2002.

All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

We will now move to our first interview.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MARGARET SMITH

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Margaret S. Smith, intended appointee as member, Child and Family Services Review Board and Custody Review Board.

The Vice-Chair: We call forward Margaret S. Smith, intended appointee as a member of the Child and Family Services Review Board and the Custody Review Board.

Welcome to the committee. You have an opportunity to say a few words, if you would like, before we begin the questioning. When you are finished, we will begin the questioning with the government party.

Mrs Margaret S. Smith: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman and members of the committee, for permitting me to speak to you today about my wish and desire to be on both these boards, the Child and Family Services Review Board and the Custody Review Board.

I'll give you a little bit of information about my personal background. I grew up on our family's century farm in West Nissouri township, which is now known as Thames Centre, in the county of Middlesex. It is in this

same municipality that my husband and I have resided and raised our two sons.

My interest in community involvement started at an early age and was deeply rooted in our family's interest in being involved in school and community activities.

During the course of my 37 years in education, I enjoyed being an elementary school secretary for 15 years. It was during this time, while our sons were in elementary school, that I recognized the value of parent volunteers and the need for parents to be involved in their children's education; that I was introduced to the home and school association and served on their executive as president; and that their motto, Students Come First, remains as vital today as it did in 1965. This past April, I represented the administration of the Thames Valley District School Board on the planning committee for the province's home and school conference in London. So you can see that my passion for working with parents in the best interests of children continues.

In 1980, I moved to the education centre of the former Middlesex County Board of Education and within a few years assumed the role of executive assistant to the director of education. This indeed was a multi-faceted role, attending all board meetings, working closely with all employee groups, student trustees and home and schools. I then had the privilege of working with the director of education when school councils were implemented. With amalgamation in 1998, I joined the central office team of the Thames Valley District School Board as the school community liaison officer and, in this capacity, began even a closer relationship with parents and students. During the past four years my duties included organizing the student trustee elections, chairing the board's education week activities and representing the board as the contact for the United Way for the London-Middlesex area. I chaired the Growing a Caring Learning Community conference for school councils, home and schools, and parent associations.

This past September the director of education gave me a task of organizing the board's display at the International Ploughing Match, also known as Rural Expo 2002, in Glencoe. The county of Middlesex invited the board to enter a display. At this display we showcased how the Thames Valley board prepares young people to be an integral part of their community. About 70 students participated at the display, and 4,000 students from the Thames Valley board either attended or participated.

Working with the superintendent of education, I was given the task of organizing the student trustee election, and coached and prepared students for their election day activities. Certainly one of my goals was to ensure that the event was an enriching and positive experience and that students who let their names stand for election or participated in the full day event left feeling excited about the election day process and eager to take leadership roles in the community.

1010

In May 2002, the Thames Valley District School Board recognized my career in education and I was honoured as a recipient of the award of distinction. I'm proud of the fact that the criteria for this award were based on the Thames Valley District School Board's foundation principles for a caring, learning community—integrity, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, coaching, continuous improvement, job-specific skills and improved student learning—and that I was recognized as a person who lives these principles and role-models them, whether it's for my own children, my grandchildren, the students of Plover Mills Public School, the students of Middlesex county or the students of the Thames Valley District School Board.

I want to assure you that I would consistently demonstrate these same principles in an expanded role on these two committees.

Just as recently as October 24, 2002, I was contacted by a representative of the Canadian Millennium excellence awards committee, inviting me to serve as a community volunteer representative to review scholarship applications from innovative young people who have demonstrated they are community leaders. As a volunteer representative, I would be affirming the value of my community-mindedness in selecting worthy students.

It is through these involvements that I feel my background qualifies me to be a member of these boards.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Smith. Members of the government, are there any questions?

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): First of all, I should welcome you here, Ms Smith. I think it's an honour for anybody to put their name forward for a position like this.

Two weeks ago, I had a couple of representatives from the child and family services of Waterloo region come in, and they expressed how our approach to children and family services had improved considerably from what their experience had been over the years. They have been members of child and family services and before that of the children's aid society and what have you, going back probably about 25 years. One thing they noted was that there is a great increase in the number of appeals in spite of their effort to do remedial work. I was wondering if you had any preconceived notions when an individual may appeal his or her placement by child and family services? Do you have any preconceived notions when they come forward with an appeal?

Mrs Smith: It's my understanding that they come forth if there has been a refusal of a placement, a

relocation suspended, maybe contested terms, so that those appeals go before the board at that time when they're not happy with the decisions that have been made.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, the children can bring those appeals forward, but I was wondering what your bias may be if you have any.

Mrs Smith: No, I don't.

Mr Wettlaufer: OK. Thank you.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): Thank you very much, Ms Smith, for putting your name forward. Certainly it's a very important job. I think that when it comes to these types of situations, they're getting much more difficult in today's environment, and some of the arguments you will be listening to will be much more complex than they may have been 30 or 40 years ago. When you talk to people in child care work or child protection, you will find that for many different reasons there are more cases that come forward, mainly legislation and mandates—people in authority, like yourself when you were at the school board, to report on a mandatory basis as opposed to perhaps voluntary.

I think too that when it comes to apprehensions and appeals and so on, we always talk about prevention. One thing that's not been looked at is the use of drugs in our society. Anyway, that's for another day. I'll certainly be making my point in that regard, but it works right down to violence on the street and to children being apprehended that have nowhere to go but a safe place through the state or the province.

Thank you for taking on that role. I'm sure it will be a very difficult and challenging position.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Johnson, we have about one minute left of your allotted time.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Mrs Smith, I just want to congratulate you for your leadership in your area of the province and to wish you well, should this appointment be successful.

I assume that one of the programs that may fall on your front step would be a situation similar to the one that's been quite a lot in the papers in St Thomas, the one where the church people were using discipline that the children's aid society considered inappropriate, and at some point that may or would be appealed.

My point is that your job is not an easy one. You'll need all the wisdom of Solomon, and I wish you very well.

Mrs Smith: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: We move to the official opposition.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Good morning, Mrs Smith. It's very nice to see you here today and I certainly did appreciate your opening remarks. I always am interested to understand how it is that people come to be intended appointees to the various boards, and perhaps you can explain to this committee how it is that you are here today.

Mrs Smith: Recognizing that I was going to retire from the Thames Valley District School Board on

October 31, just a few days ago, early in the year I did express an interest through Mr Bob Wood's office to Dave Dillon that if there was an opening in the year 2002 that would be an extension of my career, I would be interested in looking at something like that. The Honourable Dianne Cunningham was also made aware of my pending retirement.

Then, in March of this year, I did receive a call from Dave Dillon about this possible opportunity. It was at that time that I submitted an application. Following the arrival of my application, I did receive a call from Mr Rob Adams, the chair of the two committees, and he explained to me the work of the committee and wanted to see if I was still interested. He also inquired about my background at that time.

Mrs Dombrowsky: When you indicate you submitted an application, was it for a specific board?

Mrs Smith: Yes, for this board, the Child and Family Services Review Board and the Custody Review Board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So they operate in tandem. Is that it?

Mrs Smith: Yes, they do, as I understand it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. So we understand that you have come to be here because you were able to contact your local member and indicate that you were prepared to share your expertise, your background and your energy by participating on a board for the province of Ontario.

Can you perhaps describe why, because there are a wide range of boards and agencies, this one was of particular interest you?

Mrs Smith: Well, I know there are several boards, and perhaps if another one had been made available, my interest could have been there as well. But this opportunity did come forth and as you can appreciate, having been involved and working with students, this would be an extension of my career. I felt that the values that I have, being a good listener, I have a high regard for the plight of individuals and the youth and children of this province—that I would ultimately make a good member of this committee.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I do want to make a comment. I know the member from Kitchener, Mr Wettlaufer, had made some observations about the folks from child and family services, those representatives who would visit his office, and those representatives who also come to my office. However, I'm really surprised, because I do receive quite a different report from these folks than the one that Mr Wettlaufer has received. People who work in the system providing services for children are regularly perplexed and disappointed and disillusioned that they are not able to access the kind of resources that they believe children need.

1020

You're obviously going to be in a role where you see children in difficulty. Do you feel that in your role you have any responsibility in terms of advocacy if you regularly see children who come under appeal, and do you recognize that much of the circumstance relates directly to a lack of support for families and children? Do

you see that you have a responsibility in your role to advocate for better resources and services for these situations?

Mrs Smith: The board's mandate is to provide a review mechanism for the children and youth of Ontario. I feel that both boards offer a lot when they can sit as an independent group of people and listen to these situations that various youth have encountered. I would hope that through the work of the board we would be able to help out, but I recognize we will be working under the mandate and the act. I respect both of those guidelines. I look forward to the training that would come following my appointment to learn more about the act and the mandate.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I didn't intend that to be a difficult question or a trick question. I also think that people on a review board would be able to understand or appreciate programs that are working well, and it would be equally important to have people understand that when you think there are programs that are serving families and children well, that should be known. Conversely, I also believe that when there are shortcomings in the system, when they are amply evident and when the needs, particularly of children, are not being met, representatives on a board have a responsibility to make some comment about that to try and arrest the problems. It might prevent you from seeing the same sorts of problems on a regular basis.

With regard to children's aid societies, many of the young people or many of the cases you will be required to review will have had experience in, or will be in, the children's aid society system. Do you have, right now at this time, an understanding of how well the children's aid society system is working in our communities or any of the challenges CASs might be facing?

Mrs Smith: The CAS of course has been operating for some time and in most areas they have situations that are difficult, but with the review process that's in place now, I think that is helping them a great deal, both as an agency and for individuals as well. Through the board, the process of hearing appeals is helping them, but I'm also aware that there are lots of young people who are going through the agencies as well.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Good morning. I take it from your answers to other questions and from your presentation at the beginning that you take this appointment quite seriously and to heart and want to do a good job.

Our concern here always is to make sure these arm's-length boards actually do a job separate from any political consideration or connection because of the appointment. As to your own political involvement, I note by your resumé that back in 1986 you were involved in a group looking at women seeking involvement in politics. Did you come to that from any particular political persuasion, and what would be your political connections at this time?

Mrs Smith: I am a card-carrying Progressive Conservative. It was by an invitation as the riding president

for Middlesex that I was invited to serve on the committee looking at women being involved in politics.

At that time the people that were invited to serve were not necessarily from one party. There were Reeves of municipalities, trustees of school boards. They were looking at recruiting female candidates, attracting female voters. It wasn't just for one party. We looked at it in many ways. That was in August 1986 that I was involved with that.

Mr Martin: What would your position be vis-à-vis the whole question of young offenders? Do you think we're being too tough, not tough enough? What's your take on that whole area? Do you think the federal government is doing a good job in terms of, for example, the reform of that whole area?

Mrs Smith: In regard to young offenders, it certainly is the responsibility of the government to make the policy. I do feel that both individuals or young offenders need to be held accountable for their actions. I know the Young Offenders Act certainly does provide directions. It offers both an open and secure program, and one of their goals is to safeguard the public and the clients and staff, and be sensitive and supportive of the youth of Ontario.

Mr Martin: What about rehabilitation and the restoration of the young offender to a place where he can become, again, a contributing member of society? What part does that play now?

Mrs Smith: I think that's a very important part. Certainly we do have many different types of placements for young people. Whether it be the boot camp near Barrie, or I know through the Thames Valley District School Board we have several schools under section 19 for young offenders who have had some situations where they need help. We have some special schools where they can go to be rehabilitated. I think it is very important that we do work with them as the province and as the government of Canada.

Mr Martin: So you think the boot camp near Barrie is a good example of a rehabilitation program?

Mrs Smith: It is one place—I know it is an intensive and regimented program, but probably in some situations it is necessary. I am very glad that we do have a very diverse plan of being able to help young people, whether it's from that to just a school program that helps them to get back into their community. I am glad that there are many different aspects of rehabilitation.

Mr Martin: What about in the area of adoption? Because you'll have to make decisions concerning that. We have a member of our caucus who has been trying to get an adoption disclosure act through the Legislature, that I carried for a while when we were in government between 1990 and 1995. We just can't seem to get it through the maze here. Is it your view that people seeking information about themselves as adopted persons, or as part of the adoption community—what's your view? Should information be shared freely?

Mrs Smith: I think information should be shared just with those people who are either the child's natural parents, the adopted person or the adoptive parents. I

think that is the way the act is now. I do feel that we should continue in that way so that they can—

Mr Martin: So if it comes down to a question of whether that information is released or not, which way would you naturally lean?

Mrs Smith: I would lean toward having it released to only the appropriate people.

Mr Martin: The adopted person who is looking for information on themselves?

Mrs Smith: Yes.

Mr Martin: Do you think it is appropriate that adopted individuals get to know—whether they make contact or not—who their natural parents are?

1030

Mrs Smith: As I understand it, they do have that privilege now to contact. When they become an adult, if that is going to help them to become a better citizen and adjust, then I think it should be made available to them.

Mr Martin: There's a new piece that's added to the responsibility of these boards you're going to be appointed to. The new piece is this whole question of safe schools and the expulsion of students. There are some who claim that this has now become a bit of a catch-all. I know in my own community I've had at least one example where a school has decided to dismiss a student because of their behaviour, but their behaviour is not a result of just simply coming in and wanting to be violent or abusive. They have behavioural, emotional or psychological difficulties that actually require more in-depth intervention than simply just dismissing them. What's your view of this whole Safe Schools Act and student expulsions? Where would you fall?

Mrs Smith: The Safe Schools Act—and I will make some comments on what I've been familiar with—came in in the year 2000. I know the school boards worked very extensively in the province to look at new policies that would meet the needs of the act, and they did consult with parents and students.

Being involved with school councils, I knew that was certainly being done. They did consult on matters pertaining to a safe, positive learning environment and programs that would assist student behaviours as well. Within the Thames Valley board of education, we have many programs that are going to be what I call preventive programs; preventive things like partnerships that are developed with the boys' and girls' club, Kids on the Block and the police services board. I think there are a lot of preventive things being done as came about from the Safe Schools Act.

I recognize that with the Safe Schools Act, like you mention, there are some sensitive issues about the age of the children and if they are having some emotional problems. As we work through this, since it is a relatively new act, I hope we will be able to recognize the needs of all children.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Martin, one quick question, please.

Mr Martin: OK. What if you discover in your role that those preventive programs aren't out there because

the community is so small, it doesn't have the resources? I met with the school board in my own area last week, and they just don't have the money to participate or be involved in the development of these extra programs for students they might expel. If you discover that those programs aren't in fact there, what then would you do?

Mrs Smith: The Thames Valley District School Board being one of the larger boards in the province, I know we're working extensively, for instance, with the London Community Foundation to help finance some of these programs. I would hope that would be able to be done in all school boards, where you would find people who would assist financially with these programs because I do feel they're vital. Anything preventive we can do is certainly beneficial for everyone.

The Vice-Chair: That concludes the period of time allotted. Thank you very much. We'll be voting on your appointment at the end of the session.

DAVID McCAMON

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: David McCamon, intended appointee as member, Windsor Police Services Board.

The Vice-Chair: If we may next call forward Mr David Stuart McCamon, intended appointee as a member of the city of Windsor Police Services Board. Good morning, Mr McCamon. Welcome. Am I pronouncing your name correctly?

Mr David McCamon: Yes, you are.

The Vice-Chair: Good. Mr McCamon, feel free to make an opening statement, if you like, and then we'll begin the questioning, this time with the official opposition.

Mr McCamon: I'd like to do that in three parts, Mr Chairman, the first being an introduction to myself—a little more information.

I'm 37 years old. I've lived in Windsor basically my whole life, although I was born in St Thomas. I have a wife and two children, one 17 and one 15. I work at the Ford Motor Co in an hourly unionized position. I went to the University of Windsor. I received my bachelor of arts in history there, and then I got a bachelor of education in 1994 at Nipissing University in North Bay.

I'd like to make a brief statement about why I'm interested in public life in a general respect and then address the Windsor Police Services Board in particular.

There are certain things in life we would like to take for granted. Among these things is the safety of our families, that when our spouses go to work, they come home safely, that when our children go to school, they come home safely. We would like to take for granted that the laws passed by this Legislature and other levels of government are enforced without favour and without prejudice. But we cannot take all that for granted. Somebody has to stand up in public and take that role. We can't leave the responsibility of public issues to somebody else all the time. I believe I have the knowledge and

ability to make a positive contribution to my community, and that has been the focus of my public activities so far.

With regard to the Windsor Police Services Board in particular, I consider police services to be one of the fundamental roles of government. It is perhaps the most visible representative of government and, therefore, one of the most important roles of government.

As a younger man, I had considered becoming a police officer. I ruled that out for myself for a number of reasons, not the least of which was physical considerations and the need for—how should I put it?—reflex and instinct, which maybe I don't possess.

Having made the decision that I was not necessarily police officer material, but noting that it is an absolutely necessary role in our society, I came to two conclusions. Number one, I would not hinder, harass, obstruct or in any other way interfere with the operations or the activities of any police officer, and quite simply that I would never give a police officer a hard time. The second determination I made was that I would assist the police in any way I could, whether it was offering information or assistance, or, as is usually the case, just staying out of their way when the police department has a job to do.

It's this latter decision in terms of helping where I can that has led me to seek the role as a member of the Windsor Police Services Board. I find it's a very important role and one of the most fundamental roles of government.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Mr McCamon. Beginning the questioning with the official opposition, Mrs Dombrowsky.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr McCamon, and thank you very much for coming to the committee today. You have very clearly indicated how important you think the role is that police officers play in our communities. In terms of how you have arrived here as an intended appointee, did you respond to an ad in a newspaper? How is it you find yourself here today?

Mr McCamon: Several months ago, I got in contact with the Attorney General's office and I ended up submitting a resumé to them, which I would guess sat in a file for several months because that was quite a while ago, and then I got the call to come here.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You submitted your resumé simply because it arrived in your mind that this is something you wanted to do? Did someone suggest this is what you might do?

Mr McCamon: It's always something that has interested me.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you weren't encouraged by anyone.

Mr McCamon: Not necessarily encouraged as in, "Hey, you know what? This is something you ought to do. This is the only thing you'd ever be good at." No, nothing like that.

1040

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. Do you think we need more police officers?

Mr McCamon: I don't see any particular shortage. I haven't considered that a shortage of police officers has been a serious issue.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You obviously considered this role. Have you had an opportunity to speak with members of your community about the quality of service they believe they're receiving from Windsor Police Services? Have you had an opportunity to speak with officers of Windsor Police Services?

Mr McCamon: To be honest, I haven't had a lot of contact with police officers.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That's not a bad thing.

Mr McCamon: No, I was going to say that's a good thing. But among the people with whom I've become friends and associated, there don't seem to be any serious issues right now with the way the Windsor police department is being run.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have any serious safety issues in your community?

Mr McCamon: There are a couple of issues that are on the table right now, the first being the downtown district on weekend nights. It's very busy with bar patrons. At closing time, or even during the entire night, especially in summer, it's a very busy area with lots of younger people often having had something to drink. It's a challenge for the police department to handle that many people all confined into one area.

I spend a fair amount of time downtown. I don't go to the bars, though. The police have a large and visible presence and, to a great degree, that acts as a deterrent, and I think that is being handled well.

Mrs Dombrowsky: What's the other issue?

Mr McCamon: The other issue is that Huron Church Road is backed up on its way to the Ambassador Bridge. It causes traffic jams, tie-ups. It generally does not seem to be a very safe stretch of road at times. There is again a large visible presence of police officers there whenever there's a situation that causes busy traffic and dangerous situations. I think that's being handled effectively as well.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yesterday actually I had the opportunity to speak with members from the Police Association of Ontario. These are men and women who serve in various city or regional police forces across the province. In Ontario there are basically two ways communities can engage police services. They can either have their own police service or they can contract the policing service with the Ontario Provincial Police. I live in a riding where every community in my riding is served by the Ontario Provincial Police.

Yesterday it was very important for me to have the opportunity to understand what the issues were for police officers in city or regional forces. It came to my understanding that with a city force or a regional force, that budget is more carefully reviewed. There's a more hands-on approach to the budget process at the municipal level. The police services boards submit their budgets to the municipality and the municipality does have the right to indicate it would expect a 0% increase or to present to the

police services board the kind of increase it could tolerate. Consequently, it can happen that police officers are not provided with all of the kinds of equipment they believe they need, and sometimes the fact that the equipment isn't provided relates directly to the fact that the police services board is being very money conscious. I'll just give you an example.

In a community in Ontario, there's a city force that has what they call a containment unit; it's not a tactical unit. If there was a hostage in a home or someone in a home who had a weapon, this is the first response team from the municipal police force that surrounds the house and makes sure that no one goes in the house and that if anyone comes out of the house, they are received safely. They are on site until the OPP tactical squad arrives to determine how best to deal with the situation.

When the OPP arrive, they have Kevlar helmets to protect them in case someone inside the building would have a firearm and could shoot at them. However, it was the decision of a local police service board not to purchase those helmets for the containment team. But really, they're outside; they're containing the site.

I guess the point I'm making is that there are in the province guidelines that would suggest to police service boards that it would be a good idea for containment teams to have these helmets, but it's not regulated. There isn't anything that says a police service board must provide that equipment, so police officers feel very vulnerable that there are occasions when their officers are required to participate in an activity and are not sufficiently protected.

You are a member of the police services board. Do you have an opinion on that kind of an issue?

Mr McCamon: Yes, I do. Perhaps it's from working in a union environment, but I absolutely believe that every worker has a right to go home from his job. That is a job; it's not worth somebody's life. Safety is paramount. If a police officer or a group of police officers is telling us that this is what they need to do the job safely, then that to me really has to be the number one priority. I don't think there is ever a time to fool with safety.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Would you think you might have some responsibility to advocate that guidelines would be more than guidelines and become regulations, so that it is consistent across the province of Ontario that, for officers who are engaged in very risky operations, they would be adequately protected?

Mr McCamon: I'm not necessarily sure that legislation is the way to go or that a hard and fast regulation is the way to go. Certainly, it should be up to the police officer in question. If they need the equipment, it should be available to them. If they choose, for whatever reason, not to, then that's entirely their own choice as well.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you Mrs Dombrowsky. Mr Martin?

Mr Martin: What's your political affiliation?

Mr McCamon: I am an Ontario Progressive Conservative and not the same federally. I'm not a Progressive Conservative federally.

Mr Martin: What are you federally?

Mr McCamon: Alliance.

Mr Martin: You expressed earlier that your interest in being appointed to this board was to support the police. What else does the board do besides support the police, in your understanding of this appointment?

Mr McCamon: The board also takes complaints from the public with regard to the activities of the police department, and they assist the victims of crime as well. I believe the role is also to assist citizens' groups or Neighborhood Watch groups, essentially prevention-of-crime type initiatives.

Mr Martin: What in your view are the biggest issues confronting police these days?

Mr McCamon: The biggest issues—

Mr Martin: Confronting police, and a broader question would be, confronting the whole issue of policing.

Mr McCamon: I think just the regular day-to-day activities of being a police officer and enforcing the law. The biggest issue would be dealing with the public, because a police officer can never be sure what situation they're going to run into. From an issues point of view, that's the key to police services: the police department interacting with the public and how that's handled.

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Mr Martin: What about issues like the proliferation of drugs out there and the role of policing the proliferation of gangs, of biker gangs? Is that a growing concern for you?

Mr McCamon: In some ways, yes. I understand there's been some gang activity in Windsor, particularly with the border crossing, and certainly that's a concern. It goes back to how the police department responds to that issue. They have to determine the best way to handle that situation, and the police services board would have to support the requirements of dealing with that situation.

Mr Martin: We've had a lot of violence for a fair amount of time, some would say a growing problem of very tragic violence happening. In the middle of all that, you have a bit of a debate brewing about how police respond to that. There's been the suggestion that police are doing racial profiling. What's your view of that? Are they doing it, and is it appropriate if they are?

Mr McCamon: It's certainly not appropriate in any instance. I can only speak to what I've seen in Windsor. Windsor has several large and identifiable ethnic communities. I'll be perfectly honest with you: I haven't heard the issue of profiling come up in regard to the Windsor Police Service.

Mr Martin: We've had the chiefs of police and the police association to Queen's Park in the last month lobbying us on various and sundry issues. Some of the issues are different because they have different roles, those two groups, but some of them are the same. What do you think their biggest issues were coming to Queen's Park? What would your hunch be that they would be most concerned about and asking us to do something about?

Mr McCamon: You're asking for speculation on my part?

Mr Martin: No, I guess I'm trying to determine why you would want this appointment and what you would want to accomplish. You had mentioned earlier that you wanted to support the police. I guess I want to understand what you meant by that and how consistent with what the police are saying you would be in your view of what is needed.

Mr McCamon: And you're asking that from the point of view of—

Mr Martin: You as a member of the public in Windsor being appointed to the police board: what would you see as the biggest challenge or that the police would indicate would be the biggest challenge facing them?

Mr McCamon: I'm not sure what went on at the meeting of the police chiefs so I really can't speak to that. As far as challenges to the Windsor Police Service in general are concerned, I'm not entirely sure there are any major challenges. I've been very happy with the way the Windsor Police Service operates. I don't see that there's any public outcry against the Windsor Police Service. I don't particularly think that the Windsor Police Service is underfunded by any means. I don't see that the officers are in any extraordinary danger in performing their role. Basically, I'm quite happy with the way that department is run and I don't see any really major issues in the operation of that department.

In terms of what the broader issues of police forces across Ontario are, I don't think I could effectively address that without looking at it more intimately.

Mr Martin: You mentioned earlier that you thought there were enough police officers out there. What if I told you that both the chiefs of police and the police association say there aren't and there is a lack of resources and there are a number of other issues of that nature that they brought before us here? You're obviously not in agreement with that. You think that there's enough of everything?

Mr McCamon: I can't say I'd agree or disagree with that. I can only speak to what I've seen in Windsor. That's where I live, that's where I spend my life, and I haven't seen that that has been an issue.

Mr Martin: You've mentioned the issue of the licensed bars in downtown Windsor. It's been in the media lately in Windsor—

Mr McCamon: Yes.

Mr Martin: —and you have councillors and people involved in policing in Windsor indicating that they don't think they can handle the growth, the proliferation of opportunity and activity there and that they in fact need either a curtailment of further licenses or more police. They have actually hired, it seems, a consultant from the States to give them some advice on how to deal with this. That doesn't seem like a major issue to you coming out of Windsor?

Mr McCamon: Actually, I did identify that as one of the issues that the police service is going to have to deal with.

Mr Martin: You also said, though, that you didn't see any major problems, that everything seems to be hunky-dory. They had enough police, enough resources, everything was OK.

Mr McCamon: From what I've seen, that situation, from a police department's perspective, is being handled quite well. That's from me being in downtown Windsor on the weekends.

Now, as that situation develops, certainly it'll have to be addressed according to the way it develops. Whether that situation gets worse would most likely be an issue between Windsor city council, the liquor licensing board with its zoning regulations and bylaws, and the business community. The police department obviously will have to react to any growth in that situation and it will ultimately be the responsibility of the Windsor city council and Windsor police services board to make sure that situation is addressed as it grows, if in fact it does.

Mr Martin: There's also a challenge, I believe, in Windsor, of people coming across from the States to go to the bars and, I guess, gamble, and that presents a particularly unique challenge to the Windsor area on two fronts: (1) the numbers of people coming over; and (2) the fact that you can't deal with them in the same way as you can your local populace because they go back to the States and chasing them down or following up is a more difficult challenge. What's your response to that? How would you deal with that?

Mr McCamon: I can give you a particular situation that actually happened where there was a young man shot at the main intersection of Windsor's downtown and the police caught that American shooter on the way to the border. They apprehended him before he crossed the border. Again, that goes back to the number of police officers downtown and how the downtown area is being managed. When something happens downtown, there is a large and visible police presence and it's an effective police presence. They're trained to do what they need to do. That to me is important in that situation. The system worked.

Mr Mazzilli: Thank you very much, Mr McCamon, for putting your name forward on the police services board. Obviously you've done so because you want some oversight as a member of the community over the Windsor police and the way they operate, and to have your input on the broader policy operation.

You've got an interesting situation there in Windsor because, as you know, Windsor has grown pretty well in the tourism sector.

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I can remember after September 11—at that time I was PA in Tourism—occupancy in your hotels was somewhere around 30% or 40%. At that point, you didn't have the problem with the downtown people coming over and spilling on to the streets. The big dilemma you have is, when you don't have that, the community suffers from an economic perspective. When you have that, certainly there are some challenges for the police. Coming from that background, they're going to put forward their arguments on why it shouldn't be there.

But when you look at the broader policy—and this is something bars don't do, and every downtown has this problem. You have a lot of licensed premises in a small radius. Essentially, the problem is, in a small radius you may have 7,000 or 8,000 people leaving the same premises at the same time, at 2:30 in the morning. So it causes a bit of a problem. I think we have to be somewhat innovative where you can have some staggered closings. Business owners can't do that on their own and the police can't enforce that on their own. Legislators here can stop pointing their fingers and do something about it. You can keep everybody in business but you don't have to have 10,000 people going on to the street at 2:30 in the morning in a radius of two blocks. That does pose a problem.

Thank you for taking on the challenge. Keep an open mind and I'm sure you will do a great job in representing your community.

Mr Wettlaufer: I have a comment more than a question.

Mr Mazzilli: Really?

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, I really do. In the recent weeks that we have been holding these committee meetings, it's quite common for the members of the two opposition parties to question those who have put their names forward as to their political affiliation. It's always whether or not you're a card-carrying Progressive Conservative member. It's been pretty well traditional too that when the vote comes at the end on whether or not to appoint the person, the Liberals and the NDP have opposed those who have put their names forward.

Mr Mazzilli: They're kind of the same party anyway.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, I know. The thing that I want to point out to you is that they probably will vote against you and we will probably vote in favour; I say probably. Your qualifications are definitely there. They're above reproach. I was quite pleased with what you had to say today.

The comment is that the Liberals ignore the fact that there are more individual members of the PC Party than there are of the other parties. The Liberals receive more in corporate donations than what the PC Party does. The PC Party receives more in individual donations. There was a really interesting newspaper article a week or two ago about the fact that those who make donations to the Liberal Party usually do so with the expectation that they're going to get something in return. I just wanted that to be on the record.

The Vice-Chair: Are there any other questions?

Mr Wood: We will waive the balance of our time.

The Vice-Chair: I suppose it would be inappropriate for the Chair to respond to any of those comments, wouldn't it? I'm feeling compelled to respond.

Thank you very much, Mr McCamon.

STEVEN RASTIN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Steven Rastin, intended appointee as member, town of Midland Police Services Board.

The Vice-Chair: Our next appointee is Mr Steven Rastin, intended appointee as member of the town of Midland Police Services Board. Welcome, Mr Rastin.

Mr Steve Rastin: Thank you, Mr Vice-Chair.

The Vice-Chair: Certainly you have the opportunity to make an opening statement. Feel free to do so and then we'll begin our questioning with the third party.

Mr Rastin: I would like to make a brief opening statement. I would like to thank this committee for the chance to be here today to explain why I would like to sit on the Midland Police Services Board. I appreciate the opportunity.

I've provided a resumé. I don't propose to go over that resumé in its entirety, but I would like to perhaps flesh it out a little bit and give some more background.

I'm currently a lawyer practising in Midland. I grew up in London, Ontario. My wife grew up in the riding of Mr Wood. I grew up on the north end of the town. I enjoyed living there very much. After law school, I practised in London for a short period of time. Then I was attracted to the lights of downtown Toronto, and I took a job on Bay Street. It didn't take me long to realize that Bay Street wasn't for me. I had two children at the time, whom I never saw.

I also very much felt that I could not make the differences I wanted to make in my community being a nameless, faceless lawyer in a sea of nameless, faceless lawyers, so I moved to Midland. I had the opportunity to do that. I started working with a firm that was called Ferguson & Boeckle, which later became Ferguson Barristers. I moved to Midland about 1996. I became a partner there about 1999. Recently, in the last four months, I've left with my new partners, John McCarthy and Ted Bergeron, and we've formed a new law firm. We have offices in Midland, Barrie, Lindsay and Kingston. We serve the public doing civil litigation work, and I also do some labour and employment work.

In terms of other activities, I'm a member of various legal organizations like the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association and the Advocates' Society, which probably don't interest this committee that much with respect to my qualifications. In law school, I was involved in service. I sat on the admissions committee at UWO. I was the justice commissioner, which meant that I ran the student court and had something to do with services at that time. Since going to Midland, I've joined the Midland Rotary Club. I'm an elder—I can't believe I'm an elder at the age of 37—of the Knox Presbyterian Church. I'm active in the Rotary Club. I'm active in a number of charities including heart and stroke and the cancer society, primarily in fundraising. I've also sat for six years as a trustee of the Huronia District Hospital: two years as vice-chair, two years as chair. I've found that to be an excellent way to represent and serve my community. During that time, I've fought for my community in terms of funding for the community, access to services and that sort of thing.

I want to say that this is an appointment which I take extremely seriously. I view health and police services as

probably two of the most important aspects of what government does. When there were initial consultations with me about whether I would be prepared to sit on the board, I talked to a number of people about it. I asked myself if I could represent my community and make a positive contribution, and after having all those considerations, I said yes.

I do have some background, although I don't do criminal defence work or anything like that. I represented the Haldimand-Norfolk Regional Police before they were taken over by the OPP. I know Larry Hembruff, who used to be the head of Haldimand-Norfolk, fairly well. So I am familiar with policing issues and a lot of the funding issues, and I do know a lot about what's going on in terms of the relationship between the OPP and local police authorities and that sort of thing.

So that's a brief introduction about what I've been doing for the last few years.

Why do I want to sit on this committee? I'm sure I'm going to be asked that in more detail. Largely because I want to make a difference in my community. I view the police services board as the link between the community at large and, let's face it, a force that has a lot of power and authority. When a police officer with a firearm approaches a citizen and says, "Get out of your car" or "Do this," it's an intimidating and frightening thing for people. We expect our police officers to protect us. I have three young children. I teach them, like everyone else, "When you're in trouble, you go find a police officer." It's important that the public believe the police service is protecting them, is there for them and is responding to their needs. I view this as a crucial function and, if you find my appointment satisfactory, I intend to do what I can to ensure that police services work smoothly in the Midland area.

The Vice-Chair: We'll begin the questioning with the third party.

Mr Martin: Thanks for coming. What's your political affiliation?

Mr Rastin: I am a provincial member of the Conservative Party.

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Mr Martin: In your view of policing, you've given some specific examples of where you think the police need to be involved and supported. Do you have an overall view, philosophy or approach to how policing should work, and how that might be done perhaps more effectively?

Mr Rastin: I think that the situation is more complex than it used to be. Maybe I'm over-simplifying, but I think that policing needs to change and evolve.

In our community, I think that relates to a number of areas. As a layman, one of the things I would like to see more of is more involvement in community policing. One of the issues we've had in our community—and I've talked to members of council about this. Larry Hembruff used to be the chief of police in Midland and I've talked to him about this. Paul Hamelin is a former Rotarian. He's the chief of police. I've talked to him as well. One

of the problems we have is that there isn't a place for young people to go and do things in our community. If you go out on a Saturday night at 2 o'clock in the morning down King Street in Midland, it's amazing how many young people are out there in the streets. As a parent, that's something that has always concerned me.

The perception among too many young people is that police are people to be avoided. One of the things I know that they've tried to do at Midland Police Service is to get out into the schools and meet the children more and to forge those bonds.

Another area is, and again, I'm trying to be specific to Midland, we do have a biker problem, a gang-related problem. There have been signs that there's been a recent attempt to put a biker gang house in the town of Midland. Steps are trying to be made in terms of municipal bylaws and other things to make that more difficult. I view this as a huge and serious pressing issue for the police service to deal with. As a father of three children and as a member in the community, I'm terrified of what bikers can do to communities. I don't view that as positive for our community.

I view another issue, for the police service, to be in relation to the funding issue. I saw that in terms of the whole OPP versus municipal funding thing. One of the concerns I have is, if you go one way or the other, everywhere around us is OPP. We're one of the few municipal places left. One of the things I'm hearing is the OPP have gone in, given a lowball quote and then when it comes time for renewal in three or four years, the prices have ratcheted up to the point where the ratepayers are no better off than they were before, and they've lost that autonomy.

So those are all issues in terms of the visions where I want to go.

I want to echo one of the comments that the previous appointee made, and that is, I don't feel that cost considerations are something that should be on the table in the safety concern. One of the questions Mrs Dombrowsky had related to helmets. My view is, if you need helmets to be safe, you buy them. And if that means if you go into deficit, you go into deficit. There's isn't enough money; I've spent the last three days at the Ontario Hospital Association conference listening to Senator Kirby and others talk about how our present health care system isn't sustainable. I know there's not enough money, but where safety issues are involved, I don't think we have a choice. I think we have to spend it.

I don't know if that answers your question, but those are the primary issues that I see.

Mr Martin: I'm happy to hear you mention community policing and the need to further that approach. I think that will help. I'm also happy to hear you mention the difficulty that we're facing these days in terms of biker gangs. Policing and protection of the public is becoming, as you said, a more sophisticated and complicated issue.

We've had the chiefs of police and the police association through here in the last few weeks talking to us

about the issues that they see confronting them every day. Contrary to the member who spoke before you, they're indicating that there's a lack of resources, a lack of police officers on the street. If they're going to have to deal with biker gangs and that kind of activity, they're going to need more.

If it was a choice for you, as a card-carrying member of the Conservative Party, to give tax breaks or keep more money in the public coffer in order to be able to provide better policing, which would you choose?

Mr Rastin: I guess I should preface my response by saying that my view is that I am being appointed to a role. You can ask Mr Dunlop, who is the local member, if I have ever gone to him in my other hat as past chair of the hospital and said, "Listen, we need more money." Have we knocked on the doors of Queen's Park? Have I had to bite my tongue when speaking to bureaucrats on the issue? My job is to represent my constituency. It means that I'm going to have to follow my own conscience and what I believe is right and what I believe protects them.

I wasn't approached, I don't think, politically. I was approached by two members of the current police services board who knew me through my community involvement and asked me to participate. I'm not sure of this, because I don't know the process, but I don't think it had anything to do with political affiliation as much as it had to do with community involvement.

Having said that, to answer your question, if more money is needed, then we have to get more money. I don't know the issue in terms of tax breaks because my understanding is that a lot of the funding for police services comes locally.

I can tell you that one of the problems we have in the Midland area is that we're a somewhat economically depressed area as compared to certain other areas. We actually had our population decline in the last census. Midland is coming to be regarded in some circles as a retirement community, where people come and retire but maybe don't have a lot of money that they're adding to the tax base, not in the same way that, say, a new factory or something would. So financing is an issue.

If your question is, if we need more money would I advocate for more money, yes. Would I ask council to allocate more money? Yes, if I believe that's what the constituency needs to be safe.

Mr Martin: I appreciate that answer.

There always seems to be some issue top of mind where policing is concerned in the province. If it's not one thing, it's something else coming forward, each of them as important and critical as the other, it seems.

At the moment, there's a question as to whether there's racial profiling going on. That sort of raised its ugly head after September 11, if you'll remember, and then again, just recently, there was a series of articles in the Toronto Star. What's your view on that? Is it happening and, if it is, what can we or should we be doing about it?

Mr Rastin: In terms of is it happening, I can only tell you that I have had a conversation with one of the

members of the Midland Police Services Board who has told me that it isn't happening in Midland.

What's my view of it? My knee-jerk reaction is that I'm opposed to it. Having said that, I would like to think that I wouldn't make a decision on an issue until I've heard all debate and that sort of thing. I would like to say that I don't have a closed mind and maybe somebody could convince me. Generally speaking, I find the American initiative in terms of racial profiling of Canadian citizens at the border to be offensive.

I don't see the advantage of profiling someone. That has a lot less to do with my community. Midland is much less racially and ethnically diverse than certain other areas of the province. That's one of the things that struck me and my family when we moved up there. There are other issues, but the racial diversity is different there and I believe the issues would be different. But it doesn't change my basic view that probably it wouldn't make a difference. You can't treat somebody any differently because of the colour of their skin. Even if, as a generalization, some group might do something more often than some other group, it doesn't tell you anything about any given individual.

Mr Martin: The other day, the police association came forward. It seems that no matter when they come forward, the issue of the SIU comes up. It's a problem for them. What's your view on the SIU?

Mr Rastin: I think there needs to be something like the SIU, obviously, because there has to be a sense that at the end of the day a police service, a police officer, anybody is accountable to a civilian authority. I've heard those problems and those issues, those presumed-guilty-until-proven-innocent complaints. But having said all that, I think there needs to be some level of discomfort. If the chiefs of police were happy with the SIU, that would make me wonder that maybe the SIU wasn't completely doing its job.

I'm sure there are specific incidences where there are specific areas of grief and they might have legitimate complaints. I think that would have to be done on a case-by-case basis, but generally speaking I'm in favour of having an independent overseer body like the SIU involved in police services.

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Mr Martin: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair: Sorry, Mr Martin; we've run out of time again. Mr Mazzilli.

Mr Mazzilli: Mr Rastin, thank you very much for putting your name forward. You came from London, I heard. What's going on? Are all the London people moving to Midland? The chief, Paul Hamelin, worked in London, as you may know, for many, many years.

Mr Rastin: Mr Mazzilli, there's no water in London.

Mr Mazzilli: There's no water in London. That's what he said. But of course he was from Midland to start with and then came to London to work and then went back to be chief in Midland.

We heard from the previous intended appointee of peak times in Windsor, obviously when the bars are getting out and so on. In Midland you've got a different

problem because your peak time is in the summer months. When you talk about not enough resources, this will always be the problem in any kind of emergency service. It's the peak times: how do you get people out there between 2 and 4 in the morning, a whole bunch of people? You don't need them, generally, before that or after that. How do you have it appropriate? In your case the peak time is not 2 to 4 in the morning; it's July and August. How do you handle that in Midland? You're not a member of the board now, so—

Mr Rastin: How would I handle it? I would hope we would try and do things like flexible scheduling. One of the things I'm aware of in the work that we did for Haldimand-Norfolk is that they have auxiliary volunteer officers and things like that who can be assigned to increase numbers and there is some flexibility. I know they're not full police officers, but they are another person in a uniform with the police officer. My perception is that a lot of times it's not as important that you do anything; it's that you be seen out on the streets and there be a perception that the police service is out there. I think it has to be with scheduling issues and shift issues. It's hard to go out and hire temporary people, quite frankly, in terms of a police officer, when you look at the skill set that's out there. It's also one of the things you try and deal with through community policing initiatives and that sort of thing.

Mr Mazzilli: I certainly accept what you say. I don't necessarily agree with all of it. Perception certainly works sometimes. Sometimes you're expected to know what to do; the uniform alone won't help you, and you'd better take control of situations. But in a place like Midland I can accept the fact that the community would have to get involved and things may have to be done a little bit differently.

What's your vision of community policing? Everybody throws the term around. I've heard it many times. What's your interpretation of community policing?

Mr Rastin: I think we could probably debate that for a few hours. I have specific ideas of what I think community policing entails. One of them is getting police officers into the schools and meeting with the children. The second one is getting the police services board into the community and perceived to be partnering in dealing with some of the issues of young people.

One of the things that we as a Rotary Club did in Midland is we put a skate park together. One of the big problems that people were complaining to the police about on a regular basis is that there was nothing for the kids to do, so the kids were skateboarding in their parking lots and that sort of thing. The police supported this project and the Rotary supported it and we gave the teenagers a place to go, and everybody's happy with it. That, to me, is a community initiative. Public awareness issues, you know, in terms of the drug issue—we have the opportunity to tell kids what drugs will do to them.

Mr Mazzilli: That's my point.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Mazzilli, very quickly—

Mr Mazzilli: Bob Wood and I are on the road doing George Chuvalo's Fight Against Drugs Ontario/Crime

Control Commission forums throughout the province. We have certainly a lot of violence in society, a lot of people fighting for drug turf. They wouldn't be doing that if they were the consumers. At this stage we've got to get the message across that drugs contribute to all of these other problems, and that can only be done through enormous public education right at the schools level. I thank you for the initiative; good luck in your new job.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for your wise words.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Rastin, and thank you very much for coming this morning. I'm very happy that you had an opportunity to hear some of the questions for the previous intended appointee and I do appreciate the comments you made around equipment.

I want to get to another part of that, but since you were here and did hear the remarks that were made with regard to that particular appointee, I think it is very important as well to point out to you that in my role on this committee I try to understand how it is that an individual has come to be appointed to whatever role it is. Mr Wettlaufer is wrong when he would suggest that we always ask about political affiliation. I'm happy to say that I do support intended appointees who come here who have indicated that they are members and active in the Progressive Conservative Party. I think it is important that our citizens involve themselves in the political process. I know I depend on that very much in my own association. I'm very happy to say that I have been able to support intended appointees who have very clearly indicated they were of a political affiliation not the same as mine. If you stay around this morning, you will be able to see that I will prove Mr Wettlaufer wrong on that particular matter.

With regard to the issue that I spoke about with the intended appointee around equipment—and I'm very happy you made the comment that you did around safety. My question to the previous appointee was, does he believe that there should be provincial regulations for these sorts of things? Should it really be left up to the local board to determine whether or not they want to make that expenditure, or do you believe that our officers deserve a standard regardless of what community they live in? Conceivably, an officer from a force in Midland who would have enjoyed the benefit of your wisdom and support could go to another community where he might be more vulnerable because the police services board there would have made a different choice. What I'm asking you is, do you have an opinion about whether or not such issues should be regulated?

Mr Rastin: I think that's a difficult question. I guess I would answer that in two parts. I don't think it is my role to propose legislation or advocate for that sort of thing. My role is to serve my constituency. Having said that, I will tell you that one of the concerns I've had moving from a larger centre to a smaller centre is my perception that services are weaker in smaller communities in health care, in police service, in telephone service and cable service—across the board—and sometimes I think that perhaps because we live in rural Ontario we're expected to put up with less, and I've always opposed that.

If I can say, a regulation that would establish a safety benchmark, that was a required safety benchmark—I don't see how you could oppose that. I might get into more of an issue when we have regulations that deal with policies and procedures, because that might need to be done on an individual community-by-community basis. What's good for one community might not be good for another in a policy or procedure. That's why we have police service boards. On safety issues—should you have these Kevlar helmets when you're in a containment group? I would think that on universal issues like that, it would be difficult to oppose that type of regulation.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm happy to hear you say that. You could be in a situation—you've indicated to me that you believe when the safety of an officer is at stake they absolutely should have them, but that doesn't mean that the majority of people on your police service board would share that opinion. If it is not a regulation, it is conceivable that even in your own community a decision would be made that might compromise the safety of an officer. That's my issue around whether or not these are guidelines from the province around safety; but they are not regulated. The concern of the officers is that there is not a consistent standard for what they term as life-saving equipment.

I just wonder if, in your role as a member of a police services board, you would be prepared to advocate for a consistent approach to addressing those kinds of safety guidelines?

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Mr Rastin: Yes, I think I might. I guess one of the areas where we may differ is I, having sat on a number of boards, including the hospital board for the last six years, have a high degree of faith in which community-based boards will do what's best for their community. There have been situations—again, I'm using the hospital board as an example—where we don't have the money to put another ER nurse in the hospital, but our administration will come to us and say it's a safety issue. Every time that happens, the deficit goes up and we put the nurse in the ER. I guess I have faith that the people who sit on these boards—I mean, we're not sitting on these boards for the money or because we like spending time away from our families. We're sitting on the boards because we want to make the community a better place and we want to do the right thing. I know a lot of the people who are on the Midland Police Services Board and I have faith that they're going to do the right thing.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you know how much a Kevlar helmet costs?

Mr Rastin: I have no idea.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Sixteen-hundred dollars, so—

Mr Johnson: How many police officers in Ontario?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yes, it is significant.

I do appreciate your remarks. What I have noted is that, in my view, you've come to this role particularly interested in the services that a police services board oversees and provides within communities. That is refreshing. Sometimes appointees come here and their

political credentials are probably their best qualification for the job. When we ask why they want to be on this particular board and we receive a response of, "Well, I really wanted to be on another board but this is the first vacancy that came," I have to say it gives me great cause for concern. You very clearly do not fall in that category.

I want to ask you a question with regard to new recruits in a police service. This is another issue that has come to my attention, having had conversations with representatives from the police association. There are a couple of issues. You may know that police officers in the province have been advocating that, because of the level of stress in their job, it's reasonable to consider that after a career of 25 or 27, at maximum 30 years, they should be eligible to retire. While I think few would argue with the good sense or reason behind that, there is a concern that your veteran, seasoned and experienced workforce in a very highly skilled role leave, and then there's a question about new recruits.

A conversation I had would suggest that it's expensive for police service boards to engage new recruits because it means that they bring them on staff and then send them away for a few months to the police college. So really, it's a few months before they get any return on their investment and it can be more cost-effective for them to try to attract already trained officers from other forces. There is a concern among the police that there needs to be more new recruits. They are concerned that there are up to 60 vacancies in the police college.

As a member of the police services board, do you have a particular bias in terms of how you engage new officers?

Mr Rastin: What you're asking me to deal with there is a theoretical problem between what might be best for my community in the short run and what might be best for the province, police service as a whole, in the long run. The short and obvious answer is that it's more convenient for the Midland Police Service to go out and hire three or four trained officers who can start tomorrow, as opposed to having to pay them to go to the college. Mr Mazzilli is right; that's what we've done with our chiefs of police. Historically, we're a small rural community without a lot of money, and maybe it's easy to say, "Go let Toronto train people."

Having said that, in the long term, I know from the nursing issues right now, all that's happening on the nursing front in health care is that everybody's robbing from Peter to pay Paul and we're going to hit a crescendo where it's all going to fall apart. I would anticipate that in the long term the same thing is going to happen. One of the things we might do, and Senator Kirby proposed this yesterday on the health care front, is that there should be federal or provincial dollars allocated to training to put new people into the system and make that happen. I'd be prepared to advocate for something like that. If there are 60 vacancies in the college and we need those 60 officers, let's put some kind of funding program in place to get them through and put them in there. I'd be prepared to advocate for something like that, recognizing that of course there's never enough money to go around.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I certainly appreciate that with a police chief you would be looking for an experienced officer and not a recruit. But the point that was made by the officers, another concern they had—and I was speaking with two gentlemen—was that there are very few women being recruited. Would you think that is an issue?

Mr Rastin: I think gender representation is important because, out of all the community policing initiatives that we were talking about, some people are going to respond better to hearing a message from a woman or from a person of colour or whatever. I would think that is an issue that should be taken into account in recruitment.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good luck.

Mr Rastin: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Rastin. We'll be moving concurrence after our next appointee.

ROSS LAUR

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Mr Ross Laur, intended appointee as member, village of Point Edward Police Services Board.

The Vice-Chair: The last intended appointee we're reviewing is Mr Ross J. Laur. Mr Laur, if you could come forward. You will have an opportunity to make a statement if you wish, and then we will begin the questioning with the members of the government. Please feel free to go forward.

Mr Ross Laur: Yes, I'm prepared to make an opening statement. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to review my background and to address any questions you may have concerning my intended appointment to the village of Point Edward police services. I was born in Sarnia, lived a short time in Point Edward as a pre-schooler on the corner of Livingstone Street and Victoria Street, moved from there to Camlachie and on to Petrolia.

I met my good wife in high school and was married on October 2, 1965. We settled in Sarnia after our marriage and raised two children, who are both married. We had four grandchildren. Sadly, our oldest granddaughter was killed in a car accident on October 26 of this year in Calgary.

My wife, Mary, and I moved into a condo in 1998 in the village of Point Edward and I am on the board of directors of the condo corporation.

As my CV states, I have been in real estate full-time since 1972. During that time I owned and managed my own firm for a number of years. I enjoy working with people, meeting new people and negotiating the purchase or sale of properties for these people. I have sat on several boards within the Sarnia-Lambton Real Estate Board, including membership and ethics. I am a past president of the Seaway Kiwanis Club. I am an active member on the board of directors of the VON for Sarnia-Lambton. I am a lifetime appointed trustee of our church, St Luke's United. I am a member of the Masonic order Leopold lodge 297, Bruce 53, and the Lambton Shrine

Club and the Mocha temple in London and in Sarnia. I am also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion branch 62 of Sarnia. I have also sat on the Sarnia-Lambton Historical Society for two terms.

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I am a long-standing member of the Sarnia Chamber of Commerce. I look forward to sitting on the Point Edward Police Services Board and working closely with the sergeant in command, Mr Stan Korosec, and other board members.

I understand one of the functions of the board is to serve as an advisory body to the commanding officer and I look forward to this challenge. I think it is important that those serving on the board have the requisite skills set to be able to listen effectively, act impartially, think critically and judge fairly.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to any questions.

Mr Johnson: I just wanted to start off and welcome you this morning and to thank you for coming out from Point Edward. My geography is not perfect for that area, but tell me how big Point Edward is. What's the population?

Mr Laur: Point Edward is a small community that's covered by two sides—one is Lake Huron and we're at the mouth of the St Clair River. Our population is 2,200 people. We have approximately 1,100 homes in the village. My wife and I live in a condo corporation where there are 116 units near the water in that corporation.

Mr Johnson: And your police service, are you familiar with the size of it? How many uniformed officers would you have?

Mr Laur: Yes, we're a small board. There are 10 officers, including Sergeant Korosec; five of those officers are dedicated to the village and the other five are dedicated to work on the 402 highway that abuts us.

Mr Johnson: OK, my other question is—it may be the last one; I'm not sure—the international bridge from the States, does that come into Point Edward and does that bring up policing issues?

Mr Laur: Yes, that's our main issue. We have the twin bridges that go over to the USA. In the last year or two the people who work at the bridge are now able to charge people who come across the bridge for carrying weapons or for drinking violations or whatever. But the minute they find them, they call on our OPP to take them away and lay the further charges, so it is a concern.

Mr Johnson: I'll go into to that a little bit further then, just because it's international. There's also a train tunnel going to the States.

Mr Laur: Yes.

Mr Johnson: Does that policing come within Point Edward or would that be the CN police or the Mounties or—

Mr Laur: I'm familiar with all of that. The CN have their own police and the city of Sarnia has a large force that worked with the CN.

Mr Johnson: Those are our questions. Thank you.

Mr Wettlaufer: Mr Laur, welcome here this morning. I'm going to pre-empt what the opposition would ask you. Are you a card-carrying member of the Progressive Conservative Party?

Mr Laur: Yes, I am.

Mr Wettlaufer: OK, just so we get that on the record because they will ask you that. Like you, I once was a licensed member of the Real Estate Institute and also the Appraisal Institute and I realize the background that you must have in order to achieve those designations and keep the job—

Mr Laur: You too.

Mr Wettlaufer: Well, I probably could have, but I left it years ago. Anyway, Mr Laur, based on that background and the knowledge and experience that is required, I think you're eminently qualified for this position and I certainly would recommend that you be accepted.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you. Mr Mazzilli.

Mr Mazzilli: Thank you very much, sir, for putting your name forward. I know that you probably have more family in the London area—do you have any relatives in London?

Mr Laur: Yes, there are some relatives. We're from a big family.

Mr Mazzilli: Do any of them happen to be police officers?

Mr Laur: No.

Mr Mazzilli: There's quite a Laur family out in the Dorchester area, very close to London.

Mr Laur: Yes.

Mr Mazzilli: I just wish you luck. Obviously you had the opportunity to hear from other intended appointees on different challenges. When it comes to the province of Ontario, it's obvious that one size does not fit all. You heard from Mr Rastin and the challenges they have in Midland. Their peak season is through the summertime. In Point Edward, obviously with the casino you have some different types of challenges of what your peak periods or demand times would be.

I think it was good that many intended appointees of police services boards came forward today because it gives an opportunity for everyone to hear the challenges that others have, and how to keep an open mind and deliver those services for your community. Thank you and good luck.

Mr Laur: Thank you, sir.

The Vice-Chair: We are moving to the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning. Thank you very much for coming.

Mr Laur, would you be able to explain for the members of the committee how it is that you have become an intended appointee?

Mr Laur: Sure. I have no problem with that. I was approached and asked if I would consider this. I said, "Sure, I'd love to. Let me dig in and do some background work to find out whether this is something that I would really be interested in."

I am strong believer in giving back. My family, my mom and dad, have taught me to give back to the community, not always take. When I talked to some of the council members, the chief of police and the mayor of our village, I was quite impressed and look forward to sitting on the board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Were you approached by a member of council or a member of the board to consider this?

Mr Laur: To tell you the truth, a member of the Conservative Party approached me that that opening was there—

Mrs Dombrowsky: A member of the party or a member of the Legislature?

Mr Laur: A member of our local party. That's where I went from there, then, before I said yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You indicated that you set about to do a little bit of background research and understand the role. What do you understand are the most significant policing issues in your community? I know you shared with Mr Johnson concerns that relate to your proximity to the bridge that enters and exits the United States. Are there any other issues in your community that you're aware of?

Mr Laur: The bridge and Highway 402 are our major concerns right now with the traffic backup of the large transport trucks. Over 6,000 of those trucks go over the bridge every day. Yesterday they were backed up two or three miles on Highway 402, which is a concern about safety to me.

The other issue that might be of concern is the casino, as was mentioned. They have a good security system there and a good gentleman that I know well is head of the security at the casino. We have not had any problems with that, from what I've been told.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Have you had an opportunity to have conversations with officers who are engaged to provide services in your community?

Mr Laur: Only with Mr Korosec, the chief commanding sergeant in charge. I've only met with him. I've not talked to any of the other officers.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you think we need more police officers?

Mr Laur: The council in the village—the mayor in the village indicates to me that they think we need more since September 11, the demand at the bridge, that type of thing. I look forward to working with them and could tell better once I'm on the board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You think that you might be able to support an initiative that would advocate for more officers in the province?

Mr Laur: Yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That's interesting to hear, as well.

Finally, with respect to the role that you would have on your police services board, what makes it a little bit different from the other intended appointees that we've had earlier this morning, who are appointed to police services boards, is that they are appointed to city or regional boards. They have a very direct say in who the chief will be, budget expenditures and so on. However, in

your particular case, your board, because you contract your services with the Ontario Provincial Police, is more advisory in nature. Do you have an opinion about that? Do you think that's problematic? Do think there should be more say afforded to police services boards who engage the services of the OPP?

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Mr Laur: I'm quite happy with being in the advisory position on our small board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That will conclude my questions. Thank you, Mr Laur.

Mr Martin: Thank you for coming this morning. We have a couple of things in common. Point Edward and Sault Ste Marie were two of the first to have the new charitable casino operations in their communities, and the challenges they present, as well as the opportunities.

I just want to let you know that being a Progressive Conservative doesn't diminish you one iota in my eyes. What concerns me, though, is when I sit here and watch four appointees in a row from a Conservative background. I don't think that presents a healthy mix in terms of appointments to all these very important boards across the province. That concerns me, because the four that were brought forward this morning were picked primarily at random from a whole host of other appointees that were put forward. That all four would turn out to be of the same political persuasion is indeed a concern, but it's a pattern that we see here every week as we sit to talk to intended appointees.

I also agree that you're probably imminently qualified for this job, given your background in the community and your understanding of the needs etc. But I wouldn't put too much hope in an endorsement from the other side because we had somebody come forward last week who had absolutely no qualification or understanding of the appointment and they said that was a good thing too. So we're wondering over here what does actually constitute a good appointee from their perspective.

I just have one question and it's a policing issue, because it's a concern for my community. What we're finding in Sault Ste Marie is that because we have the casino and the new emphasis on security that comes with that, and I think there was an agreement that there would be extra police officers, somebody from the alcohol and gaming commission, and a bit more vigilant oversight by the municipality itself, what's happening now is that all the organizations in the community that have run raffles and lotteries for years to support community services like sports teams, health care organizations and so on are starting to be squeezed, and they've come to me. I've got a huge issue before the Minister of Consumer and Business Services right now around that. A lot of them are saying they're going to go under because they're not being allowed to do that which they've always done, which is to help them both support their activities and provide the service that they like to provide to the community.

The cost to families in the community for recreational programs like hockey will go right out of sight because

the money that's been raised through these raffles and lotteries is what has paid for almost half the cost of ice time and making sure that children who wouldn't otherwise be able to play hockey because it's too expensive will be able to play. What they're saying is, there will be less hockey, fewer children playing hockey because they won't be able to afford it, and the organizations won't be able to afford to subsidize them if this continues. Is that becoming a problem in Point Edward?

Mr Laur: No, we've seen no problem yet, but I'm with you. I understand what you're saying. I'm the past chairman of Kiwanis and very involved in Kiwanis. The major money that we make is from bingos. It's the same as what you're talking about; it has declined with the opening. When I did some research in talking to the head of security at the casino, we have now found, being on the border, though, that a lot of our customers to the casino are Americans. So it's brought the Americans over, with the \$1.60.

As far as ice time with the arenas, they're still begging for ice time. In Point Edward have a small arena and in Sarnia there's a sports and entertainment centre with another arena with double ice, and we're still finding that children have to come in at 5 or 6 in the morning to get ice time. I don't see that as a problem yet.

On the Kiwanis side of it, our bingo money went down for a while; it's starting to come back up. I was very concerned about that for a while because we sponsor a children's animal farm and park whereby our Kiwanis group donates approximately \$50,000 a year to the city of Sarnia to keep that open for children so that it's free for school buses and the kids to come in.

Mr Martin: That's all the questions I have this morning. Thanks.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Laur. We appreciate you taking the time, particularly in light of the tragic loss your family suffered recently. I can only imagine how difficult it's been, and sad. We thank you for making the time to come here.

Mr Laur: Thank you.

Mr Mazzilli: On a point of order, Mr Chair: We've been hearing a lot on this committee about the cards people carry, political or otherwise. I just want to be assured by this committee that there's no profiling kept on what colour of card someone may be carrying who comes before the committee. As long as I'm assured of that—

The Vice-Chair: I'm not sure you want to make light of this; I don't know if that's something I would deem appropriate as Chair.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair: And it's not a point of order. Thank you very much.

Let's move to concurrence, if we may. We will first deal with the appointment of Margaret S. Smith, intended appointee as member of the Child and Family Services Review Board and Custody Review Board.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence. Is there any discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

We then move to the next selection, Mr David Stuart McCamon, intended appointee as member of the city of Windsor Police Services Board.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

Mr Wettlaufer: Recorded vote, please.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence. Any discussion?

Mr Wettlaufer has asked for a recorded vote.

Ayes

Johnson, Mazzilli, Wettlaufer, Wood.

Nays

Dombrowsky, Martin.

The Vice-Chair: Mr McCamon's appointment is carried.

We next have the appointment of Mr Steve Rastin, intended appointee as member of the town of Midland Police Services Board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: A recorded vote.

The Vice-Chair: A recorded vote is being asked for.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence. Any discussion?

We'll have a recorded vote again.

Ayes

Dombrowsky, Johnson, Martin, Mazzilli, Wettlaufer, Wood.

The Vice-Chair: A unanimous recorded vote. That is carried.

We then have the final appointee, Mr Ross J. Laur, intended appointee as member of the village of Point Edward Police Services Board.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

Mr Wettlaufer: A recorded vote, please.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence, and there's another request for a recorded vote, I believe. Any discussion?

Ayes

Dombrowsky, Johnson, Martin, Mazzilli, Wettlaufer, Wood.

The Vice-Chair: That is carried.

I believe that completes our business for the day. Do we have a motion to adjourn?

Mr Wood: So moved.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wood has moved adjournment. All those in favour? We are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1159.

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