



ISSN 1180-4335

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 26 February 2003

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 26 février 2003

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: James J. Bradley
Clerk: Anne Stokes

Président : James J. Bradley
Greffière : Anne Stokes

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'Index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 26 February 2003

Mercredi 26 février 2003

The committee met at 1103 in room 151.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr James J. Bradley): We won't be having any votes right now, so I'll bring us to order. I think it's safe to do that with the delegation that is here.

We have a couple of what I guess we would call housekeeping items to begin with. One is a requested extension of the deadline for the review of intended appointees included in the certificate of February 7, 2003. The original deadline was March 9, 2003. The new deadline would be April 8, 2003. They are: Gary Arthur Harron, Glenda O'Brien and John Adams.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I ask for unanimous consent to extend the deadline as outlined by you, Mr Chair.

The Chair: OK. Any comments?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I'm just wondering if Mr Wood would have any intelligence for us re might we be into the middle of an election by then or what the story might be.

Mr Wood: Well, I have received important information from the Premier, but I'll have to get his authorization to share it with the committee.

Mr Martin: Do you think you could report back?

Mr Wood: I'll ask.

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent? If we do, fine. Thank you very much, Mr Wood.

The second item is going to be a statement. We ran into a glitch with the people who feed us the appointments. I sent along a note to them, and I want to read it for the committee's sake, so you're aware of where we are. As it turned out, we'll call the problem solved, but I thought the committee would certainly want to know about this.

"Before the committee commences its ... business today, I would like to address a matter concerning the committee's agenda and its terms of reference.

"Members have been previously advised by a memorandum from the clerk of the committee with respect to an irregularity that led to the order-in-council appointment of Dorothy Cauthers to the Simcoe-York Grant Review Team. The order-in-council appointment took place on January 20, 2003—after Ms Cauthers had been selected for review by our subcommittee and prior to any

review taking place at this committee of the intended appointment.

"I would like to review for members the committee's mandate, assess the situation before us and advise of my direction as Chair."

First of all, the mandate reads as follows:

"The terms of reference of the standing committee on government agencies are set out in SO 106(e) and empower the committee with a double mandate:

"(1) to review the operations of Ontario government agencies, boards and commissions as selected by the committee;

"(2) to review intended appointments to such agencies, boards and commissions as they are referred to the committee by ministerial certificate, and then as they are further selected by our subcommittee for interview.

"The committee's terms of reference set out very detailed procedures for the intended appointments review process.

"The committee, by order of the House, has the mandate and authority to interview intended appointees whose names are referred to the committee by ministerial certificate and to concur or not in the appointment within the permitted time frames and rules.

"Notwithstanding the fact that an order-in-council document has apparently ... been signed, I find any such appointment prior to the committee's review of that intended appointee to be contrary to the spirit of the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and of questionable legitimacy.

"I have therefore instructed the clerk of the committee to proceed with scheduling the interview of Dorothy Cauthers so that the committee may determine whether or not to concur in the intended appointment, as is our established practice.

"Nevertheless, I find this situation to be regrettable and bordering on contempt of the committee. It is to be hoped that such irregularities or errors will not be repeated and that the spirit of openness and transparency embodied in the committee process will be respected in future by all parties involved."

Mr Wood: The Chair has correctly referred to what was in fact an error on the part of the government. I think the Chair's steps in scheduling the appointment for review were very sound. The individual involved has not participated in the work of the agency, and the government has indicated in this particular case that if the

committee does not concur in the appointment, the appointment will be revoked. So this is not something that was done deliberately by the government, as I understand it, but simply an error. We certainly want to do everything necessary in order to rectify the error. It's not the intention on anyone's part that the standing orders not be fully complied with in all cases. However, in this case there was an error, and we think what has been done does correct the error.

The Chair: Thank you. Any other comment? If not, we'll proceed with the business of the committee.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair: First of all, I have the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, January 30, 2003.

Mr Wood: I move its adoption.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved its adoption. Any discussion? If not, we'll have a vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Second is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, February 13, 2003.

Mr Wood: I move its adoption.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved its adoption. Any comment? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

ALFRED LIU

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Alfred Liu, intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission.

The Chair: Now we proceed to appointments review. The first is Mr Alfred Liu, who is the intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission. Mr Liu, you may come forward. You have an opportunity to make an initial statement if you see fit. Subsequent to that, there will be questions from any members of the committee who wish to question you for a period of up to 10 minutes allocated to each of the political parties represented on the committee. Welcome, sir.

1110

Mr Alfred Liu: Thank you. I would like to make a statement.

Mr Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honour to be considered as a commissioner for the Niagara Parks Commission. I would like to start by telling you a little about myself. I was born and raised in Hong Kong. After graduating from high school, I worked in a hospital pharmacy as a pharmacy technician. After two years, I came to Canada as a student. I attended the University of Toronto in 1969 and graduated in 1973 with a bachelor of science in pharmacy.

I became the associate owner of the Shoppers Drug Mart in Fort Erie in June 1974 and ran a very successful pharmacy business for the next 28 years. My store was

considered to be one of the best within the chain of Shoppers Drug Mart. My business achieved good financial results year after year in both growth and profit. The success of my store was a direct result of my dedicated staff, some of whom were with me for 15 to 25 years. They not only worked as a team but, most importantly, they practised excellent customer service. For approximately five years in the 1980s I was also a partner in a local restaurant.

Being in the retail business and depending on the community to support me, I always felt the need to be really involved within the community. As a result, I was honoured with the Paul Harris Fellow Award. When I was chairman of the tourism committee for the town of Fort Erie, I had first-hand experience in dealing with the Niagara Parks Commission. I was fortunate to work with Mr George Bailey, who was the director of marketing at that time for the Niagara Parks Commission. I was an active board member for the Friendship Festival, which is a celebration between Fort Erie and Buffalo, commemorating both Canada Day and Independence Day. This event attracts approximately 500,000 people along the Niagara Parkway, from Mathers Arch to the Old Fort. I worked very closely with the Niagara Parks Commission and I believe they contributed greatly to the success of the festival.

About two years ago the chairman of the Niagara Parks Commission, Mr Brian Merritt, requested my assistance with the owner of a Chinese restaurant whose business was located along the walkway they were going to construct along the river from the Peace Bridge to Bertie Street. I was able to arrange a meeting for them.

In conclusion, I feel I'm qualified for this position for the following reasons: my 28 years in the retail business; my experience in the restaurant business; my volunteer work in the tourism industry; and my extensive community involvement, which includes working with the Niagara Parks Commission. Thank you for your consideration.

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

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Good morning, Mr Liu. Thank you for being here. Obviously, just based on what you were telling us in your opening remarks, you've got some connection and association with the Niagara Parks Commission, but we're always curious as to how the appointments do come about. I notice some of your associations in the past with the Conservative Party and I'm wondering if your local member put your name forward.

Mr Liu: No. What happened was, during my retirement party last June a couple of people asked me, now that I'm retired, can I consider sitting on some government board or agency? I thought it was just a volunteer job and I said fine, because I always like to help the community. I never heard anything about it until the middle of December. Tim Hudak's secretary asked me to get a resumé, so I gave her one. I didn't hear anything until January. The government called me that I

was appointed to the Niagara Parks Commission, but I had to come in front of the standing committee, which is a surprise to me.

Mr Gravelle: Thank you very much. What are your goals in terms of becoming a member, Mr Liu? Do you have some specific goals in terms of some changes or suggestions you want to make? Certainly we know that the casino and the Gateway project have a huge impact, but if I could just begin by asking you, what are some of the specific things you would like to do as a member of the commission and if there are even some concerns you have about how it has been run in the past?

Mr Liu: I think they've been run really well, but I understand with the casino there's some direct competition for the retail business section. But then the casino will increase the traffic, get a lot of customers, and I think they are going to turn it into an all-year-round tourist destination in Niagara Falls. So what I want to do is make sure the Niagara Parks Commission is ready for all-year-round tourism. Most of their cultural and historic sites are closed in the winter. I think they should be open in the wintertime. The other thing I noticed is that the Niagara Parks Commission is going to turn the Canadian Niagara Powerhouse into an interactive museum, which is in the right direction.

Then again, I haven't had an opportunity to look at the Niagara Parks planning section. I'm sure they have a five-year or a 10-year plan. Until I get a look at it, I really don't have much to say.

Mr Gravelle: Certainly in terms of the new Gateway casino, it will be opening in—what is it?

Mr Liu: In 2004.

Mr Gravelle: There have been, I'm sure, from your perspective some benefits of the casino. There are those of us who have concerns about casinos for different reasons altogether, which I think are important as well, but in terms of the economic benefits, I'm presuming you would say that this has been of some benefit.

I guess one of the issues out there is the belief by some that once the permanent facility is in place, the temporary one should remain open as well. What is your thinking on that, and how will you represent that as a member of the parks commission?

Mr Liu: Personally, I think that once the new one is open, the existing one should be closed, for the following reasons. As I understand it, the number of customers in the casino is down since 9/11. The borders are very strict, and 40% or 50% of the customers for the casino are Americans. So with the border and 9/11, the number is down. Secondly, Niagara Falls, New York, does have a casino now, and they draw customers. So with the new casino complex, which is much bigger than the existing one, I think there should be more capacity to fulfill the needs of the increased customers. As far as the existing casino, I think we should turn it into a family type of entertainment complex that will better serve the community.

Mr Gravelle: And I take it you'll express those views as a member of the commission.

Mr Liu: Certainly, yes.

Mr Gravelle: What about the People Mover project, as it's called, the elevated rail line? This is something where obviously again there are some issues related to the environment and other such issues as well. What are your thoughts on the People Mover project?

Mr Liu: You are talking about the transportation—

Mr Gravelle: Yes, the elevated rail line.

Mr Liu: I think any time people can circulate around the city and go from point A to point B in an easier or faster fashion, it will do good for everybody. I think the Niagara Parks Commission should endorse the project, but they should set a committee to look into it and see how they best serve the Niagara Parks Commission.

Mr Gravelle: One of the issues that comes up—we have a casino in Thunder Bay, which is my home riding, which the government still insists on calling a charity casino, even though we know it's not really a charity casino. It certainly is not licensed as such. But one of the concerns is that there is an increase in crime and a need for more police enforcement. Can you tell us what your understanding is of the situation in the Niagara Falls area in that regard?

1120

Mr Liu: I don't think I have any information like that. Certainly crime will increase where there's casino gambling. I really can't answer the question.

Mr Gravelle: Thank you, Mr Liu. I'm going to pass it to my colleague, Mr Chair.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Good morning, Mr Liu. When you were talking about the new Gateway project, I was interested in your comment that you would suggest that it be developed as a family entertainment facility. My question is, do you believe that gambling is a family activity?

Mr Liu: No, I don't think gambling is a family activity. What I mean by a family entertainment complex is some kind of activity where the whole family, young and old, can participate, rather than gambling—concerts or different types of—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with any studies that have been done in the Niagara community to assess the social impact of the establishment of the casino there?

Mr Liu: What I understand is that the business around the casino has increased three times what it used to be before the casino, and unemployment in Niagara Falls is way down, from 13% to about 5% right now. So I think the social impact will be good: unemployment is down and business is up.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I appreciate the point you're making, and I would suggest that maybe the information you've shared with me would reflect more the economic impact that the casino has had. But when I speak of the social impact I'm asking you, are you aware of any studies that have been undertaken to determine if, for example, the access to gambling has had any negative impact on the social fabric within the community? Are there more folks who are in need of addiction treatment services? Are there more families who are finding

themselves in crisis because they have an addiction problem? Are there more children in stressful situations or in situations of poverty because of that particular facility?

Mr Liu: Certainly there are some of those. Personally, I don't know any, but I'm sure there is a lot of impact for people addicted to gambling. The family suffers and the children suffer. But there's certainly help.

Mrs Dombrowsky: One last point: you are probably aware that the MPP for St Catharines, Mr Bradley, who is also the Chair of this committee, has been a great advocate to have the provincial GO train system extend to the Niagara region. What would your opinion be on supporting that kind of initiative?

Mr Liu: I don't even know what it is. I have no idea.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You are familiar with the GO train system?

Mr Liu: No, I'm not familiar with it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It is a provincially supported transportation system in the GTA. It runs basically along the lakeshore, and it does have some feeder routes. How far does it go now?

The Chair: Hamilton.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It goes to Hamilton. Do you have an opinion about the benefit that kind of link would have for the Niagara community?

Mr Liu: Oh, yes. I will support it. That would be good for that region, because the QEW is always congested. It's hard to drive along the QEW, and the extra means of transportation will benefit the region greatly.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Now that you know that we have this infrastructure to Hamilton, is it something that you might, as a member of the commission, be prepared to push for, advocating that extension—

Mr Liu: Certainly.

Mrs Dombrowsky: —and assisting Mr Bradley in his good work?

Mr Liu: Certainly.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Very good. That concludes my questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your questions. I'll move to Mr Martin of the third party.

Mr Martin: I wanted to explore perhaps your experience, knowledge and thoughts around the actual conservation of parkland in the Niagara region and what background you have, what understanding, knowledge or experience you bring to that equation. It seems to me that one of the very important responsibilities of this commission would be the protection of the environment because you're attracting a lot of people there now. They're talking, it seems to me, from the material that I've read, about perhaps bringing in another golf course, which brings with it all kinds of chemicals and things like that that can be put into the ground, that can find their way into the water system.

First of all, what background in conservation do you bring to this position?

Mr Liu: I have no background in conservation; I'm only a pharmacist. But I do live along the river and I have

some understanding of what people want along the river and what the park is doing to the river, the lands along the parkway. The golf course you're talking about, Legends of the Niagara, I think is a good idea. I don't think they have much environmental impact on the area. I don't have any background in conservation.

Mr Martin: So you're not aware of any concerns that perhaps environmentalists living in the area are concerned with.

Mr Liu: No, I don't have any.

Mr Martin: And you have nothing to support your contention that putting a golf course in would have no environmental impact.

Mr Liu: The golf is already there. They opened last year. So there's not much anybody can do.

Mr Martin: What about further development of that nature?

Mr Liu: I think three golf courses there is enough. Further development will be some kind of outdoor activity along the river so that the whole family can participate instead of a golf course or a MarineLand type of thing.

Mr Martin: Are you aware of the makeup of the committee? Are there people on this committee who would bring to it a concern about the environment and the protection of natural resources and wildlife?

Mr Liu: I only know one member of the committee right now, Mrs Joan Brunt. She is living in Fort Erie. I don't know if she has any background in the environmental issue, no. I have no idea.

Mr Martin: OK. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any further questions?

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time.

The Chair: Sir, you may step down.

DOROTHY CAUTHERS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Dorothy Cauthers, intended appointee as member, Simcoe-York Grant Review Team.

The Chair: The next intended appointee is Dorothy Cauthers, intended appointee as member, Simcoe-York Grant Review Team. Ms Cauthers, you may come forward. As I believe you are aware, you have an opportunity, should you see fit, to make an initial statement. Subsequent to that, the members of the committee will direct questions to you. Welcome to the committee.

Mrs Dorothy Cauthers: Thank you, sir. I don't know whether I'm in order, but I commend you, Mr Bradley, for pronouncing my name correctly. Do you all have a copy of this about me? Then there's no need in me reiterating it. Is that all right?

The Chair: That is fine.

Mrs Cauthers: Because it's 11:30.

The Chair: We will follow any format you see fit.

Mrs Cauthers: I can't stand bragging.

The Chair: Well then, we'll go directly to questions.

Mrs Cauthers: There are a few mistakes in that. I was district deputy, not department. And “Stephenson” has a “v.” The rest is all right.

The Chair: We can go directly to questions, then. I think we start with the third party this time, Mr Martin.

Mr Martin: Why would you want this position? Why would you want to serve in this capacity?

Mrs Cauthers: People asked me. I haven’t done it before. I don’t know whether I’m qualified or not, but I’ll certainly try.

Mr Martin: You will make decisions that others will consider very important—

Mrs Cauthers: I realize that.

Mr Martin: —in their ability to do their work and—

Mrs Cauthers: And allot the money.

Mr Martin: Yes. You don’t think it would have been helpful for you to perhaps have a little more knowledge of what it is that you’ll be doing if you get this appointment?

1130

Mrs Cauthers: I’m sure if I do something right, no one will say anything. But if I do something wrong, I’ll be well coached.

Mr Martin: I guess I’m trying to figure out—

Mrs Cauthers: Why I’m here?

Mr Martin: Yes.

Mrs Cauthers: I was telephoned by Leta Hall, a member on this committee. She felt I would qualify. Also, Jim Wilson phoned me.

Mr Martin: Did they tell you why they thought you would qualify?

Mrs Cauthers: Did they what? Pardon me?

Mr Martin: Did they tell you why they thought you would qualify?

Mrs Cauthers: They didn’t tell me everything.

Mr Martin: Are you a member of the Progressive Conservative Party?

Mrs Cauthers: Yes, I am.

Mr Martin: Maybe that’s why you qualify.

Mrs Cauthers: I guess so.

Mr Martin: Is there any overarching purpose in you wanting to spend the kind of time that you will on this committee? Is there anything in particular you wanted to contribute or achieve through this?

Mrs Cauthers: I would like to think that I would research any suggestion of somebody receiving money and make sure they qualify, rather than just say, “Oh, they applied so they’re going to get it.” Does that make sense?

Mr Martin: Yes, it does. If my experience of this kind of thing is any indicator, given that I’ve served for over 12 years now and watched governments of different persuasion give out money to various and sundry groups in communities, there will be a fair amount of competition for this money. Do you have any druthers in terms of where you think money of this sort should be going or not going?

Mrs Cauthers: I would make sure it was justified. If someone had applied and someone else applied and

someone else, find out just who would benefit, that the most people would benefit, and make sure they spent it correctly. I would try.

Mr Martin: OK. Thank you very much.

The Chair: We next move to the government.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): All our questions have been answered.

The Chair: We will then move to the opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Ms Cauthers.

Mrs Cauthers: No, I’m Mrs. I know it says “Ms” on the—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Thank you very much for coming this morning. With regard to the role that you are intended to be appointed to, you’ve indicated in your remarks to Mr Martin that it would be your practice to do a lot of research. I’m sure you have also received the background information, the same material that we receive. Given that you’ve had this information, you would be aware that there have been some recent changes to the mandate for applications for the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Do you have an opinion on those changes? Do you think they’re good changes? Do you think it’s appropriate?

Mrs Cauthers: I would hope it’s appropriate.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you think it’s appropriate that the well-being of library services within a community or the efficiency of those services might now depend on the ability of the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support their grant requests?

Mrs Cauthers: Just entirely?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Not just entirely, but even supplementally?

Mrs Cauthers: I think a library is so important in every community. For heaven’s sake, if they need a little help, what are we here for?

Mrs Dombrowsky: What is government here for?

Mrs Cauthers: To help.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Up until now it has been the responsibility of government—local government with some assistance from provincial government—to ensure that this very important service within our community is maintained. Now we see that the government would enable libraries to access this money, or they would qualify to be considered for this money. I’m sure in your research you have appreciated the fact that there are significant volumes of application for this. I mean, \$100 million sounds like a lot of money, but there are, and I’m sure you’ll come to find out, because I believe your appointment will be supported, that there are many charitable organizations within communities across the province whose only source of additional money that once came from the government is now coming from Trillium. Now they see yet another group that can access this pot. Can you appreciate the concern they have in terms of what it does to their chance to access those resources that they very much need and are very deserving of?

Mrs Cauthers: That are not libraries.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Not libraries, no, but they are organizations that heretofore have qualified to apply to

the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The point I'm trying to make is that there are already more requests for the money—

Mrs Cauthers: Than there is money.

Mrs Dombrowsky: —than there is money. So now you add to that another group, and a group that typically has received its funds in other ways. Do you think that's fair? Can you appreciate the concern of those applicants?

Mrs Cauthers: Everybody's looking for a handout, and I would hope that research into who is applying would be carefully screened. Just because more people apply doesn't mean they are eligible, really. They may want the money but maybe there's another channel that the money could be given to.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Mrs Cauthers, the government has made it very clear that these people do qualify, that municipal groups or groups that are associated with municipalities can now apply. So they've lengthened the list of people who now will be accessing that pot of money.

Mrs Cauthers: They can apply but it doesn't mean they'll receive.

Mrs Dombrowsky: This is true, but I'm sure you would agree that it makes it more of a challenge for the groups that were there, without those groups before still competing. It makes it much more difficult for them or challenging for them to access a limited—

Mrs Cauthers: Well, that's what we're here for, to do our best to channel it to the right areas; right? I would think a committee would certainly look into it. It doesn't matter how many people apply. You research who is eligible, who is trying to get a little extra.

Mrs Dombrowsky: First of all, I don't think it's a handout. I think it's a very important way to support agencies within communities that do excellent work. They are struggling, many of them, to maintain programs that are absolutely essential in many communities. The point that I'm trying to make or I guess what I'm trying to understand from you is that when municipalities find it difficult to meet their historic obligations in terms of providing services, do you think that it's appropriate that the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which was founded on some very different principles, is now including them in that fold? I'm sure you can appreciate why charitable groups are now saying, "Charities are now competing with governments, and how fair is that?"

Mrs Cauthers: Can you be specific?

Mrs Dombrowsky: You could have the local Legion that would be applying for a project competing—

Mrs Cauthers: You'd have to know what the project is. This is what I'm saying. It doesn't matter who applies. Is it a good thing or not and will many people benefit? It doesn't matter how wide the spectrum is.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So it's fine that municipalities would also be accessing this pot of money?

Mrs Cauthers: If the government has already sanctioned that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Oh, they have.

Mrs Cauthers: And you don't like it?

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm asking you.

Mrs Cauthers: I'm sorry. If people apply, it doesn't mean they'll get something.

1140

Mr Gravelle: I just want to pursue this a little bit more, Mrs Cauthers, if I may.

Mrs Cauthers: I think Mrs Dombrowsky asked you to.

Mr Gravelle: She passed it off to me.

I guess the point—and it does concern us; I mean, Trillium is a \$100-million fund. I'm from Thunder Bay, northwestern Ontario. We have a set amount of money that is allotted and there are many organizations that are not able to access it. There are probably two to one who apply and can't get it.

With the government now deciding they are going to allow libraries in smaller communities to access it on a one-time basis—we're very conscious of the need for libraries to get more support; we think they are incredibly important. I used to be the critic for that area and it was something we fought for very hard. The concern is that they're not increasing the pot of money. They're saying, "We're going to keep the same amount of money, but we're now going to allow libraries to apply for one-time funding."

We're not opposing libraries getting some help; it's a question that it should be coming out of the Ministry of Culture. That's where the money should be coming from. So to us—and I guess that's why we want to get your thoughts on it—it seems that we should be saying to the government, "We agree with the need for libraries, but that should be coming out of the government department that should be supporting libraries rather than tightening up this fund."

I'm sure one of the things you will hear if your appointment goes through is that we just have so many people applying for it. So the concern is that if small municipalities are now being allowed to apply for, I think, \$75,000, it's just going to make the amount of available money smaller. I think it would make sense to have the government—if they acknowledge the need for municipalities to have this help, which they should with all the downloading, and they acknowledge the need for libraries, they shouldn't be taking it out of that pot of money. They're not expanding the pot of money; they're keeping it the same. But they're adding more organizations that can access it. That seems unfair and wrong to me, and I guess we're trying to get a sense from you about how you feel about the fact.

Mrs Cauthers: What could I do about it?

Mr Gravelle: You could express your feelings about it as a member of the grant review team. We certainly feel strongly that that's an opportunity you have if your appointment does go through.

Mrs Cauthers: That's if I get on the committee.

Mr Gravelle: This seems unfair to me too. If it does seem unfair to you, I think that would be an appropriate action for you to take.

Interjection.

Mr Gravelle: Sorry?

Mr Mazzilli: Dalton McGuinty can put in his platform that he's going to fund everybody—

The Chair: I think you're out of order. Mr Mazzilli is out of order.

Mr Gravelle: Could I ask you one more question? I'm just curious as to how you feel about casinos, in general.

Mrs Cauthers: It's all right, but it's not my cup of tea. It's a way of making money, but I hope it's not mine.

Mr Gravelle: Is it a concern in terms of what happens—certainly we know that some people use casinos and become addicted to them, and those numbers appear to be increasing. Does that concern you in terms of casinos across the province?

Mrs Cauthers: Overall, yes, but personally, no.

The Chair: That concludes your allocated time for questions. I know I always seem to cut you off just when you're in the middle of your questioning, but that's the end, and that concludes all our questioning. Thank you very much for being with us. You may step down.

Mrs Cauthers: Thank you. Because we're done at a quarter to 12, does that mean you'll be back at a quarter to one?

The Chair: No.

Mr Wood: We're still going. We've got more work. You could stay and give us some advice.

Mrs Cauthers: No, thank you.

JOEL PETERS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Joel Peters, intended appointee as member, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Joel Peters, intended appointee as member, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. Welcome to the committee, sir. I think you're aware that you may make an initial statement, should you see fit, and then we will begin questioning. The government will have the right to ask the first series of questions.

Mr Joel Peters: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My name is Joel Peters, and I have been invited to join the board of Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. I'm honoured to have the opportunity to appear before you today. With your permission, I'd like to spend a few minutes just introducing myself and describing for you what I believe my qualifications would be for the board.

I have been actively involved in the tourism industry since 1985 on a professional level. From 1985 through 1989 I was a management consultant in leisure time industries with Levanthal and Horwath, based here in Toronto. I specialized in the development of management plans for natural areas, protected areas—particularly areas with sensitive resources. Many of the projects I was involved in were located in Ontario. I worked up in Moosonee and Moose Factory. I worked for Algonquin Provincial Park, Balls Falls Conservation Area and also the North Shore of Lake Superior, to name a few of the projects. In the course of my life, I've travelled through

out Ontario, and I greatly enjoy this province. It's a beautiful province.

In 1989, I joined the Toronto Zoo as marketing manager, and I served in several staff positions with the zoo until 1999. The zoo continues to be a well-loved attraction and annually sees attendance in excess of 1.2 million people.

In 1999, I had the opportunity to join the staff of the Royal Ontario Museum. I'm currently vice-president of marketing and commercial development for the ROM. In two of the last three years, ROM attendance has also exceeded one million visitors, and that's the first time it has done that in more than 10 years. That's an accomplishment we're very proud of.

Through my experience—and this may seem a little bit like common sense—I can tell you that successfully marketing a single-destination attraction very much depends on how well the province is being marketed and how well the city is being marketed. When one is responsible for attracting visitors to a particular site, you learn very quickly how much your success depends on how well-positioned and how well-marketed the overall destination can be. Hence, I really believe it's a responsibility and it's incumbent on us working within the industry to collaborate and share our insights and our expertise in order that the entire chain of marketing efforts succeeds.

Since 1999, when the OTMPC was created, I've chaired their market performance and assessment committee; that's a board committee. We're a relatively small group of people, five in total, and as a board committee, MPAC is charged with looking at how well marketing campaigns are tracked and the measuring systems that are put in place to assess those campaigns. This role has given me an overview of OTMP activities, and it's that perspective I think I would take with me to the board.

The tourism industry is, by definition, a very fractured industry. It's made up of many businesses—small, large, private and public. It's further complicated in Ontario just by the diverse nature of the province, both in human terms and in terms of our physical geography. At the same time, tourism and hospitality are very social industries, ones that deal first-hand with special times in people's lives. After all, it's all about enjoying and appreciating many of the good things life has to offer. Many young people also get their first jobs in the tourism industry, while others are earning their livelihoods from it. In Ontario, that's almost 400,000 people. It's a very important industry.

In summary, it's because I believe strongly in the value of the industry that I'm honoured to have been asked to serve on the board of OTMPC.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We'll commence questioning with members of the government party.

Mr Mazzilli: I have just a couple of questions, sir. I certainly will be supporting your appointment to this very important board. The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership has been very successful. Where I become a little bit worried as we go out into our own communities is that

you have local tourism boards and so on that also want to promote tourism, and you have the different venues.

I don't know what the numbers are today, but say in Ontario it's a \$20-billion tourism industry. Of course, the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, rightfully so, coordinates and wants to bring people to Ontario, and then they can go where they like and spend money—so, a bigger picture. Then, out of that pie, our local boards, whether it's Thunder Bay or London, want the ability to raise money to bring people to their area. So at the end of the day what we end up having is a \$20-billion industry, for example, and the tourism people say, "It's our industry," and the culture people will come in and say, "We're the \$20-billion industry," and the sports tourism people will come in and say, "We're the \$20-billion industry," and the agri-tourism industry will come in and say, "We're the \$20-billion industry." Collectively, they're all part of this \$20 billion, but it's the same \$20 billion. In the bigger picture at the local level, how do we get away from funding the same \$20-billion industry?

Mr Peters: That's a very good question. As I indicated, I agree with you: it's a complicated industry and there are a lot of different players in it. The power that resides within OTMPC as a model is that, through its committee structure, there are a lot of opportunities for different people to play different roles within the province, whether it's in their product development series, on outdoor committees or on their city committees. They also have a touring committee that picks up a lot of the in-between. On the marketing side, they've got groups that are focused and looking at the Americas, as well as looking at the domestic market and overseas.

When you start looking at the other parts of it—the culture and agri-business parts—I don't see a model in place where there is a coherent marketing plan and a coherent image being put forward. I think one of the valuable things about having a broad-based, diverse set of folks putting their perspectives in, as they do within OTMP, is that that leads to a model that reflects more than one perspective, and I think it does drive people into more than one industry. But the way in which it's counted then becomes a different matter. I think the motivations are driven by image and perceptions, and that has to be done well and done strongly by a central organization.

1150

Mr Mazzilli: That's my only question.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We now move to the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Peters, and thank you for coming. I have a question. As someone who has travelled in the United States, and I'm sure you have as well, when you travel from state to state and you cross the state border, immediately or very shortly after crossing the border there's an information centre. At the centre, there are some wonderful resources available that provide the visitor with information around items of interest for tourists both in the vicinity and also throughout the state. I had often believed that it would be an area

that could and should be developed more in Ontario. First of all, would that be the sort of initiative that the corporation would be involved in, advocate, promote and explore? Do you have an opinion on that?

Mr Peters: They are very important as a welcoming gesture as people come in and as an adequate source of information. I think the tough part of the question becomes, who should fund those visitor centres? Ontario has a lot of different points of entry. So is it reasonable that they all be funded and modelled in the same way throughout the province? If I remember correctly, there has been a provincial investment in the major travel centres: the one that people would hit as they came across at Niagara Falls, the one as they come in at Cornwall in eastern Ontario, and I believe the third one would be in the Windsor area, but I'm not positive about that. There has been some funding to get those going. My own father is a volunteer in the Amalguin area, just north of Huntsville. He has told me repeatedly that their funding from the province has been cut, but they are supported locally through the destination marketing area that they're within.

Personally speaking as a marketer, I think it would take away too much from the overall marketing effort to have the funds disbursed just in information centres throughout the province. The role of the marketing dollar has to be to motivate the trip, set the image and excite people about coming to Ontario. Again, there are other organizations and other ways in which we can do the reception and information sharing at the local levels.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are any of those actively being pursued at the present time by this corporation?

Mr Peters: The larger centres are—material that goes into those centres. Again, I'm not familiar with all of the budget aspects of OTMPC. I don't believe that they provide ongoing operating funds for destinations like either London in southwestern Ontario or an Ottawa visit. Those are managed by SOTO, which is responsible for London, and in the case of the national capital region, the Ottawa Tourism group. They support their own centres.

Mr Gravelle: Good morning, Mr Peters. I'm curious about your role as chair of the marketing performance assessment committee too, which ties into some of the issues that Ms Dombrowsky was talking about as well. Give us, if you can, a summary of what you accomplished or were able to do, or what the role of that particular committee was and how you feel it has impacted some of the decisions that have been made recently to quite frankly change the whole set-up.

Mr Peters: That's a very good question. When I look at it from the ROM's perspective, we're spending about \$800,000 a year on marketing. From the OTMPC perspective—it's a \$30-million corporation—the fund for market research is \$1.1 million. So it's more than we have even to do our own marketing. The largest expenditure is for an ongoing market behaviour tracking study. As well, tied in with it is a study that's not only looking at consumer behaviour but at how well people are responding to the marketing campaigns.

In addition, I would look back and say that over the last four years the major success of the group has been to support the creation of a segmentation strategy. They have a travel, activity and motivation survey that was done co-operatively with other provinces and with the Canadian Tourism Commission, and that gave us a tremendous database on different people—their interests, their economic background, their educational levels, their whole demographic profile—and allowed us to look at where people are travelling and when. So from the off-season perspective, there are an awful lot of people who are more affluent—affluent couples, affluent families—whom you will find in the marketplace. As you move toward the summer season, you have all the people with time and opportunity on their hands created by summer holidays—the traditional markets, much more middle-class—who are on the road. So the target shifts by season, and I think the segmentation work we have done has allowed OTMPC to start targeting their publications and their efforts accordingly.

Mr Gravelle: To sum it up, who comes here and why, in terms of segmentation; obviously it's important to know who comes here, who may come here, why they come here and when they come here.

Mr Peters: That's right, and that allows you then to say, "Do these programs succeed, and where should we be putting our next efforts?"

Mr Gravelle: So in a larger sense, based on this information, your advice would be more in terms of, "This is where we should be spending our marketing money or our promotion money." Is that sort of—

Mr Peters: The market performance committee, from an overview perspective, tends to step back and say, "Have we got the right measures in place? Are we doing this with state-of-the-art techniques that others in the industry are using?"

For example, I'm the only one without a PhD sitting on this committee. I've got some very smart colleagues sitting around the table: a representative of York University, an individual who works with the market research group at the Canadian Tourism Commission. I guess it's looking at the techniques that are being used. The market committees themselves—and one of the things we've worked on is trying to get better timeliness on the delivery of the information. Statistics Canada is basically on a 16- to 18-month time delay before you've got information on how well you've done through the Canadian travel survey. That's just the way they work; it's one of the better statistical organizations in the world.

So what we've done is rather than have a four- or five-month, we try to get that information and we work with staff to tighten that down to two months. So by the time they're doing the next campaign, they know how well they've done.

Mr Gravelle: Did your committee have any impact on the decisions related to northern tourism marketing being separated? There was a Northern Tourism Marketing Corp, which was based out of Thunder Bay, and it was disbanded. The minister recently announced that instead

of a new set-up—it's still under the umbrella of the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. I'm just wondering whether some of the work you did in terms of your market assessment committee had any recommendations related to northern tourism marketing.

Mr Peters: No, we didn't.

Mr Gravelle: You didn't.

Mr Peters: We were asked if we were open to it and have indicated to the chair of the board that at any point he can refer that information to us, but they've not elected to do that.

Mr Gravelle: So you have no information related to the issue of northern tourism marketing? I ask the question as a member from northwestern Ontario. We obviously do feel it's important. We understand best what works in the north in terms of tourism marketing, and I take it you wouldn't argue with that. But still, I would think that some of the information you're gathering would be of great value to those of us—you were talking about coming through Fort Frances/International Falls, coming through Pigeon River, Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Peters: Certainly one of our emphases has been to look at how we make sure the information that's coming through centrally is getting out through the committee levels and to people in the field. But no, we have not dealt with the northern tourism situation.

Mr Gravelle: Is part of what you're doing also looking at—there's a tendency for us always to think in terms of tourism as people coming in through border points—obviously there are some issues relating to border points and we probably won't get a chance to talk about that. But were you looking in a detailed way also at Ontario citizens themselves? Certainly I think there is more and more need for encouragement for us to be using our own—obviously it's a fabulous province to visit, so did that come into the equation in a separate kind of way? Were you able to look at that as a different market?

1200

Mr Peters: Very much. The domestic market is tremendously important. I believe in overall trips, about 60% or two thirds of the number of trips taken in Ontario are taken by Ontario residents.

Mr Gravelle: That's interesting.

Mr Peters: We just recently, at our last meeting, took this information through to the OTMP board. They did a study where they aged the travel activity and motivation studies. They said, "Well, what are people doing now, and if you look at them 25 years down the road, what are those people likely to be doing and how big will the various market segments be?" They did it for both sides of the border. They looked at those very critical near-border states as well as the domestic market, and Ontario's growth in most respects will be ahead of our feeder states. We've been very used to looking at Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and New York state as important sources, but very few of those states are growing at the rate that Ontario is growing. So 25 years from now, our domestic market will be even more

important, and when you start looking within that at the large reservoir pools we have of new Canadians who are coming through our urban areas, how do we get those people out and more active in this province? There are some very good challenges.

I was pleased to see that report come before our committee, and then we presented it to the full board.

Mr Gravelle: I would think that certainly in terms of your professional involvement with the Royal Ontario Museum you would be using the information that you're getting in a direct sense, but is there a direct relationship between organizations like ROM, and smaller ones as well, where the information you gather from the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp is communicated to the specific attractions across the province? Is there some kind of automatic link? One would think that would be useful.

Mr Peters: It's very useful. The Web site that has been set up by OTMP has a partners side to it. There are no fees for anyone in the industry to register and become part of it. In addition, the research supplier that did the work on aging the TAM study went out and met with Resorts Ontario, met with Attractions Ontario, so there's been a lot of encouragement to see the information gets out to people who are active.

One of the individuals on our committee, Ken Lambert, is vice-president of marketing for Delta Hotels, and his reaction was a little bit like, "Jeez, I've seen 30 studies like this," and yet when we talked to the tourism researcher and she put it in front of Resorts Ontario, their reaction was, "Man, this is the first time someone has shared this with us. We appreciate it, but we realize we've got some changes to make." So there is a lot of thirst for that information within the smaller operations, and I think the committee structure helps do that. We've certainly got an orientation to do more of that.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Gravelle.

Mr Gravelle: Unbelievable. Cut off again.

The Chair: I unfortunately have to cut you off again, just when you were asking some scintillating questions.

We move now to Mr Martin of the third party.

Mr Martin: I had the privilege last week of sitting in on the public accounts committee, where we looked at a review of the tourism ministry by the Provincial Auditor. He had, I think, some pretty serious criticism of the way we market Ontario. Are you aware of any of those findings or that report?

Mr Peters: No, I'm not, sir. They do have a separate audit committee of the OTMPC board that has been set up, and they have tended to take more of their financial reviews through that group. If it's only a week old, I'm not sure that's something that would be referred to us yet, but I'm not familiar with that particular report, no.

Mr Martin: Some of the criticism that was levelled was that the marketing efforts, some of the materials that were put out, weren't comprehensive enough. For example, in the north, which is where I come from, we've recognized in a number of pamphlets put out that we have a lot of really good attractions up our way. In Sault

Ste Marie we have the Bush Plane Museum, the Snow Train, Searchmont ski resort, the Old Stone House—a number of things. We noted that they weren't included, so we raised it and we got some answers back that we weren't quite satisfied with. But then the Provincial Auditor came forward and said that the materials that have been put out aren't comprehensive enough. He also made the comment that, in promoting some of the festivals, by the time the material gets out, the festivals are over. This is what he found in his research and study. In your role as the chair of the marketing performance assessment committee, did you note that at all? Is that something you happened on?

Mr Peters: We have met with some of the groups that are doing specific publications. The focus of our work in market performance has been on the overall market campaign, so it tends to be looking more at what is happening in terms of the major media, the radio and television efforts.

Publications are interesting vehicles. We do a lot of newspaper drops or we'll do a Yours to Discover Ontario guide and that will go into the Cleveland Plain Dealer, into Toledo, into Detroit etc. Some of these papers are as big as the Toronto Star. For a consumer to find those publications within the newspaper medium can be a challenge. Not everyone finds them.

What I think we're in the middle of as well, though, is this revolution of people turning to the Web for more of their travel information. I find that with my friends and neighbours, I'm just amazed at how many of them are doing very solid, thorough research on destinations over the Internet before they're travelling. We're seeing that within our own numbers, that the emphasis on publications is going down. So there is a transition going on.

I am shocked to hear there has been festival information go out afterwards; that's ridiculous. But the role of publications I think is one that we're going to see change a lot in the next few years. Will we get completely away from the paper and putting out brochures and comprehensive catalogues? I doubt if we'll ever get away from them. But they are very expensive to produce and I think what we're moving more toward is how we do that better on-line.

The question, though, on the on-line side of course is, do people have access to it? A lot of the strategy from the OTMP has been, how do we integrate things like the 1-800 number? If we can get a publication out there that's a lure brochure, that encourages people to pick up the phone and call and then information is sent back to them—whether it comes in through the Web or it comes in through a phone call or some other mechanism—publications can then be directed that way. I think we'll see a lot more of the targeting of publications that way as opposed to the mass distribution of them.

Mr Martin: I'm just a little surprised that as the chair of the performance assessment committee you didn't pick that up, that some of the comments of the Provincial Auditor didn't get picked up by somebody else who would be overseeing that. He also suggested that there

were problems in some of the contracting-out procedures of the OTMPC as well, that there were irregularities and there was misuse of procedures that made it simpler to just give contracts as opposed to asking for people to tender and make proposals.

Coming from the north, again, we're always leery of provincial organizations that don't effectively represent us. I'm looking at the list of people on this board. I guess Tobermory is about as far north as this membership seems to go. With you coming from the Royal Ontario Museum and having an interest obviously in promoting that, how do we ensure that you don't have a conflict of interest, first of all, in terms of being on this board and promoting your own organization, and that the north gets a fair shake?

1210

Mr Peters: I think there are certainly two issues there, sir. I can tell you that I park my own interests at the door in terms of when I step into the role for this committee and this board.

In terms of the northern Ontario situation, it has been an uneven situation in terms of how we're now going through a change where I understand there is going to be increased northern representation added to the OTMPC board. Bill French from Thunder Bay had been a stalwart on the group. He has stepped back now, but I believe there are two or three northern representatives who are being sought out to be brought on to the OTMPC board, and that would come through their nominations committee and through the minister. So it's certainly not my purview, but I know there are changes coming.

I think the other thing that is a trend within the industry now, and I see it here in Toronto with Tourism Toronto programs but it's certainly with OTMP programs and Canadian programs, is that we have moved to a "pay as you play" model. The programs that are succeeding are ones where there might be seed funding come from the OTMP, or it may come from CTC, and then others buy into the program.

Looking at the ROM's budget, I can't stretch it far enough to go off and do an effective job of marketing in New York state and Michigan. I need to use the vehicles that the OTMP provides to get our message through there. I think the challenge to the OTMP, whether it's Toronto, Ottawa, southern Ontario or northern Ontario, is that they have to design appropriate vehicles. The measure of that will be, will the organizations in those markets align their marketing dollars with those programs? Will they buy in and say, "Is this the best way we can reach the market? Is this the trade show we should go to?" I personally think we're better when we go underneath an Ontario brand and we go there to reach the market. It gives us some strength.

Mr Martin: OK. Thank you.

The Chair: That concludes the questioning from members of the committee. You may step down, sir. Thank you very much for being with us.

HARRY McCOSH

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Harry McCosh, intended appointee as member, council of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.

The Chair: The next intended appointee is Harry McCosh, intended appointee as member, council of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. Welcome to the committee, Mr McCosh. You have an opportunity, as you know, to begin with an initial statement, should you see fit. Subsequent to that, you'll be questioned by members of the committee who choose to direct questions to you.

Mr Harry McCosh: Thank you very much, Mr Chair and members of the committee, for inviting me here today to attend this review of my intended appointment to the council of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. I'll briefly provide a bit of background for you on myself so that you can better evaluate my appointment to this council.

My career was spent as a schoolteacher and administrator over 39 years in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario, the last 28 of which were with the Waterloo Region District School Board, where I was a teacher, vice-principal, principal, superintendent and, for the last years, chief superintendent—that is, superintendent of instruction—with the board.

Following my retirement in 1996, I was appointed to the council of the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario for a three-year term, from 1997 to 1999, and then reappointed for an additional three years, which ended in December 2002.

I found the experience with the college to be very satisfying in many respects, and relevant to the experience that I had brought to the council, particularly with my administrative supervisory experience of attempting to maintain high standards of performance, combined with care and sensitivity to the people in one's care. I feel that I have been able to make a significant contribution to the college and to the community that uses the services of the members as well.

During my six years on council, I served each year on the executive committee and on two other statutory committees. For the final three years, I was chair of the quality assurance committee and vice-president of the college.

This is a cursory glance at activities relevant to this appointment, I believe, and I look forward to an opportunity to elaborate on these or any other matters as you see fit.

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

Mr Gravelle: Good afternoon, Mr McCosh. Can you elaborate to some degree on what role you hope you can play in terms of this next appointment, if it goes through? What do you think are some of the goals and objectives in terms of improving the system?

Mr McCosh: I suppose what I started out with, with the college of medical lab technologists, hasn't changed, in that my function really is to be a protector of the public interest, for one thing, for sure. Secondly, I see it as a force to work with people, to try to keep the standards where they should be right across the province, and also to keep making people aware that this is a customer service that has to really treat people with respect and dignity in all situations. I think that's the focus I had on the one college, and I would attempt to do the same.

Mr Gravelle: Did you find, in terms of your previous experience, that there was a varying of standards that you were able to identify in the time you were there?

Mr McCosh: Yes, there's no doubt about that. I have learned which labs I'm not going to.

Mr Gravelle: That's pretty interesting. Tell us what you were able to identify. I don't necessarily want you to get yourself or anybody else in trouble, but that's a pretty interesting thing to say.

Mr McCosh: The problem in Ontario, essentially, as I see it, is the problem everybody has: not having enough money and resources to meet all the needs. We've had a change over the years, some restructuring that has caused some downsizing that has done a lot to interfere with the optimism, if I can call it that, of the people who are involved. We have a shortage of people in the underserved areas, particularly in the north and east. We have people who move out of there whom we can't afford to have to move out of there. We have situations where economy has caused people to be undervalued to some degree.

Mr Gravelle: That is interesting too. What do you think the solution—certainly the restructuring of the whole hospital system has had an enormous impact on people, and very frequently in a negative way, I think. We know there are negotiations going on right now in terms of the hospital technicians, who are obviously very valuable members of the system. It's difficult to say, "This is what I think the answer is," but you've obviously given it a lot of thought and that's much appreciated. What do you think needs to change? You talked about the value, I presume, of the people who are being served, but I guess that also applies to the people who are doing the job themselves. What changes—attitude changes, but is it also financial changes—need to take place in order to improve the situation?

Mr McCosh: Essentially, the fact that people are concerned about change is one thing. They create more of a problem when they're concerned about change. They don't understand exactly what might be the end result, and they're concerned about that. But I see that we as colleges have an opportunity to help out in that regard, and I think we did, in trying to establish standards of practice that are realistic right across the province and to push employers to implement and use those standards. Oftentimes people look upon research as being the end word, and employers will say to you, "What you're saying isn't necessarily so; no one has died as a result of our practice," etc.

What we've done is brought focus groups together to get the expertise from practising people. We have standards that we think are appropriate, and we've been pushing that for employees. I think it has really helped the positive aspect where we've been able to do that.

Mr Gravelle: The government has a role to play as well, I think. What would you see that role as being? Clearly what you've done is obviously very important, but what role would you see the government has in terms of making—

Mr McCosh: Certainly the government has a very supportive role in it. I understand the difficulties in not being able to provide all the money that should be provided. Essentially, what's needed is money, support and resources. I think all the colleges feel they need more in that regard, and the one I was on was no different.

1220

The Chair: Any further questions?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr McCosh. You made an interesting statement that you understand the difficulties governments have in providing the money they should be providing. When the money that should be provided isn't, what are the consequences to the people who are relying on the service? You did focus on that previously as well.

Mr McCosh: Obviously, the difficulty is that the services are not provided in some places, particularly in underserved areas in the province, for one thing. Secondly, the services that are provided are not to the standard that they are in other parts of the province.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you've identified, then, that because the government is not providing sufficient funding, there can be a lack in service or there can be inconsistent service within a particular health profession in the province. Do you believe that the college would have a role to advocate to the government on behalf of the professionals you represent? Would you go so far as to say that the professionalism of the members is being compromised because they don't have sufficient resources to carry out their practice?

Mr McCosh: Yes, I definitely would say that the college not only has a role but that, from my experience, they are participating in that role of trying to lobby where they see, for instance, that we have more members generally retiring than we're replacing. We've been lobbying to have more faculties of training opened around the province, especially, for instance, in the north, where it's an added responsibility and difficulty for people to come south to get trained. There are all kinds of areas such as that where we as a college can participate. I, as a public member, have to be careful in that, because I represent both the ministry, if you can say that, and also the public generally.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you have a sense that you represent the ministry?

Mr McCosh: I beg your pardon?

Mrs Dombrowsky: You have a sense that, if appointed, you represent the ministry?

Mr McCosh: Well, I'm responsible for what happens. I have to be responsible in developments that come from the college.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Could you please clarify your statement that you believe you have a responsibility to the ministry or that you are responsible for the ministry? It's very key for me to understand why you bring that impression to this role.

Mr McCosh: I'm sorry. You're seeing more to that than I intended, obviously. I simply mean that I'm appointed to be a responsible representative of the public, and in doing so I'm not there to be a lobbyist for anything except that: high standards, safety and responsibility.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Thank you, Mr McCosh.

Mr Gravelle: Do we still have some time?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr Gravelle: Mr McCosh, I want to go slightly off topic. You've spent many years in the education system. You retired in 1998, I believe you said.

Mr McCosh: In 1996.

Mr Gravelle: I'm just curious as to what your thoughts are in terms of the impact of a lot of the changes we've seen in the education system and, when you saw those, what impact those changes had and whether you've kept in touch with them and what your thoughts are in regard to—

Mr Mazzilli: That's out of order.

Mr Gravelle: I don't believe it's out of order.

Mr McCosh: I had no trouble retiring. The fact is, as you know and as everybody knows, the reaction from educators has been disturbing to the public generally because of the fact that they felt they were not appreciated. Attempts to change things which may have had a basis in needing some change—I'm not saying there was no change needed, but how the changes were implemented exacerbated the problem and, again, destroyed some of the good feeling the teachers had, generally. I guess that's not news.

Mr Gravelle: But you sort of shared those concerns, I take it?

The Chair: We're now out of time. Mr Mazzilli will be happy to know that you're out of time.

Mr Gravelle: Mr McCosh is very thoughtful.

The Chair: We move now to the third party.

Mr Martin: Thank you very much for coming, Mr McCosh. Obviously you're a person of some significant experience and background and education, and you have some time on your hands now because you're retired. Looking at things that you could do to contribute to the public good out there, you chose at this time to be part of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. Why would you choose that over perhaps other things that you might get involved in?

Mr McCosh: I suppose that my experience with the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario, where I learned about the Regulated Health Professions Act and the professional procedures act, lean me toward using that information in this. I'm involved in a number

of other things in the community, such as Skills Canada. I've been very actively involved from the very beginning in Skills Canada.

So, why this? I think my experience with the group of people who were working in a variety of situations in hospitals and in labs outside of hospitals would lead me to look at the colleges, where people are working in and out, because of the differences and some of the problems I saw that were in the differences.

Mr Martin: How did you wind up getting appointed to this particular panel, as opposed to—

Mr McCosh: Actually, the chairperson of the board was a local member, and at my retirement party she asked me if I'd be willing to be on a college. My response was, "I am not looking for full-time work; I'm retiring." She said to me, "This wouldn't be full-time work." I then investigated and thought that yes, that's one way I can make a contribution back to the community.

Mr Martin: Where this business is concerned, and it's certainly an important oversight responsibility, is there anything in particular that jumps out at you that needs to be attended to?

Mr McCosh: The things I've just mentioned about the difficulties of getting people into underserved areas.

There was one other thing that I think bothered me particularly. In hospitals and places such as that where there is a union, the people have security, safety and proper procedures that have to be followed, and I was used to that as an administrator; I had to go through proper steps. I saw instances where there is no union, where there are people working for a lab or whatever who have worked there for a number of years and have done really good work, and when the downsizing happened, then it was expedient for people to find one error, which would not have had the person fired, and then fire them. We as a college simply got the word that this person had been dismissed, and then the person is out of our control, as an example. They're not under our control, essentially. We lobbied hard to try to do something about that, but our power was very little. That, I think, was the thing that hit me hardest of all: the lack of power that a college had.

Mr Martin: Thank you very much.

The Chair: The government party.

Mr Mazzilli: Mr McCosh has answered all questions very well. We're prepared to waive the remainder of our time.

The Chair: You're speaking on behalf of Mr Gilchrist as well?

Mr Wood: Well, no. I'll speak on behalf of him: we'll waive our time.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We appreciate it. You may step down.

Since we have a full committee here, it would probably be appropriate that we deal with the intended appointees from the morning so that doesn't stack us up in the afternoon. If that's permissible, we will do so.

The first individual was Mr Alfred Liu, who is an intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Any discussion?

Mr Martin: I just want to put on the record some concern that I have re his background and lack of knowledge or experience or ability to share with us conservation issues where this commission is concerned, the impact on the environment of further development—the further development of golf courses, for example. I think it behooves us at this point, as we move aggressively in the area of developing attractions etc in particular in the Niagara area, where the casino is now attracting larger numbers of people, to have people appointed to these commissions who have knowledge, interest and background in the protection of our natural environment. Unfortunately, even though Mr Liu perhaps will bring to this position a background in business, he certainly doesn't bring any background in the area of conservation.

1230

The Chair: Any other comments? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next intended appointee was Dorothy Cauthers, intended appointee as member, Simcoe-York Grant Review Team.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence in the appointment. Any comment from members of the committee? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next intended appointee was Mr Joel Peters, intended appointee as member, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Gilchrist has moved concurrence. Any comment?

Mr Martin: Just a couple of concerns that came up in my questioning of the intended appointee. One is that as the new chair of the marketing performance assessment committee he had no knowledge of the very serious critique that the Provincial Auditor made of that organization.

I think he'll also run into a bit of a conflict of interest in that he presently works for the Royal Ontario Museum, which will compete with other attractions across the province for resources and opportunity and some of the vehicles that will be used to market and promote Ontario. That could create a conflict of interest for him.

I also believe, in looking at the list of people who sit on that board, which is in the package we were given, that the government needs to really look hard at trying to find some people from northern Ontario. There is nobody. As I said, the farthest north we go, it seems to me from the list I look at, is Tobermory, and that's just not sufficient or acceptable.

I would hope that perhaps we could this morning retain that position by not making this appointment, such that somebody from the north could be appointed to that board, given that that board now brings in the whole marketing of northern Ontario effort given that the government wound up the Northern Ontario Tourism Marketing Association a few months back to replace it just recently with an add-on to the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. If something isn't done immediately to ensure that there is significant presence at this board on behalf of the north, I think we will be even worse off or less served than we were under the northern tourism marketing association that obviously had some serious problems attached to it; otherwise it wouldn't have been done in in the very quick and summary way that that happened.

There was also a criticism by the Provincial Auditor that the periodicals that were being put out by the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp weren't comprehensive enough. Our review of them—myself and my colleague from Nickel Belt, Shelley Martel—indicated that in most instances when brochures came out, the north didn't make the grade; we just weren't there. Again, because of that and the fact that in some instances the auditor suggested festivals were being promoted that had already happened—we have a number of very important festivals in the north. If we don't have somebody at the table making sure they're in, in a timely fashion, they may get missed or dropped or be included late. That would be tragic, given the effort and the investment that is made by so many people in those events to try and ensure their success.

I have some concerns here in this appointment. I think there is a conflict of interest. I wasn't impressed with the fact that the intended appointee had really no knowledge of the critique by the auditor of that organization, given that he's chair of the marketing performance assessment committee, and the fact that we need more—and we need it immediately—representation from the north on that board. So I won't be voting for this appointment.

The Chair: Any other comment? I will call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next intended appointee was Harry McCosh, intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I move concurrence.

The Chair: Ms Mushinski has moved concurrence. Any comment? If not, I will call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

That brings to a close the proceedings from this morning. I should indicate to members of the committee that it may be that we will finish a bit early this afternoon. I'm just gauging from what happened in the morning in terms of the questioning and so on. It may be that we may finish a bit early. I have suggested to our clerk that people be contacted at least to be ready a bit early in case that is the situation and the committee can end its deliberations in a timely fashion. So we'll all keep

that in mind. I'll try to begin at 2 o'clock sharp or have everybody ready to go. I'll hit the gavel at 2 and be all set. I appreciate that very much from members of the committee. The meeting is recessed.

The committee recessed from 1237 to 1400.

RUPINDER PANNU

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Rupinder Pannu, intended appointee as member, Ontario Film Review Board.

The Chair: The committee is called to order for the afternoon session, which was scheduled to commence at 2 pm. We have representatives of all three parties here, so we move right to our intended appointees. The first one is Rupinder Pannu, who is an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Film Review Board.

Sir, you may come forward. You are welcome to make an initial statement, if you see fit. If you don't see fit, that's fine as well. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Rupinder Pannu: Good afternoon, Mr Chairman and members of the committee. It is with great pleasure that I present myself before you this afternoon for consideration for the Ontario Film Review Board. I would like to be granted this opportunity to serve as a member of the Ontario Film Review Board as I believe I would make a positive contribution in serving the board, as well as representing the best interests of the community.

Born in the city of Toronto, I have learned to appreciate diversity and the multicultural environment in which I have been raised. Also, my educational experience has broadened my outlook by bringing me in contact with people from a wide range of different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Having many friends who are of various cultural backgrounds also enables me to understand and gain appreciation for the uniqueness of different cultures. This greater awareness has also illustrated to me the importance of tolerating sensitivities that exist in other communities.

Born into an East Indian family, I am well acquainted with the community and the culture. I speak fluent Punjabi, and in addition to this I regularly watch Hindi films and other Indian programs. In my personal life, I am very busy as I am a full-time university student and a volunteer at my local religious centre, the Malton Gurdwara, which is the temple located in Malton, Mississauga. To juggle everything and to meet my requirements, I have had to become a good problem-solver with excellent organizational and time management skills. I also feel that I am a fair-minded individual who can be objective.

Although I am of a young age, I'm confident that this will be an asset for the board as I will bring youthful energy and motivation. I would therefore consider it a pleasure to serve on the Ontario Film Review Board. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We commence our questioning with the third party.

Mr Martin: Thanks for coming this afternoon. It's quite a responsibility that you take on here today. What

do you feel, other than your youthfulness and your energy, qualifies you to perform in this capacity for the people of Ontario?

Mr Pannu: I feel that I'm capable of performing in this capacity as I understand that it is a great responsibility to serve in the public sector. Being born in a very multicultural society like Toronto, I understand the sensitivities that exist in various cultures and I understand the importance of respecting and tolerating one another. York University, which I attend, is very diverse. I meet many different people there of many different ethnicities and interact with them. So I do believe that I am capable of making decisions that reflect community standards, as well as making decisions that would be in the best interests of the board.

Mr Martin: Do you do a lot of reading?

Mr Pannu: Yes, I do.

Mr Martin: What kind of stuff do you read?

Mr Pannu: All sorts of literature: some novels, autobiographies, academic-affiliated literature, some science literature, as well.

Mr Martin: How did you come to be considered for appointment to this board?

Mr Pannu: I actually met a local MPP, whose name is Raminder Gill. I've met him at the religious centre many times and I've also met him at many community gatherings. I've spoken to him about many issues that I feel passionately about. We got to talking, and when we spoke together, I asked him if it would be possible that I would be able to seek a position that would be involved in the government somehow. He told me that the Ontario Film Review Board would be an appropriate position for someone such as myself.

Mr Martin: Did he explain to you why he thought you would be a good appointee?

Mr Pannu: We've met on several occasions at many religious gatherings and community events and he hasn't specifically told me why he thinks I would be a good appointee. From what I understand, I believe that he thinks I'm a passionate and fair-minded and objective individual who can make critical decisions.

Mr Martin: Have you helped him at all in his campaigns?

Mr Pannu: No, sir, I have not.

Mr Martin: Are you a member of his riding association?

Mr Pannu: I'm a member of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, which is his riding, but I am not a cardholding member and I do not have any political affiliation with him or any other parties at the provincial or federal level.

Mr Martin: OK. Those are all my questions.

The Chair: We'll move to the government caucus.

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time.

The Chair: We move to the official opposition.

Mr Gravelle: Mr Pannu, welcome. Good to see you. The issue of community standards is a tricky one, as I think you acknowledged. How would you define it? Certainly there are those who are critical of the Ontario Film

Review Board for being too liberal in terms of the interpretation. There are those who are critical of it for banning certain films which later on they recognize have some real artistic merit, and with the rating system, they shouldn't have banned them. There have been some interesting examples recently.

Are you familiar with some of these examples that I'm referring to and can you give me at least a sense of how you would define community standards?

Mr Pannu: Yes. Some of the examples—actually, a fairly recent one—I'm not sure if anybody read yesterday's Toronto Star—was about the film *Irreversible*, which was a French film. There was also another film, *Fat Girl*. There are a lot of differences of opinion on these two films, whether or not they should be viewable for the public. Some advocacy groups do not agree with the way violence and women are depicted in these films.

I think any time you have something that's controversial, you have to do your best to make the best judgment. You must weigh the pros and the cons to make a good judgment, to make a good decision. Also, one women's advocacy group was mentioning whether, in some of these films, the violence is gratuitous and whether it's needed.

I understand that the board has been under a lot of fire and scrutiny in the last year or so, and I also understand that the chair has resigned. So when making decisions, I think, as I mentioned before in my opening statement, it's very crucial to understand the sensitivities of the communities. However, at the same time, you have to do what's best for society and the board as well.

Mr Gravelle: Do you support the rating system? You're familiar with the rating system that's in place now. They're setting up a new system, I believe, or talking about one, in terms of 18A and 14A. Do you think that's a system that is effective?

Mr Pannu: I think it is a system that can be effective. I think we need more time to decide whether or not it is effective, because it has just recently been changed. I don't think it would be wise for me to comment, to make a judgment to say that I think it's ineffective or it's effective, because I don't think there has been adequate time to make a judgment on whether the changing of the ratings is ineffective or effective.

Mr Gravelle: As you acknowledge and as we see in your resumé, you are a very young man, which is by no means a bad thing. We all wish we were younger—at least I do. I'm curious as to what our own tastes are even in terms of film. Would you have a sense of the films that you have gone to see in terms of some that you would perhaps have thought were either inappropriately rated or—it would be useful just to get a sense of the kinds of films that you personally find of interest.

1410

Mr Pannu: There are no particular films that I do find of interest. I'm open-minded. I love to watch films of all sorts of different cultures and backgrounds. For me, I'd like to judge the merit on the film. To me, a good film has a great storyline, a great plot.

Most people—well, I don't want to say "most people," but young, adolescent youth like to watch films that are action-packed, where the storyline is fast. But for me, I just like to watch films that reflect life in general, about all sorts of issues: controversial issues, documentaries, autobiographies, any sorts of films that are of interest, rather than just one genre or one type of film. So I do not have any particular interest. I think my interests would be wide and they would be very broad, so I'm open to watching all types of films.

Mr Gravelle: Do you play video games?

Mr Pannu: Not too much, but I am familiar with the issue of video games and video game violence.

Mr Gravelle: Do you think there should be some regulation for video games?

Mr Pannu: I think there should be some regulation for video games. One of the issues was whether or not the industry should regulate itself. There might be dangers with the industry regulating itself, in the sense that the object of the people who create video games is a target market, which is from a certain age to a certain age bracket, and what they want to do is maximize their profits. But I do see the dangers in not having any ratings at all, as some of the games are very graphic and very violent. As technology advances, everything becomes more—in terms of video games, we've seen this. For example, the new gaming systems are more realistic; they're more graphic. The violence is also more graphic. So I think that with children it can be a serious issue. You don't want your children to become desensitized to this type of violence or to totally disregard and not understand what's going on in the films. I think it's important for parents to know what their kids are doing, what their kids are playing, what type of games their kids are playing, and also to have a balanced approach.

Mr Gravelle: Do you think the Ontario Film Review Board should be involved in the regulation or at least the branding of video games in terms of those aspects you talked about—the violence?

Mr Pannu: I think the Ontario Film Review Board should definitely look into the issue and decide ultimately what's best, if that's the most appropriate right now. I don't have enough training or don't have enough, I would say, expertise on that issue to make a judgment.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good afternoon, Mr Pannu. Have you had an opportunity to review the article that was in the Toronto Star yesterday?

Mr Pannu: Yes, I have.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you would have noted that for the same film in British Columbia, when the film was rated there was a different type of rating assigned to it than the one that will be assigned or has been assigned in Ontario. The Ontario Film Review Board has indicated that the film *Irreversible* would be rated Restricted, with warnings of coarse language, nudity and sexual violence. In British Columbia they chose to, in my opinion, be more descriptive and indicated that the film is rated "R," with warnings of brutal and prolonged sexual violence,

which in my opinion tells a very different story about what is contained in the film.

Do you think it would be appropriate for the Ontario Film Review Board to perhaps reconsider some of the descriptions and how it directs the management of the release of some of the films? It was also noted in the media that in British Columbia, in the movie theatres where this film will be released, the government has called for extra supervision at the theatre doors to keep minors from sneaking in. So obviously the content of the film is of a very serious nature, and the film review board in that province thought it merited that kind of (1) special description and (2) extra intervention at the place of showing. Do you have a comment on those kinds of measures? Would they be the sorts of things you might be prepared to advocate, initiate, in your role as a member of the board?

Mr Pannu: I would definitely have to look deeper into the issue, but I can comment on one of the policies. You mentioned that at the doors of these theatres they're now checking to see that minors do not enter. I think that's a positive step, because ultimately you want to protect the children of our society. If someone is not capable of understanding the content of a film at such a young age, then I do see the dangers of letting young people in to these types of films. Many times, there is nobody at the door of the cinema, and they are not accompanied by adults. I do think this is something the film review board might want to look into.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Would you be of the mind that the description offered by the review team in British Columbia provides a different description than the one that has been offered by the Ontario Film Review Board?

Mr Pannu: I can't comment on why they made that decision.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm not asking why, but would you agree that they are in fact different and that a different sort of film comes to your mind after reading both descriptions?

Mr Pannu: I'm sorry; could you please rephrase the question?

Mrs Dombrowsky: When you read the rating in Ontario, it indicates that the film is Restricted, with warnings of course language, nudity and sexual violence. In British Columbia, the same film is Restricted, with warnings of brutal and prolonged sexual violence. Does that give you a sort of different image of the film in your mind, and is it the kind of thing we should probably be looking to consider in this province?

Mr Pannu: I think the Ontario Film Review Board has to view the film and make a judgment for itself. I don't think we can always look to other provinces. It would be unwise to make such a judgment without viewing the film yourself. I don't think it would be in the best interests of the board to make such a judgment and comparison without actually reviewing the material.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Could I ask what artistic experiences you have in your own life? What experiences do you think might qualify you for a role on this board?

Mr Pannu: I think I have many artistic experiences. For example, I have done lots of volunteer work at our local temple, so I've met with many community members. Also, at university I took a few courses in art, and I'm also taking liberal arts and my major is economics. So I do think I'm diversified, in that sense.

Mrs Dombrowsky: With respect, Mr Pannu, there's not a direct connection between economics and the arts. Might I just ask, in terms of your background, do you watch a lot of movies, do you go to a lot of plays?

Mr Pannu: Yes, I do—not particularly plays, but I do watch a lot of films. I actually watch a lot of Hindi films.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm sorry?

Mr Pannu: I actually watch a lot of Hindi films, Punjabi films and English films from Hollywood. Hollywood is the biggest film producer in the world, and the second-biggest would be India—I'm not sure if you're familiar, but they call it Bollywood. So I am very familiar—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you go to theatres, or do you watch movies in your home?

Mr Pannu: I attend theatres, and I watch movies at home as well.

The Chair: The time for questions is concluded. The three political parties have had their opportunity. You may step down, sir. Thank you very much for being with us.

1420

RYAN CLARKE

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Ryan Clarke, intended appointee as member, Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

The Chair: The next intended appointee is Ryan Clarke, intended appointee as member, Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario. Mr Clarke, I think you're aware that you are permitted to begin with a statement, should you see fit, and then be questioned by members of the three parties if they choose to do so. Welcome, sir.

Mr Ryan Clarke: Thank you, Mr Chairman and members of the committee, for this opportunity to appear before the standing committee on government agencies and to answer any questions you may have pertaining to my proposed appointment to the Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

By way of background, I am from Dundas, Ontario, where I lived until approximately six years ago. I currently reside in Mississauga. I received both a BA and an MA from McMaster University, and then went on to study law at the University of Western Ontario. I was called to the bar in 1995. After practising for about three years in Hamilton, I took a job as special assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology here at Queen's Park, where I stayed until August 1999. Since that time, I have been employed at GlaxoSmithKline, where I work in the public affairs division.

I left the practice of law some years ago because I wanted to serve the government of the day. Since that time, and specifically since re-entering the private sector, my involvement with community-based organizations has remained active. I serve on various committees of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, the Mississauga Board of Trade and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. The opportunity I have been afforded to work with a variety of business people on these committees has helped me expand my scope of understanding on a range of issues.

My interest in the college that regulates the dentistry profession in Ontario represents a further extension of my willingness to serve. I believe that people in this province have the right to expect competent and professional care by those who work in the health field, and if selected, I will serve with this overriding premise in mind. As well, my legal training will allow me to actively participate in the quasi-judicial function of various committees of the college, if permitted to do so. I look forward to the challenges of this appointment and believe myself suitable to serve at this time.

Thank you once again for permitting me to appear, and I would be pleased to answer any of your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. We'll commence our questions with the government party.

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time.

The Chair: The government has waived its time, so we move to the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good afternoon, Mr Clarke. Would you be able to tell us how you have come to be an intended appointee here this afternoon?

Mr Clarke: Certainly. Having worked at Queen's Park, I was of course aware of the public appointments process and the fact that the government of Ontario has a number of appointments. Probably about a year ago, I contacted the Premier's office directly to inquire about any opportunities to serve. Since that time, there has been various communication back and forth waiting for the right opportunity to come forward, and when this one presented itself, I decided to put my name forward.

Mrs Dombrowsky: If you could just remind me, you worked at Queen's Park for whom?

Mr Clarke: I worked for Minister Jim Wilson from November 1997 until August 1999.

Mrs Dombrowsky: And it was through that work experience that you became aware of agencies, boards and commissions?

Mr Clarke: That's right.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you didn't have any particular interest in serving on the college of dentists, but you wanted an order-in-council appointment.

Mr Clarke: That's right. When I initially approached the Premier's office, it was not specifically with this potential board in mind; it was just with a willingness to serve.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm sure you've had an opportunity to read the same background that committee members receive, and from time to time we hear about the issues that are highlighted in the background material.

Can you perhaps explain to me your understanding of the order issue between dentists and dental hygienists?

Mr Clarke: Yes. I understand from the background material that there is an issue around the ability of hygienists to perform certain functions subject to the direction of a dentist. The issue revolves around whether hygienists should have the ability to do it without a direction, or whether that direction from a dentist to perform those particular functions is necessary. I understand that over a period of time starting in the mid-1990s there has been quite a bit of back-and-forth concerning this issue.

I know there was a proposed amendment to a regulation, which the college of dental surgeons put forward, to further clarify the direction they would give hygienists around performing this particular act. My understanding is that technically that amendment to the regulation is still before cabinet and has not been dealt with, although that was, if I read the material correctly, about five years ago.

Beyond the material, I'm not familiar with exactly where the issue sits, other than to say that I think the minister of the day suggested that both the hygienists and the dentists should try to get together to try to work out this issue. I understand that was not done. In my opinion, certainly that may be an effective way to start the process rolling, if these two sides are going to get together and get this issue resolved.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It is a very important issue. Perhaps you could explain to me your understanding of its impact within the community as long as it goes unresolved.

Mr Clarke: I understand there's a financial impact as well. The cost of the procedure, if performed by a hygienist, is somewhat less than it is if performed by a dentist. And there's the issue of—I don't know whether "stand-alone clinic" is the right term—the ability of hygienists to do this procedure on their own versus having to set up shop within a dentist's office and that sort of thing. So to the extent there is a financial impact, I understand that's there.

As I said, I've read the same material that you've read. I'm not going to presuppose that the information isn't correct, but I will simply say that I believe it represents one view of the information. I haven't explored it in any detail to understand any differently than what I've read as well as you.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I have had the occasion to speak with some people who are involved in the dental health profession on this issue. When I read the material that was presented, I thought it was done very objectively. For me, the issue, as a representative of constituents in a part of the province where transportation is an issue—there is no municipality in my riding that has a public transportation system, for example—is that accessing dental services can be a challenge, particularly for younger families and for seniors. The services that would be made available to them, for example, if dental hygienists were able to visit at nursing homes or nursery schools,

would be a significant advantage, an enhancement of services for the people in these communities.

I am speaking as a rural representative, but I believe the same issues that exist in my riding exist in urban centres as well. I am concerned about the fact that we have professionals who are trained. We have a report—the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council report—that would say the scaling practices can happen very safely without the order of a dentist. I guess my take on this, Mr Clarke, is that the people of Ontario are not able to access a health service as conveniently or as cost-effectively as they perhaps could. For me, it's very important that I have this opportunity to make this point to you as someone intended to be appointed to a council where I expect you might hear a different perspective, and I appreciate there certainly can be more than one on this issue.

I think it's very important that if the goal is to provide good dental health within communities, this is an issue that really needs some attention and needs it now. In my opinion, we should be looking for ways to make the service more available. We know today, more than ever before, that good dental health has a significant impact on the overall health of individuals, particularly seniors.

That's my commercial for you here today. I'm really happy that I've had this opportunity so you can hear the perspective I hear from people in my riding.

The Chair: Mr Gravelle.

Mr Gravelle: Good afternoon, Mr Clarke. I'm just a little curious. You're still the senior manager, policy and government relations, with GlaxoSmithKline, correct?

1430

Mr Clarke: That's correct.

Mr Gravelle: That position is one in which you have a pretty interesting relationship with the government in terms of your responsibilities in terms of working out strategies, lobbying and working with the government. There's something about this that seems—I will say the word “strange,” but I don't think it is strange. I'm just a little curious as to why you would want to be on this particular agency when you have this relationship with the government. So I'm curious as to whether or not you can see any kind of a semi-conflict involved here. I don't mean to be reaching. It just strikes me as—

Interjection.

Mr Gravelle: In your position, I'm a little surprised that you would be seeking to be on a government agency, and perhaps even particularly this one. I don't know if you've given it any thought at all. Your professional life is one where you're dealing with the government quite frequently.

Mr Clarke: Yes, I'm certainly dealing with the government as the government and as the party in power and also as opposition parties. I don't think there is an inherent conflict. As with many cases, there is the opportunity for conflict. I've reviewed the bylaw that deals with conflict with respect to the board. I'm certainly well aware of conflict issues from the practice of law and other experiences I've had. GlaxoSmithKline is

in the pharmaceutical business, as you all know, and in the normal course of my duties on this board, I don't suspect that I'm going to be dealing with pharmaceutical issues.

Mr Gravelle: It's possible, though, right?

Mr Clarke: Exactly. However, if the board were called upon to deal with that issue, pursuant to what for me would be common sense as well as the bylaws of the board and, quite frankly, my professional obligations as a lawyer, I would certainly recuse myself from any and all involvement in the discussions that might relate to the pharmaceutical industry, no question about that.

Mr Gravelle: I appreciate your acknowledging that possibility, but that, again, is what begs the question, I suppose, of why you would be seeking to be on an agency of the government where indeed that could be perceived even in a remote way. I just found it strange, because obviously you were interested in getting involved with a government agency, and this particular one just seems to me to be maybe somewhat on the edge in terms of whether or not you could be involved in a situation where you'd have to say, “I shouldn't be involved in that.” That's what strikes me as somewhat strange. Did you think about that at all before you allowed your name to come forward?

Mr Clarke: I certainly did. Any agency that's involved in health care at all could potentially, I suppose, have a conflict. Having said that, though, and taking a look at this board, by the judgment I made, there wasn't going to be an inherent conflict. In fact, I felt the likelihood of conflict was quite small. I also felt that if conflict did arise, it could be dealt with and I could recuse myself.

Mr Gravelle: Do you see it as an advantage, though, to perhaps be a member of a government board or agency in terms of your professional relationship? Is there some sense that your company might view it as an advantage?

Mr Clarke: No.

Mr Gravelle: That's essentially my question.

The Chair: That concludes your questions.

Mr Gravelle: I'm through anyway, aren't I?

The Chair: I always like concluding them for you. Next will be the third party.

Mr Martin: I still haven't heard, and maybe I missed it, what it is, other than your desire to serve the public, you bring to this board, why you would want this particular appointment and what you would want to achieve in doing this.

Mr Clarke: Why this particular appointment? Because beyond just serving, I have an interest in health care and somewhat of a background in health care with respect to the job I currently hold. So I think there's certainly an interest there. In terms of what I can bring to the board, as I outlined, I think my training and background allow me to serve in a quasi-judicial function, which is called upon in some of the committee work that I know is required. So if permitted to do so, then that's certainly a function I believe I could fulfill.

Mr Martin: Why did you leave the employ of the government back in 1999?

Mr Clarke: Because I chose to return to the private sector.

Mr Martin: Is there any particular reason?

Mr Clarke: I suppose because I come from the private sector. I wanted the opportunity to work in government, but when I arrived at Queen's Park it was not my intention to make a career out of serving full-time, so I had an interest in returning to the private sector.

Mr Martin: OK. I guess you could tell me, in trying to make some connections here, would it be fair that you went into government, made a significant number of contacts there, met people, got to know the system and took that with you to your work with GlaxoSmithKline Inc—one fitted into the other—and now, because Glaxo-SmithKline Inc is obviously interested in the health care field, particularly with a government that's inclined to have an interest in doing business with the private sector, perhaps we might see some kind of self-service here or a conflict of interest or a building of your career out of what you said you actually wanted to get out of, which was working for government and in government.

Mr Clarke: I don't view it as building my career. I really do feel it's an opportunity to serve once again. As I said, I have certainly thought about the conflict, and I don't believe there is a conflict. I don't believe my company is served commercially by my being there. In fact, I know they are not.

Again, I can only emphasize that my chosen profession as well as various job experiences have taught me that conflict of interest is something I take very seriously, and it is not just actual conflicts; it is the perception of conflict. I understand that, and so even a perceived conflict in a given circumstance would cause me to immediately recuse myself from any and all discussions that might take place, not just with respect to Glaxo-SmithKline and its various commercial interests but the entire pharmaceutical industry.

Mr Martin: It seems to me that the nature of your work with GlaxoSmithKline is about having contacts, knowing people and being able to influence people, and the more people you know, the more opportunity you will have to be successful in what you do. As I said, you go from government to government relations with a very big, successful pharmaceutical company, also participating in that industry, and now back into the health care field through another door to perhaps meet some more people. It certainly speaks to me about the potential for some conflict of interest.

Mr Clarke: Again, I don't agree with you necessarily, but having said that, as I said, I would certainly recuse myself in any and all circumstances that I perceived to be of any conflict or even the perception of conflict.

The Chair: That's it? OK. That completes the questioning. You may step down, sir.

SUSAN BRYSON

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Susan Bryson, intended appointee as

member, Council of the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Susan Bryson, intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario. Welcome to the committee, Ms Bryson. I think you're aware that you have an opportunity to make an initial statement, should you see fit, and subsequent to that, questions from the committee, if they see fit.

Ms Susan Bryson: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and the Chair today for allowing me to appear. I'm currently a resident of Streetsville; we refer to it as the village within the city in Mississauga. I've been there for about five years. I'm a member of the local Rotary Club, which is also located in Streetsville. I've been proud to serve in some capacity as a member of their board of directors for the past five years and was given the honour last year of working as their president. I actually worked through to be their first female member and then, of course, their first female president.

1440

I also serve as a community representative at a public school. It is not one that my son attends or that is in my district; it is just something I do to work toward the better good of our little area in Streetsville. I've always tried to live by the philosophy that if you give a little bit more than you take, we will all live in a better place.

When this opportunity was first presented to me, obviously my first thought was that I had no experience in the medical field. But the future of health care in any capacity in our province and country is obviously very important. We've gone through some changes and some growing pains over the last few years.

Our philosophy in Rotary is that when one pair of hands is joined with many, there are no boundaries to accomplishment; they're endless. So as a private citizen and someone who obviously uses the health care system, I would like to be able to contribute to that.

I've been fortunate to have experienced both the private sector and the public sector in my career—the private sector from the perspective of both a large corporation and a small business with just a sole proprietor. I worked in a riding office with Elections Ontario during the last provincial election. I learned a lot. I am sorry to say I was always just someone who cast their ballot and went home without realizing the work and preparation that was involved. The experience, after the polls had closed, of having the results phoned in is something I'll never forget—the electricity in the air.

Again, I thank you for your time and welcome any questions you might have.

The Chair: Thank you. We begin our questioning in this case with the official opposition.

Mr Gravelle: Good afternoon, Ms Bryson. Can you expand a bit on why you are interested in being appointed to this particular council? You mentioned giving back, and I appreciate that and think that's more than legitimate. Are you interested particularly in this agency

you're up for, or were there others? I may as well ask the other question: how did the appointment come about?

Ms Bryson: How did I get it? I had a business associate who was appointed to the college of dental physicians and surgeons. The appointment itself interested me. I wasn't aware this type of work was available. So I passed my resumé along to my constituency office several months ago and received a telephone call from someone in the Ministry of Health asking me if it was something I was interested in. So, no, I didn't pursue this particular college, but, as I say, I think any facet of health care—as a private citizen who's encountering different situations with what is covered now and what is no longer covered, there could be a point where respiratory therapy may not be covered. Are we heading toward privatization? The entire process is something I would like to be involved in, even if it is as a small cog in a very large wheel.

Mr Gravelle: You made some reference to privatization. Can you tell me more about what you meant by that?

Ms Bryson: From a layman's point of view, are we working toward a system similar to the States or Great Britain, where you pay as you go? Certainly over the last few years there are some services we now pay for that we didn't. I'm not disagreeing or agreeing with that. Sometimes there are necessary evils with everything. But are we going to be in a position 10 or 15 years from now where we need extra insurance just to get a room in a hospital?

Mr Gravelle: It's interesting to pursue this. Do you support the increase in access to private health care—is that really the direction you're going in?—or do you believe strongly in a publicly funded system? I think it's worthwhile pursuing this.

Ms Bryson: I believe in a publicly funded system. My personal belief is that there has to be some responsibility on the part of citizens. I think we probably all, unfortunately, have been in a situation in an emergency room where people are using it as a walk-in clinic. Maybe there's an area to start. Emergencies are there for a particular purpose and not because your doctor can't fit you in. Unfortunately, maybe that's where we've arrived today, and that's part of the problem, because it's such a pull on the system and the funds that are available. There's only so much money available. It doesn't matter how many people are in the province; there's always only so much funding available.

Mr Gravelle: Just going back to the previous point you made in terms of how you made the appointment, I meant to do a follow-up question as well. You went to your constituency office. Whose office was that?

Ms Bryson: Mr John Snobelen's.

Mr Gravelle: Was it Mr Snobelen, then, who put your name forward?

Ms Bryson: It was his assistant, Anne Grice. I went through Ms Grice, not directly through Mr Snobelen.

Mr Gravelle: Were you involved in Mr Snobelen's campaigns?

Ms Bryson: No, I was not. Mr Snobelen is currently what is classified as an honorary member of my Rotary Club. Prior to my joining, when he was in the private sector, he was an active member. Now it's a classification of honorary member, that he can come to a meeting if he's able to, if he has the time in his schedule. He helps out once a year. We have an annual festival where we raise funds for Easter seals, and he usually comes out and flips a few pancakes at our pancake breakfast.

Mr Gravelle: Thank you. Did you have some questions, Leona?

Mrs Dombrowsky: You've indicated you have a connection with your local member. Are you a member of the party?

Ms Bryson: No, I am not.

Mrs Dombrowsky: With regard to the appointment that brings you to this meeting today, you've had the background material that has been sent to the committee members, and they have highlighted for us the dispute with regard to the quality assurance program. Do you have an opinion on that or an observation that you'd like to share with us?

Ms Bryson: Just from the information that I received, what seemed to be an obvious and maybe a partial solution was that instead of doing the exam—their problem seems to be that the exam is almost too close to the entrance exam that they are required for licensing, and possibly too, as a respiratory therapist moves on and specializes—it may be neonatal care or anaesthesia—that they gear the examination or some practical testing a little bit more toward that so that it's a proper assessment of their skills and not just basic knowledge, as they've already taken the test.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have any experience in labour relations?

Ms Bryson: On a very small basis, working within a small business. So not on a large scale, no.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That would conclude my questions.

The Chair: We will move, then, to the third party.

Mr Martin: I find it really interesting, actually quite pleasantly interesting. We're looking for people from the public to serve on these boards so that they bring another perspective than simply the professional perspective that perhaps members of the profession would bring to the board. Certainly you have some varied background coming to this.

You may already have answered it, but I need to hear it again: the contribution that you can make and what you hope to achieve.

Ms Bryson: Obviously, coming from a varied background—as you can see from my resumé, I left the banking industry and moved into the hospitality industry. I had no experience within the hospitality industry. So I like to take on a challenge and, if you'll pardon the cliché, jump in with both feet. It worked out for me very well, as I'm sure this would.

I think with some of the debates going on right now—I'm personally a non-smoker and obviously work in an environment where there is smoke. Respiratory therapy as well in the future will likely be something—I think there's a case right now with that particular waitress who was, again, a non-smoker and has been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. So from that standpoint, especially in the city of Mississauga, there's a lot of debate going on right now about banning smoking in establishments.

I think personally I've always been able to judge a situation without any preconceived notions. So again, coming into this with no background, I would like to take just the public perspective.

Mr Martin: What's your position on smoking in public places?

Ms Bryson: I'm probably a very tolerant non-smoker. Unfortunately, smokers have rights too. It's just unfortunate that their rights infringe upon the rights of non-smokers. The situation right now in Mississauga is that if someone has a designated smoking room, they are allowed to operate, and personally I think that works. If I choose to work in that environment, that is my choice. There are now a number of non-smoking establishments that I could go work in. It satisfies both smokers and non-smokers if I don't, because they are required to have additional washrooms and an entrance and an exit so that I, as a non-smoker, don't have to go in if I don't want to.

1450

Mr Martin: You've had a short time to think about this. Is there anything that you want to achieve in serving on this particular college?

Ms Bryson: I think initially I'd like to do a little bit more research—obviously I was sent some material—and to work through to see how the core competency evaluations can proceed. It's still going on, so it's—

Mr Martin: Just an aside: I'd love to live in a place called Streetsville.

Ms Bryson: It is a lovely town. We refer to it as "town."

Mr Martin: Thank you. That's all I have.

The Chair: The government.

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time.

The Chair: The government waives its time, so thank you very much for being with us, Ms Bryson. You may step down at this time.

Our next intended appointee is not here yet; Mr Dykstra is not here at this time. Perhaps we could proceed with consideration of the ones we've heard. Does that make sense?

Mr Wood: I would be prepared to move concurrence re Mr Pannu.

The Chair: We have a motion from Mr Wood of concurrence in Mr Pannu's appointment as an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Film Review Board. Any discussion?

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to support this appointment. I think it's very important when we consider these appointments that we consider the background that people bring to the role,

particularly as well in light of the fact that some of the issues or matters dealt with by this particular board have a significant impact within our communities.

Just yesterday we had the issue that was published in the Toronto Star about a film of questionable nature, and it is a subject that members of the film review board have to make some very serious consideration about. I think I would like to know that the people there have some background and understanding in the arts. I don't know that I received the sense from Mr Pannu that he was a strong advocate of the arts or that he even regularly participated in artistic activities. I think that particularly with regard to this appointment that's an important qualification to bring to the role. So I'm looking for someone with more experience and a little more depth in the field.

The Chair: Any other comments from members of the committee before I call the vote? No? I'll call the vote, then.

All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

RICK DYKSTRA

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Rick Dykstra, intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee has arrived: Mr Rick Dykstra, intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission. Welcome to the committee, Mr Dykstra. You have an opportunity, as you would know, to make an initial statement if you see fit, and subsequent to that, questions will be directed to you from members of the committee if they see fit.

Mr Rick Dykstra: Great. Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would just like to thank the committee for the opportunity to make a few brief remarks, perhaps tell you a little bit about who I am and what I will do as a member of the commission.

Basically, a little bit of history on myself: I spent 12 years as president of Dykstra Landscaping, involved in landscape designing and landscape architecture, and also the actual physical installation. The company is a family business run out of St Catharines and Niagara, doing work certainly in the Niagara region and outside in the Niagara Peninsula.

During that time, I had the opportunity to serve six years as city councillor in the city of St Catharines for St Patrick's ward, which is ward 4, and I enjoyed the opportunity immensely. It gave me a great understanding of both municipal government and, more importantly, the importance of community, the importance of participation in local community activities, and also the opportunity to spend five years on the budget committee. I actually chaired the budget committee twice. I sat on the library board. As often happens in municipal government, as many of you know, subcommittees come up for particular reasons, and I did serve on a subcommittee of the parks and recreation department for the city.

I spent the last five years working at Queen's Park in two ministries and also in the Premier's office. I've spent the last eight or nine months involved in my own firm, with my partner, in a public relations and public affairs management company that works here in Toronto and also in Niagara.

The reasons I'd like to serve on the parks commission are fivefold. The first is that I have a strong sense of community and the importance of participating in the betterment of the Niagara region. The second is that I have a belief in public service and a commitment to serve in that capacity. The third is that I have lived in the Niagara region my entire life and know the communities that make up Niagara very well. The fourth is that I understand the important role the parks commission plays within Niagara, specifically in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie. And finally, I have a willingness to serve, and hopefully my public service experience will assist me in that regard.

In terms of my commitment to the parks commission, I believe in and agree with the park's mission statement: "The goal of the Niagara Parks Commission is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Falls and the Niagara River corridor for the enjoyment of visitors while maintaining financial independence."

There are two points I would like to make regarding this. The first is that the preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of Niagara is what I believe in and what my wife and I have chosen in terms of remaining in Niagara as residents to raise our three children. The second point is regarding financial independence. As a city councillor and two-time budget chief, owner of a small business and provincial employee, sound fiscal management is very important. I'm committed to acting in a fair and responsible manner with the Niagara Parks Commission, recognizing the responsibility that goes with that position.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to serve in a public capacity and I want to let all members of the standing committee know that I will work hard, act responsibly and be a positive and proactive member of the parks commission.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We'll begin our questioning with the third party.

Mr Martin: Good afternoon, Mr Dykstra. Suffice it to say you've had some significant involvement with the government over the last few years.

Mr Dykstra: That would be fair.

Mr Martin: And I would take from that that you're a card-carrying member of the Tory party?

Mr Dykstra: Yes, I am.

Mr Martin: So you're active in campaigns and—

Mr Dykstra: I have been active in campaigns, yes.

Mr Martin: And contributed, as well, to the party?

Mr Dykstra: Financially? Yes.

Mr Martin: When I look at this appointment, recognizing where you have come from and what you do now for a living and the overwhelming involvement of this commission in almost the whole of the Niagara area

economy and your involvement in government relations and public relations, communications and this kind of thing, and living in the Niagara area, don't you think that it obviously speaks to conflict of interest all over the place here, the possibility of conflict of interest? If you're going to do business in the Niagara area and the Niagara commission oversees all of these activities, and you're wanting to be involved in your own personal business, do you not see that there may be the possibility of conflict of interest here?

1500

Mr Dykstra: I think that in all public life and all public service there is certainly the potential for conflict of interest. Having said that, I would submit that my six years on city council, I think, is a clear indication that wherever there was a perceived or an actual conflict of interest, I declared that conflict and certainly left the room for the discussion. I would understand anyone's responsibility on a provincial board or agency to be the same: if one has a conflict of interest, it should be noted, and therefore you should remove yourself from the discussion.

Mr Martin: But in the business that you're in—and I made this comment to a previous intended appointee—it's all about contacts, knowing people, having access, knowing where the opportunities are. In the Niagara area, it seems that almost everything in some way, shape or form comes under the aegis of the Niagara Parks Commission. So I would present that just in your own personal best interests you'd be better off not being on this thing at all. That way you could apply and respond to requests for proposals from these organizations to do public relations, marketing, strategic communications and project management without having to worry about conflict of interest. No?

Mr Dykstra: I come back to the point that if there's a perceived or an actual conflict of interest, one should certainly be declaring that conflict and should not be participating in the discussion and should be removing themselves from the room. Further to that, up to this point in my life this is the first time I've actually sat down and had a discussion about the parks commission. I certainly haven't entertained any opportunities in the past to do work for or through the parks commission.

Mr Martin: You haven't done anything for any of the—let's go through them: the Niagara Spanish Aero Car; the Journey Behind the Falls; the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens; the Butterfly Conservatory; Queen Victoria Park; the golf courses; Niagara Glen Nature Area; Niagara River Recreational Trail; the historical sites—and there are a bunch of those—and other facilities and services? You've done no work nor do you anticipate doing any work for any of those organizations in the future?

Mr Dykstra: No, sir.

The Chair: That completes your questions. We go to the Conservative Party and Mr Johnson.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Mr Chair, I had a couple of questions for the young man—because

he's not the only one, I understand, sitting around this table who has served on councils in St Catharines.

I'm just a little interested in some of your experiences. My first question is, while on council in St Catharines, were you there under the tenure of Mayor Unwin?

Mr Dykstra: Yes, I was.

Mr Johnson: If you see him, say hello to him. I went to school in Palmerston and his sister was in the same year as I was. I knew Al quite well, way back when his hair had some colour to it and so on.

My biggest interest is in your experiences on council and how you think they will help in not only your own expectations but the expectations others have in your appointment to this. I'd be a little bit interested in hearing that.

Mr Dykstra: I think that one of the number of opportunities serving on city council allows an individual is the opportunity to learn about municipal government structure and the impact you can have from a city council perspective. I think one of the benefits is that you get a much better understanding of what your community and the extended community beyond that is like. I think I've learned a lot from that experience. I think that experience has paid dividends in terms of my personal understanding, and it has renewed my commitment to the community I live in. In fact, I think having that clear understanding and that willingness to serve certainly will have advantages. The ability to learn about the mechanisms of being on a board, of being on a committee, of understanding how that works, of being prepared to make decisions and to put your perspectives forward—all of those opportunities, at least from a city perspective, have certainly helped me and given me the confidence I need to be able to represent the parks commission very well.

Mr Johnson: I also wanted to say that, having known you for a few years, I had no idea of your background interest in the horticultural trades. It's a thing that most of us admire when we see it, but I always think of the person who said that it's not enough to like flowers; you have to hate weeds. So along with some of the very attractive features of the parks you'll be looking after, a lot of it is done by people who are very dedicated to hard work and hating those weeds.

I wanted to tell you that you're the fourth young applicant we've interviewed this afternoon, and I've been impressed with all of them. As we age—some of us started before others, but we all go at the same rate. I wanted to say that I think the future of the Niagara parks would benefit from your experience, and I'm very pleased that you've offered yourself for this position.

Mr Dykstra: Thank you, Mr Johnson.

Mr Mazzilli: I just want to thank you very much for putting your name forward for this position on the Niagara Parks Commission, Mr Dykstra. I'm sure the people of Niagara will be very well served.

I think it's important to tell the public in Ontario that often members who volunteer to serve on these boards certainly are confronted with allegations of a perception

of conflict of interest and so on. But if it were not for members serving on these boards, these boards would certainly be dysfunctional. I just want to thank you for putting your name forward.

Mr Dykstra: Thank you very much.

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

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Wood. It is now the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good afternoon, Mr Dykstra. I'd like to clarify a point that was made by Mr Mazzilli, who suggested that this is a volunteer role. Is that your understanding?

Mr Dykstra: In large part it is a volunteer role, but my understanding is that there is—I don't know what the term is—a per diem.

Mrs Dombrowsky: A per diem of—

Mr Dykstra: I believe it's \$135.

Mrs Dombrowsky: For each day that you're involved in—

Mr Dykstra: It's one meeting a month, from what I understand.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I see. Are there any other benefits paid for—mileage or anything?

Mr Dykstra: Not to my knowledge.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Not to your knowledge. So \$135 a day is not exactly volunteering.

Mr Dykstra: It's 12 meetings a year. If what you're asking is whether there's compensation involved with the position, I think the answer to your question is yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: All right. I think that does need to be clarified for the public record.

Mr Dykstra, can you explain how it is you've come to be here today?

Mr Dykstra: I guess I was invited to be here on the invitation of the standing committee.

Mrs Dombrowsky: No, how is it you've come to be an intended appointee?

Mr Dykstra: The Niagara Parks Commission is considered to be interesting, and it obviously has a lot of input into the community of Niagara, certainly an interest that I have. Through my involvement in the community, I understood that there would potentially be a couple of positions opening up this year, and I put forward my application based on that understanding.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm sorry, I wasn't clear. Was it your involvement in the community or your involvement in your local political association?

Mr Dykstra: No, what I had said was my local community.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you involved with your local political association?

Mr Dykstra: Yes, I am.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have any particular role in that association?

Mr Dykstra: At the present time, I'm on the board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The board of—

Mr Dykstra: The local association.

Mrs Dombrowsky: In what role?

Mr Dykstra: Just as a board member on the executive.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You're just a board member of the provincial Progressive Conservative association?

Mr Dykstra: Yes, I am.

1510

Mrs Dombrowsky: I want to perhaps touch on part of the commission consideration, the golf course facility. Is it the Legends of the Niagara that the commission runs?

Mr Dykstra: Yes. Like I say, they run two additional courses as well.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Is there any debate or discussion within the Niagara community about unfair competition with the private sector or private golf courses?

Mr Dykstra: I haven't been involved in any of those discussions. Certainly part of the understanding that Niagara has as a whole, in particular Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie, is the opportunity to market Niagara and Niagara Falls throughout the whole year as a tourist destination. One of the opportunities certainly that avails the Niagara community is the tremendous and beautiful golf courses, whether they be with the parks commission or throughout the community. The opportunity to market those on a national and certainly international scale has certainly paid dividends to the Niagara region in terms of tourism.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are there private courses in the Niagara region, though, that would see the course operated by the commission as a rival or as unfair competition?

Mr Dykstra: I haven't spoken to any private owners to get their perspective on that, so in terms of answering directly to that, I would say that I don't know.

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. Can you perhaps clarify for me your understanding. The activities of the commission, do they fall under the Environmental Assessment Act?

Mr Dykstra: Sorry, I'm not aware whether they are or whether they are not.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You don't know?

Mr Dykstra: No. The parks commission obviously pays a whole lot of attention to the parks and responsibilities they have, but I don't know where they fall under the purview of the environmental assessment board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I would suggest that if they are advocating or promoting the establishment of golf courses and so on, those promotions do have an impact on the local environment.

Mr Dykstra: Right. So I would assume that in the work the parks commission does as an official board and as an official entity of the province, they would certainly pay heed and pay attention to those things.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you think that the parks should fall under the—

Mr Dykstra: I think they—

Mrs Dombrowsky: If they don't, do you think they should?

Mr Dykstra: They certainly should pay attention to—whatever environmental legislation, regulation and poli-

cies are in place, I'm certain the parks commission would follow the purview of that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: If they're not already, should they?

Mr Dykstra: Sure, yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. I have a few questions here. I think that would conclude my questions, then, Mr Chair.

The Chair: OK. I think that concludes all the questions today. Thank you very much for being with us, Mr Dykstra. You may step down.

The committee will do its business now, as they say.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Clarke.

The Chair: We are into concurrences and Mr Ryan Clarke, intended appointee as member, Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario, has been moved by Mr Wood. Any comment?

Mr Martin: Yes. I'm just detecting a bit of a pattern here this afternoon where you have some folks who worked for government, who leave government and go into consulting for themselves in the private sector and then get appointed to boards of government, make more contacts and then the connections begin. The circle is made and you have somebody who then benefits fully from the system. I would suggest that presents all kinds of opportunity for interesting conflicts of interest.

In my understanding of how agencies of government work, it's supposed to be people who have nothing other than the public interest at heart when they're appointed and that they would operate and act always in that capacity and that, as much as we can, we stay away from even putting people into positions where they may have to step away because there could be a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest. Because of that, in this instance, I will not be supporting this appointment.

The Chair: Any further comment? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Ms Bryson.

The Chair: Concurrence has been moved by Mr Wood in the appointment of Susan Bryson, intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario. Any comments?

Mr Mazzilli: I just want to note that Ms Bryson had no party affiliation. She came here and was appointed by the government to be on this board. I just want that on the record for the people of Ontario.

The Chair: I thank you very much, Mr Mazzilli, for putting that on the record. Any other comments from members of the committee?

Mr Martin: I wasn't going to comment, and I'm going to vote in favour of this appointment. But I think it's only fair to note, though, that Ms Bryson did work on John Snobelen's campaign and was quite excited on election night, as the numbers came in, to see that he had won. I believe that's what she said when she was before us. So to indicate for a second that there is no political affiliation when in fact there is, I think, is to mislead the public.

Mr Mazzilli: That's what you do for a hard-working MPP.

Mr Martin: That's fine. Just let's be fair.

Interjection.

The Chair: One at a time. Any other comments? If not, we will have the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Dykstra.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence in the intended appointment of Rick Dykstra, intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission. Any comment?

Mr Martin: Yes. This is another case for me of a person who, yes, probably worked very hard to achieve some success at the municipal government level and in work at the provincial government level, and now has gone on to work in the private sector. He is a partner in a consulting firm and is looking to be appointed to the Niagara Parks Commission. He lives in the Niagara area. When you consider the number of very large and public organizations and operations that this commission oversees, you can't help but think there are connections here that need to be made, and probably in the end will be made. With that in mind, I don't think this is a good appointment and I'll be voting against it.

The Chair: Any further comment from members of the committee? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Any other business for the committee? Any questions, comments or business?

Mr Wood: Hearing none, I move adjournment.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved adjournment. I don't think there is any discussion of that, is there?

All in favour? Opposed? Carried unanimously. That one is always carried unanimously.

We will set a meeting for next time, whenever it happens to be.

Mr Wood: We would presumably go into the new sitting—

The Chair: That's what I assume.

Mr Wood: What I'm saying is that we'll get into the new sitting without having a backlog.

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Anne Stokes): We have three outstanding. Then tomorrow is the deadline for selections, so I don't know how many more we'll have.

Mr Wood: My point is that I think we should have no backlog when we get into the sitting.

The Chair: Yes. I think that's a good suggestion, so when the House reconvenes we are clear.

Mr Wood: That may require only one more meeting. I think it's more desirable to do that than be trying to clear a backlog when we get back to full-time business.

The Chair: That makes sense.

Thank you much, members of the committee.

The committee adjourned at 1519.

CONTENTS

Wednesday 26 February 2003

Committee business	A-223
Subcommittee reports	A-224
Intended appointments	A-224
Mr Alfred Liu	A-224
Mrs Dorothy Cauthers.....	A-226
Mr Joel Peters.....	A-229
Mr Harry McCosh.....	A-233
Mr Rupinder Pannu.....	A-237
Mr Ryan Clarke	A-239
Ms Susan Bryson	A-242
Mr Rick Dykstra	A-244

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Chair / Président

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines L)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord L)

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines L)

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington L)

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord L)

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex PC)

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie ND)

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe PC)

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre / -Centre PC)

Mr Bob Wood (London West / -Ouest PC)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC)

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre / -Centre PC)

Clerk / Greffière

Ms Anne Stokes

Staff / Personnel

Mr David Pond, research officer,
Research and Information Services