



ISSN 1180-4335

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Intersession, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième intersession, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 8 April 2003

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 8 avril 2003

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: James J. Bradley
Clerk: Anne Stokes

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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 AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 8 April 2003

Mardi 8 avril 2003

The committee met at 1302 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr James J. Bradley): I will call the meeting to order, since we have representation from the three political parties represented on the committee.

To begin, we have some subcommittee reports to deal with. The first is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, March 13, 2003.

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

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved its adoption. Any discussion? If not, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The second is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, March 27, 2003.

Mr Wood: I move its adoption.

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

The third is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, April 3, 2003.

Mr Wood: I move its adoption.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved its adoption. Any discussion? If not, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

I should announce to the committee that there has been a withdrawal -- this is a memorandum that ultimately comes to the committee:

"This is to inform you that one item included in the memorandum of February 7, 2003, has been withdrawn, and, therefore should not be considered." This was the "Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Council of the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario, John Adams." That has been withdrawn, according to Gina Thorn, general manager, Public Appointments Secretariat.

A little later on when all committee members are here, at the conclusion of our appointment process, I'll talk about what we have to do on any extensions or anything of that nature. I'll leave that till the end, if that's OK.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS
RHEA SUTHERLAND

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Rhea Sutherland, intended appointee as member, Social Benefits Tribunal.

The Chair: The first intended appointee is Rhea Sutherland, intended appointee as member, Social Benefits Tribunal. You may come forward.

Welcome to the committee. You have an opportunity to make an initial statement if you see fit. Subsequent to that, each of the political parties represented on the committee will have a chance to ask you questions for up to 10 minutes. Again, welcome.

Ms Rhea Sutherland: Thank you, Mr Chairman and members of the committee, for inviting me here today. My name is Rhea Sutherland, and I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about myself.

I was born in Windsor, Ontario, and I grew up in a small farming community outside of London known as Iona Station, with a population of less than 100. In my high school years we moved to what was considered the big city of St Thomas. I first came to Toronto in 1976. I have an 11-year-old daughter, Melanie, and I've been married for almost 20 years. My husband, Paul, is a Toronto city councillor and, as you may have heard, was just last night nominated as the Conservative candidate in Don Valley East.

I am a member of the Conservative Party but have not been that active in a political sense. This may seem odd to you, considering that my husband is a politician, but my interests have been elsewhere. I am an individual with my own ideas and thoughts, and he respects that, just as I respect and support his position and ideas.

I believe you would have seen from my resumé that I have experience in the financial area as a financial controller and as a stockbroker. As a registered representative or stockbroker, my responsibilities included advising my clients on investments based on their investment strategies. The analysis of investment in most cases would come from the debt-asset ratio, the strength of management of a firm and the diversity of a company, to name a few. These investment decisions were based on facts, not emotion.

However, my work with London Life is probably more relevant to the Social Benefits Tribunal. My responsibilities included educating small to middle-sized companies on the importance of providing a comprehensive benefits package for their employees which included extended medical, dental and long-term-disability coverage. The primary goal was to enhance the quality of life for the company's employees. In some cases the cost would be shouldered entirely by the employer, but in most cases it was shared between the employer and the

employee. I am very aware of the cost to a company, or to the government for that matter, of maintaining a good benefits program. It was also very important that the plan was not abused, particularly in the disability area. When abused, of course the premiums go up or benefits go down and everyone ends up paying for that abuse.

Having said all that, I also need to share another part of my background and experience with you, because I've seen both sides of the coin. When I was 10, about my daughter's age now, a policeman came to our home in Iona Station and informed us that my father had been in a serious car accident. This was 1962. He survived but was seriously injured and unable to work for six months. Back then there was no work-based disability, and if there was government disability, my mother didn't know about it. I had three younger brothers, the youngest being 18 months old, and my mother was a homemaker. Our only source of income was welfare. This was devastating to my parents. It carried a stigma of shame in the community, and my mother found it very hard to bear.

I remember her refusing help from the Women's Institute and the community to maintain a semblance of dignity, but the community didn't give up. That Christmas was the best we had ever had. On the doorstep Christmas morning were three boxes full of toys, food and two turkeys. When she saw the joy on our faces, she knew she couldn't refuse the charity -- that's what she called it. At a very young age, I learned two lessons: to seek and accept financial help when you really need it but to work when you can to earn it.

At the age of 19 I became a registered nurse's aide, caring for the severely mentally and physically handicapped at the St Thomas Psychiatric Hospital. I nursed people who had been taken from society and put in a mental institution for various psychological handicaps. Not only that, but others were there because family and doctors didn't understand their illnesses -- people with Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy. I knew even at my young age that those people didn't belong there, just as they knew.

I've been sharing these experiences with you, honourable members, to assure you that I do understand the plight of the disabled, and I have one final piece of my experience to share. For the past 25 years, a member of my immediate family has tried to maintain in the workforce but has been plagued with illnesses that have disabled her time and time again. She has been to countless doctors and been diagnosed with numerous ailments, been given hundreds of different drugs and been called a hypochondriac even by her doctors. She has been criticized and ostracized by much of society, a devastatingly painful experience.

It was only in the past six months that she was correctly diagnosed. She has lupus. Some or all of you may know that lupus is a disorder of the immune system. Antibodies cannot tell the difference between a person's own tissues and foreign tissues. This conflict leads to inflammation in various organs and, if left untreated, this inflammation can cause organ damage and loss of

function and premature death. So I do know what it's like to experience not only the physical and mental challenges of a disability but the social ramifications as well. That person is my mother.

In summary, I feel I am an excellent candidate for this position as I bring to the tribunal a financial understanding with the strength to make tough decisions as well as an empathetic understanding of a bona fide disability.

1310

The Chair: Thank you very much. We begin with the government.

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time.

The Chair: The government waives its time, so we'll move to the official opposition.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Ms Sutherland, you mentioned that your husband was planning to run in the next provincial election. In fact, I understand that he was nominated to be the candidate in Don Valley East last night.

Ms Sutherland: That's correct.

Mr Smitherman: Were you at the meeting?

Ms Sutherland: Yes, I was.

Mr Smitherman: In 1995, when your husband ran for the Progressive Conservative Party in the riding of Oriole, did you take an active role in campaigning for him at that time?

Ms Sutherland: Yes, I door-knocked.

Mr Smitherman: Have you always taken an active role in your husband's campaigns?

Ms Sutherland: I would say not in the last couple of campaigns. He's had a tremendous amount of support and I had a young daughter at the time, so my emphasis was clearly at home.

Mr Smitherman: The position you are being recommended for by the government pays between \$62,138 and \$78,021 a year. Are you aware of that?

Ms Sutherland: No, I wasn't.

Mr Smitherman: So your husband is running for the Conservatives.

Ms Sutherland: Yes, he is.

Mr Smitherman: You're getting a lucrative appointment. Do you think that looks bad?

Ms Sutherland: I would hope not. I would hope that my husband's aspirations and interests don't negate my experience and my interest and history, and I would certainly hope that it doesn't work against me here today.

Mr Smitherman: So you can say unequivocally that at no point in your husband's negotiations to be a candidate was the issue of your appointment to a lucrative Ontario government position a factor?

Ms Sutherland: Actually I was approached, I guess it would have been about a year ago now -- it was in the summer, I should say. I was speaking with Minister Klees at a social function, and I indicated at that time that I was looking to get back into the workforce. My daughter was getting older -- she's going to be 11 in a couple of weeks -- and I had just turned 50, and I think I felt my career biological clock ticking and thought it was

time to get back on the career path. So he asked me to fax -- this would have been August or September. I faxed him my resumé, and I received a call from the Ministry of Health about an appointment in the area of nutrition. It's not really my area of expertise or great interest. It was a short time later that I received a phone call from someone at the Social Benefits Tribunal, and the vice-chair, Mr Morrison, called me and interviewed me before that. This was prior to my husband making any kind of decision.

Mr Smitherman: So you don't see any connection at all to the fact that your husband has been a very active Conservative supporter and your ability, as you said, to re-enter the workforce by getting a lucrative government appointment? You see no connection between those two things?

Ms Sutherland: As I said, I would hope not. I would hope that my experience and my interest in the Social Benefits Tribunal outweigh that.

Mr Smitherman: So in your long history of political engagement and acting in campaigns, it doesn't strike you as odd -- and a path that most people wouldn't have the opportunity of -- that you as the spouse of a prominent Conservative Party activist would have access to a government appointment that pays up to almost \$80,000 a year, that that's a route or an avenue that most of my constituents, as an example, would have access to? That doesn't strike you as a bit depending upon coincidence?

Ms Sutherland: As I said, I would hope that my experience and interest and my past experience in the disability area and with London Life are not negated by the fact of what my husband does and his interests and his affiliations.

Mr Smitherman: I find it a bit hard to swallow, because I did find that in the first three or four minutes of your remarks you were working awfully hard to try to make a resumé that had awfully little to do with this kind of activity seem awfully relevant.

I couldn't help but notice that in your comments you used the word "abuse" at least two, and perhaps three, times. Is it your opinion that there is a high level of abuse among people attempting to access benefits of this nature?

Ms Sutherland: I really don't know. I haven't studied the legislation. I would have to study all the facts and figures to really find out, and I'd like an opportunity to do that at length before I can make any kind of comment on it.

Mr Smitherman: But you did make a comment on it. You used the word "abuse" twice in your comments.

Ms Sutherland: I experienced that in the private industry and, yes, I think we all have experienced and seen situations where individuals have been collecting disability; one day they're down picking up their cheque and the next day they're on the roof putting up shingles. So I think it's out there. I don't know what the balance is. But on the other hand there are people who need that

disability who aren't getting it, too. We don't want to take it away from the people who really need it.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Ms Sutherland, I noted more than once during your comments that you referred to your area of expertise and your past experience in dealing with people with disabilities. However, again in your opening remarks you speak about your experience as a financial controller and a stockbroker. As I review your resumé, your work experience is clearly in the business sector. When I look at your volunteer work, you've volunteered for golf associations and private schools in this province, and you are particularly interested in the arts and drama and so on. I guess what I'm really searching for is, when you make reference to your experience, is it the personal experiences that you outlined, those two close -- I mean, I'm looking for some demonstration in your community. Did you volunteer at the food bank? What kinds of volunteer charity drives have you been a part of? I just don't see them listed here.

Ms Sutherland: I have volunteered at various things over the years -- it's been many years -- with the elderly. You mentioned my financial background. Yes, I do have, it seems, a strong financial background. There has to be a good balance. Yes, you're right, my experience is not just having worked at hospitals and with the mentally and physically handicapped on a professional basis but my personal experience as well.

Mrs Dombrowsky: This is a quasi-judicial role. What experience would you have in that type of role?

Ms Sutherland: I don't have any. I would hope that the commitment to the training, which I would certainly have, will give me the tools necessary to do a good, fair, impartial --

Mrs Dombrowsky: You indicated you were aware of the value of a good benefits program. Do you believe the Ontario disability support program and the welfare program in Ontario are good benefit programs for people?

Ms Sutherland: I don't have enough information to make a comment on that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you aware that people on Ontario disability have not had an increase in their compensation in 10 years? They've just had an anniversary this week.

Ms Sutherland: I'd have to study that more to make a comment. I really don't know.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you aware that this government rolled compensation for people on welfare back by 21.3%?

Ms Sutherland: Am I aware of what? Sorry.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That this government rolled compensation for people on welfare back by 21.3% eight years ago.

Ms Sutherland: As I said, I'll have to study it very, very closely, at length. Never having been involved with this type of legislation before, I really am going to need the opportunity to sit down and look at all of the legislation carefully. I don't think it would be fair today to

make a comment or a judgment, not having all the information in front of me.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Ms Sutherland, you are going to be working with people who have been intimately involved in this benefits program for a number of years or have attempted to be involved with it for a number of years and they are very familiar and aware. So in fairness to them, don't you think it would be important that you would have some understanding of their experience of what the history of this province is and has been in terms of how these people have been supported?

1320

Ms Sutherland: I have had experience in that, Mrs Dombrowsky, with my mother over the years. So I do have personal, first-hand experience with that that, yes. Absolutely.

Mr Smitherman: Do I have time for one final question, Chair?

The Chair: You have a minute and a half.

Mr Smitherman: Earlier you mentioned that Frank Klees was the one who pushed your paper within government, to use an expression. Someone clearly, at a very high level in this government -- a political person -- said, "This is a candidate for an appointment that is in our interest to move forward." That's the way the system works, and I think you know that. What kind of event was it that you met Frank Klees at where you first mentioned that you wanted to get back into the workforce?

Ms Sutherland: At a golf game.

Mr Smitherman: A golf game?

Ms Sutherland: Yes. I've known Mr Klees for many years. He's very aware of my experience and my abilities. He has met me on social levels, he has seen me in social situations, he knows my feelings about things. So I think from that standpoint it was something he may have felt I would be good at, based on my experience and my past history.

Mr Smitherman: Was it a PC Party-organized golf tournament?

Ms Sutherland: No.

Mr Smitherman: A political fundraising golf tournament?

Ms Sutherland: No. Actually --

Mr Smitherman: It was a private golf game with Frank Klees?

Ms Sutherland: No, it was actually the mayor's tournament, I believe.

Mr Smitherman: Which mayor?

Ms Sutherland: Mayor Lastman.

The Chair: That's it. Your time's up. We move now to the third party.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): First of all, I'd like to say hello. I don't think I've ever met you, although I did work with Paul for a number of years. I'm a little bit curious and puzzled, although I never really questioned Paul and maybe it's not fair to ask you, about the whole question here about Morland Marketing Inc. What happened to that company?

Ms Sutherland: It's out of business.

Mr Prue: Did it go bankrupt?

Ms Sutherland: Yes, it did.

Mr Prue: What is the status of that bankruptcy?

Ms Sutherland: First of all, I'm very disappointed that you feel it's necessary to bring up a personal issue at this meeting. However, having said that --

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): On a point of order, Mr Chair: I would just ask that you interject. I would like the questioning to stay on the proposed appointment to this tribunal, and I would ask that you certainly rule any personal matters out of order.

Mr Prue: With respect, it's in the resumé. The first item was "back into the workforce" and that she has financial experience. I want to make sure that the financial experience will be appropriate.

The Chair: It is relevant, but a candidate for the office may answer whatever way the candidate sees fit.

Mr Prue: Yes. If you don't want to answer it, just tell me.

Ms Sutherland: I'll do my best to explain. Let me do my best to explain, Mr Prue. It's very painful to me because it's something that's this way. A trusted friend of over 10 years, who was a chartered accountant, was handling all the finances of the company I was a part of. It came to light in the year 2000 that he was stealing money, he was forging signatures, he was committing fraud. I pressed charges and I sued him. He declared bankruptcy and it forced my business into bankruptcy as well. It is still very painful. This was a person I trusted for 10 years.

Mr Prue: I can understand. Are you yourself in bankruptcy? Are either you or your husband in personal -

Ms Sutherland: As a result of what he had done, I made every effort, personally, to make good on some of the things, and I didn't realize the magnitude of what he had done. As a result, it forced me into personal bankruptcy. It was discharged, however, in November 2001.

Mr Prue: So it's discharged?

Ms Sutherland: Yes.

Mr Prue: That's what I wanted to know. That's fine. So you are not today in bankruptcy?

Ms Sutherland: No.

Mr Prue: Thank you.

You went to work in Turks and Caicos. I'm a little bit curious here because -- oh, you were there for 19 months?

Ms Sutherland: About that, yes.

Mr Prue: Were you residing there full time?

Ms Sutherland: Yes, I was.

Mr Prue: What made you leave that financial arrangement?

Ms Sutherland: My husband was convinced to come back and run in the municipal --

Mr Prue: That would coincide exactly. All right. So you came back for him?

Ms Sutherland: Yes. Well, to keep the family together, of course.

Mr Prue: I've looked at the resumé, and the resumé has not been in areas related to government or government business or welfare or social services. What gives you this interest?

Ms Sutherland: As I said in my opening statement, having worked at London Life and dealing with companies, it was a commitment I had. I truly, truly believed that companies should invest in their employees and should have good benefits programs, no matter how small the company: dental plans, extended health plans, drug plans and long-term disability as well. In that business I have seen people on long-term disability -- also my personal experience, as I indicated, with my mother and my father.

Mr Prue: I think that's all. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Prue.

Mr Mazzilli: Are we done? We're done?

The Chair: You're done, unfortunately. Sorry about that. I always like to accommodate you, as you know.

Thank you very much. That completes the questioning. You may step down.

Ms Sutherland: Thank you, members of the committee.

EDWIN PARKER

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Edwin Parker, intended appointee as member, Quinte West Police Services Board.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Edwin Morton Parker, intended appointee as member, Quinte West Police Services Board.

Welcome to the committee, sir. You may assume your position at the desk or dais or whatever we call it. I know you're aware that you have an opportunity, should you see fit, to make an initial statement; that's always the choice of the nominee. Subsequent to that, there will be questions from any of the members of the committee who wish to ask questions.

Mr Edwin Parker: Very briefly, I appreciate the information that has been sent to me so that I had some idea what this appointment might mean. As you're no doubt aware, we in Quinte West have had some difficulties with both the police services board and the police force itself, which has gotten a lot of paper -- and not necessarily good paper. There appeared to be an opening and someone suggested that maybe I should apply for it, and I did. So here I am.

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

Mr Smitherman: Mr Parker, would you refer to yourself as a good friend of Doug Galt?

Mr Parker: I support him politically, if that's what you mean.

Mr Smitherman: That's not the question I asked.

Mr Parker: Am I a good friend? No. We don't have dinner together or anything like that.

Mr Smitherman: That's your definition?

It's a pretty important position, I think you'd agree. I think you said there are some difficulties with the Quinte West Police Service and with the police themselves. Obviously anyone being appointed to go in and clean it up must, I guess, be beyond reproach. So I'd ask you, very simply, have you ever been in trouble with the law?

Mr Parker: In what way?

Mr Smitherman: I think it's a very clear question, sir.

Mr Parker: I did have a ticket for not wearing a seat belt on one occasion, and I pleaded guilty once to careless driving.

Mr Smitherman: I'd like to maybe help you by refreshing your memory.

Mr Parker: Sure.

Mr Smitherman: I understand that in the not too distant past, in July 2001, you may have been charged with an incident that occurred in your town related to drunk driving. I'd like you to confirm --

Mr Parker: I may have been charged, but I wasn't convicted.

Mr Smitherman: Could you please confirm for the committee what you might have pleaded out on.

Mr Mazzilli: On a point of order, Mr Chair: Certainly anyone who has been charged with anything that has been dismissed by the court -- it is not something that is public knowledge to people. This kind of questioning is certainly beyond anything that's acceptable in a court of law.

1330

Mr Smitherman: Well, with respect --

The Chair: I just want to hear from Mr Mazzilli. You say that is not public knowledge?

Mr Mazzilli: Well, no. Once a charge has been dismissed by a court, if that's the case, a person is presumed not to have any kind of record. So this kind of questioning certainly wouldn't be permitted in a court of law and shouldn't be permitted by this Legislature.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): This is bottom-of-the-barrel politics.

Mr Smitherman: If I might respond.

The Chair: You can respond. It's a point of order.

Mr Smitherman: Firstly, it's Mr Mazzilli's word on the issue of its being dismissed. I asked a question of the witness.

Mr Mazzilli: He said he was not convicted.

Mr Smitherman: He said he wasn't convicted of impaired driving, and I asked him the question, did he plead out on a different charge? You came to his defence at that point, Mr Mazzilli --

Mr Mazzilli: I did.

Mr Smitherman: -- and he did not answer the question. So your allegation against me is not yet confirmed by this gentleman, and I'd like to give him the opportunity to do so.

Mr Mazzilli: I'd ask the Chair to rule on it.

The Chair: He may answer this question if he sees fit.

Mr Parker: I already said that I pled guilty to careless driving.

Mr Smitherman: On the issue of pleading guilty to careless driving, I had asked you a question about whether you were beyond reproach, whether you'd had any difficulty with the law, and you didn't seem too inclined to lead up to that. So let me just relay the events as I understand them, and you correct me where I may be wrong. I understand that there was an incident in which an informant, if you will, some people in your community, called the local police after they witnessed you in a state of intoxication that they felt might be a risk to the public; that you were driving home from an event; that you stopped at a convenience store, and the people in the convenience store called the police; and that they subsequently appeared at your house. Is that accurate?

Mr Parker: Well, the people who were in the convenience store did not call the police.

Mr Smitherman: They did not?

Mr Parker: Apparently some lady did. I don't know who it was, but I know who it wasn't. Eventually the police came. I was in my house at the time. They hadn't seen me drive. They hadn't seen the car move.

Mr Mazzilli: On a point of order, Mr Chair: If Mr Smitherman is going to go about this kind of questioning, certainly he shouldn't be leading into a statement and asking the witness, if you will, to agree or disagree. If you want his version of what happened, ask him, but don't put words in his mouth by reading some sort of a third- or fourth-hand version of what you have. Careless driving is a provincial offence, like not wearing your seat belt, under provincial legislation. He told you he was not convicted of impaired driving and pleaded guilty to careless driving. Do you want to put every Ontarian through this sort of situation after they've been in court?

Mr Smitherman: Mr Mazzilli, not every Ontarian is being recommended by your government to play a role on a police services board.

Mr Mazzilli: Well, not every Canadian gets appointed as ambassador to Denmark after --

Mr Smitherman: I'm sure that's relevant. If I might, sir, ask you this question: in Quinte West, which is a small community, I think you'd agree that a member of the police services board is a high-profile appointment, and on the issue of the fact that you had charges laid against you by officers in that police service, do you not see the inherent conflict of interest of being seen as someone who on the one hand is asked to go and clean something up while on the other hand having fairly recently been involved in a legal matter with these very same officers? Do you think that, in terms of the goal of cleaning up the Quinte West Police Service, you are in the best position of all the people in that community to be put forward by the government to do that?

Mr Parker: First off, I don't think that being a member of the police services board is a high-profile position; until recently nobody even knew who sat on them. It's only recently, since there has been some difficulty, that it has become somewhat more high-profile. I don't look upon myself as somebody who is going to go in and clean up anything. I hope I would be able to offer some

reasonable, well-judged opinion, but I'm not looking to be on a crusade.

Mr Smitherman: I find your answer is a bit challenging. On the one hand, you say that you don't think the police services board has been high-profile, and yet in your very opening statement you said that a lot of paper has been written on it. So you are acknowledging that at the moment the issue of police services --

Mr Parker: In the very recent past --

Mr Smitherman: Sir, I have not finished my question.

Mr Parker: Sorry.

Mr Smitherman: I think you'd agree that at this time the issue of police service in Quinte West is a very high-profile matter.

Mr Parker: It may be.

Mr Smitherman: And you continue to stand before this committee and suggest, at a time when policing is a high-profile and contentious matter, that you stand as the best possible nominee of the government of Ontario to be on that police services board? Because that's what the appointment process in this province should be suggesting.

Mr Parker: Without question, there may be other people in the city of Trenton or the city of Quinte West who are better than I am. I can't give you their names. But that certainly is a possibility.

The Chair: Further questions? Mr Prue.

Mr Prue: A fairly simple question: you list here that you were on city council for five years. Were you a councillor or a mayor? What were you on city council?

Mr Parker: No, I wasn't mayor. I was chairman of finance for five years.

Mr Prue: Was that an elected position?

Mr Parker: Yes.

Mr Prue: When was that?

Mr Parker: A long time ago; maybe 25 years ago.

Mr Prue: Did city council in those days appoint people to the police services board?

Mr Parker: I don't remember us doing that. It may be that we did back then, but I don't recall that.

Mr Prue: Might it have been the regional government that did it?

Mr Parker: We were a separated town at that time. I presume there had to be a police commission, as I think it was called then. But I don't recall any period, and I was there for five years, when we in fact appointed anybody there. But that's not to say it wasn't done.

Mr Prue: As a city councillor, though, you must have appointed a great many people over five years to many boards and committees of Belleville or Trenton.

Mr Parker: It would have been Trenton.

Mr Prue: Trenton. You must have appointed a great many people to boards and committees. As an example, you said that you were on the community gardens board -

Mr Parker: That was before I was a councillor.

Mr Prue: -- a recreation board and a parks board. They must have all been similar types of appointments that you made.

Mr Parker: I didn't make those.

Mr Prue: Who made them?

Mr Parker: The parks board appointment was made by the mayor and council. It was headed by Ross Burt at that time.

Mr Prue: Perhaps my question wasn't clear enough. I noticed that you were on some of these. Of course, you would have been appointed by the mayor and council, the same way as when you were on council you would have appointed other people as well.

Mr Parker: A similar sort of thing, yes.

Mr Prue: Just in terms of some of the answers you gave, could you explain to me -- because this is a pretty small resumé, although it has a lot of things in it -- what makes you think that you are qualified to sit on such a high-profile board? What do you do that qualifies you?

Mr Parker: I've been involved with the community for quite some while. I've run and operated a manufacturing business for over 50 years. I've been involved with a lot of people in that period of time. I've been active in party politics, both federally and provincially. I never ran as a candidate, but I've been active. I think I'm a people person. I'm sure there are others who are equally as good or better, but I think I can do that job fairly well.

The Chair: No further questions? Mr Mazzilli.

Mr Mazzilli: Sir, thank you very much for appearing today. For all the abuse that you've taken, how much does this job pay?

Mr Parker: I don't know.

Mr Mazzilli: Let me suggest to you that it's likely a volunteer job.

Mr Parker: It could well be. I don't have anything against volunteering.

Mr Mazzilli: That's right, and that's why I appreciate you coming here today. Do you know what the makeup of the Quinte police services board is; how many members?

Mr Parker: Five.

Mr Mazzilli: It's a five-member board. Three of those members are appointed by the municipality?

Mr Parker: As I understand it, the mayor is normally one. If, for whatever reason, he doesn't serve, then a councillor would be appointed to go there. There is one other councillor appointed, and there are two who are appointees of the provincial government.

Mr Mazzilli: That's correct. Certainly the voting power, if you will, remains with the municipality, but you're there to represent the people of Quinte, obviously, in the governance of the police services board. How do you see representing those people? What would be your objective if representing the people of Quinte West?

1340

Mr Parker: At the moment, we're not quite sure if we're going to have our own municipal police force, whether the Ontario Provincial Police are going to take over or whether we're going to amalgamate with the city

of Belleville. As late as last evening they still hadn't come to any conclusions. I think your action would be somewhat different, maybe, if we were with the OPP; I'm not sure just how we would fit there. But I really think our job is to give support to the police force to deal with the chief or the deputy chief, as the two who may be concerned, to try between the group of us to sort things out in an amicable way so we can move forward.

Mr Mazzilli: I thank you for taking on the challenge. That's my final question.

Mr Wettlaufer: Mr Parker, I just want to apologize to you on behalf of all of the members of the Legislature for the rude, aggressive, confrontational line of questioning directed at you by Mr Smitherman. In eight years in this Legislature, I have never heard any MPP direct that kind of questioning at someone who is appearing for an appointment. I think it is the lowest form of gutter politics.

Mr Smitherman: What would your EA say?

The Chair: Do not interrupt, please. Mr Wettlaufer has the floor.

Mr Wettlaufer: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr Johnson.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I was going to start out my questioning by asking if you're the worst criminal in Quinte West, but I wanted you to know that the police service is a very serious and important business in any community. I wanted to know if, with your experiences, that gives you a kind of bias with how you would be looking at your future as a board member with the Quinte police services.

Mr Parker: I don't quite understand your question, sir. Do you mean the fact that I had a run-in with a couple of policemen would affect the rest of my life?

Mr Johnson: Yes, sir, I do.

Mr Parker: I'm not that small.

Mr Johnson: OK. Because one of the things I heard from across the way with the last interviewee was that they thought they should have some experience with the job they were being appointed to. If so, I just wanted to, I guess in a lighthearted manner, say that your experience should be of benefit and a growing experience, and give you a different viewpoint on how your duties would lie in front of you if you succeed in your appointment to this. I wish you well.

The Chair: Any other government questions?

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

The Chair: Thank you very much. Sir, you may step down.

DOUGLAS ROLLINS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Douglas Rollins, intended appointee as member, Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Doug Rollins, intended appointee as member, Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board. Welcome to the government agencies committee, Doug. It's good to see you today.

Mr Douglas Rollins: Thank you. It's nice to be back. It's nice to see some friendly faces.

I want to thank you for giving this privilege to come before the committee. I hope you see fit to support my application to be on the parole board.

A little bit about my background that many of you maybe don't know: I had a small business, a service station and repair business, for some 33 years in Belleville. I was very active in our community, and looked after some children who were having trouble in school as far as classes were concerned, and we continually had people at our business, children who were having a hard time making it in school. We'd give them a little bit of a break in life to have them out dealing with the public.

Previously, when we had a farm out at Corbyville, I was very supportive in putting together a group of people, and there were only four of us, who supported a children's group home in our area because many of the neighbours felt that it was very wrong to have these children who were in trouble in our neighbourhood. We were very successful in keeping that group home there and we were very successful in the rapport that we've had with that group home because they didn't cause a problem in the community, like many of our neighbours thought they were going to. It worked out very well.

True, as far as the parole board is concerned, I'm more familiar with it now than I was before they asked me to put an application in; however, we've learned more about it. I think it has to be looked at from a risk factor, from the risk to society, the risk to the offender we are letting out or who is applying for parole. In my judgment, both in my personal life and my business experience, I can be prepared to make those kinds of decisions, to listen to those people in an unbiased way to be able to give them a fair judgment of whether we should let them out on parole.

As some of you people may not be aware, when you put them out on parole, you do put some conditions on the parole. When you let a person serve their entire time, when they walk out of the institution that day, they're free; there are no strings attached. Putting people on parole, you do keep them on parole for the entire length of that sentence. I think that is a way of bringing them back into our community to make them good citizens again, where you can help guide their needs to bring them back into the community.

Other than that, I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We begin our questions with the third party.

Mr Prue: I have four areas. I'm going to try to canvass them all. The first is that you have listed in your resumé, which are all one-liners, "involved with local and provincial politics." I maybe wouldn't have asked it, but you said it was good to be back.

Mr Rollins: I guess you are probably one of the few in the room, maybe two of you or three, who haven't --

Mr Prue: I've only been here 18 months.

Mr Rollins: I had the pleasure of being here from 1995 to 1999, for four years. So that's what the involve-

ment was there, and I've always been fairly active in our community and provincial and federal politics.

Mr Prue: OK.

Mr Rollins: And if you don't know for sure, I was PC.

Mr Prue: I could have guessed that.

Mr Rollins: OK, all right. I just wanted to make sure.

Mr Prue: I didn't need to ask that question.

This is a job that involves some knowledge of the quasi-judicial process of understanding how boards, especially ones that make such tough decisions, operate. Have you ever worked on or been part of a quasi-judicial process?

Mr Rollins: No, I haven't.

Mr Prue: Have you ever attended quasi-judicial processes?

Mr Rollins: Yes, I have.

Mr Prue: In what capacity?

Mr Rollins: I have attended different hearings, when I was a member of Parliament and also in my own private life, to listen to some of the judgments that have been made by other people. I think that is a reflection, so to speak, of my common sense, of being a citizen and wanting to serve my community and to look after the interests of my community. I'm not interested in having people on the street who are going to cause my community a problem, but I'm also quite interested in making sure that there are people out there who should be back out on the street, to help them realign their lives and make sure they are good people of society.

Mr Prue: The second thing that this involves is the writing of legal decisions. You have to write the decisions in a legal way that will withstand the scrutiny of the chair and possibly the courts. Have you ever had any experience writing legal decisions?

Mr Rollins: No, I haven't, but we will be getting some training in that factor to be able to write those requests out -- the risk factors for approval or for rejection, either one.

Mr Prue: I note -- we got some research and information -- that the number of people being granted parole has significantly declined from some 52% 12 years ago down to 29% -- it's a little over half of what it was -- while at the same time the reoffending rate has doubled in that same period. Any comment on that?

Mr Rollins: The only thing is at the present time, under the way the laws have been changed -- I think they were changed in approximately 1996, if my memory serves me right -- there's a large number of people now not asking for parole for the simple reason that when they are excused on two-thirds of the time they serve, then they walk out of that door with no strings attached. A lot of people would rather stay that extra 10, 20 or 30 days or whatever it is to be able to walk away with no strings attached than ask for parole. When they are put on parole, there are generally some restrictions that are put on to them that they have to live with for a longer period of time. It's the people who are in the system who choose whether to apply for parole or not.

1350

Mr Prue: Do you think more people should be paroled?

Mr Rollins: I think everyone has to be looked at as an individual. I think you have to look at them as individuals. The biggest question is, are they a danger to society? Is there a danger that they will reoffend? If those risks are there, then I think you have to make that decision from those points. I don't think you can pre-judge whether there should be 28% out or 55% out.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We move to the government. Mr Wettlaufer is first; Mr Mazzilli is second.

Mr Wettlaufer: Good to see you again. Doug, you know my feeling, I believe, on parole. We had another prospective appointee -- I don't know if she was appointed or not -- here a couple of weeks ago. I told her, and I will tell you, that I have a very strong belief that if people commit a crime, they do the time. I'm not a fan of paroles.

I notice that we have had a steady increase in the reoffending rate of parolees from 1997-98 to the present day. It has gone from 2.3% to 3.7%, so it has increased 50%. In the ministry's business plan for 2002-03, the ministry has set a performance target of achieving a reoffending rate of less than 4.5%. That would actually entail a worsening of performance from the present 3.7%. The auditor recommended that the board set a much more stringent target. I wonder if you have a comment on that.

Mr Rollins: There again, I think that on any kind of board that you join, you have to look after each one as an individual that you have before you. I think that is the criterion that you need to look after, rather than making quotas and numbers. It's easy to say it's 50% higher. Well, if you start out with two and you double it to three, it's 50% higher. I think when you look at the numbers who really do reoffend, 7% of 500-and-some people who were let out last year, or 35, have reoffended. Does that mean that the other 400-and-some-odd people who didn't reoffend maybe got back into society because there was some parole and because they were asked to meet some conditions under parole, like going to AA, going to anger management, taking up defensive driving training if it's a driving problem, or, if it's a break-and-enter, that there are some things they can be taught?

If we can bring those people back out into society and put them as paying members to society rather than a detriment on society in keeping them, I don't know where we -- I know your feeling is that you want to think that you do the time, you'll be there. Is it any advantage to that person whether he's done 60 days or whether he does 90 days? The thing is that when he does the 90 days and he is let out free with no strings attached, maybe he goes out and reoffends again quicker. Those people who do that are a higher rate of reoffenders than the people who are basically granted parole.

Mr Mazzilli: Mr Rollins, thank you for appearing. I'm certainly impressed at your answers both for Mr Prue and Mr Wettlaufer, because you didn't bite at the num-

bers. I'm impressed by that, because you can make these numbers do whatever you want them to do. If you have fewer people getting parole, obviously the reoffending rate -- you're dealing with the hardened criminal -- is going to double. It's going to be higher. You have fewer people getting parole, and you're going to have some hardened criminals out there. The likelihood of them re-offending when they get out is going to be slightly higher. So you certainly didn't bite on that argument.

The one thing that the parole board has taken very seriously in Ontario is people getting treatment and completing programs. Without those programs, you will not get parole. Substance abuse, as we have heard, is an enormous problem, so if they have not gone through the program for substance abuse, there is no point in the parole board allowing someone to receive parole. Obviously they're going to reoffend; they're still addicts. Although it's likely not the best solution to keep them in jail, in many of those cases, by keeping them in jail you're also keeping those people alive, because of their substance abuse. So good luck with your challenge on this board of review.

Mr Rollins: Thank you.

Mr Johnson: I'd like to say "Doug" if I could. I was going to ask you if you were a member of the Conservative Party now or ever had been in the past and so on. That was taken away from me in the questioning. I was going to ask you if you thought that in order to be a board member with the Ontario parole board you should have been on parole yourself at any time. That's out of my hands as well.

I just wanted you to know that I sat beside you for a couple of years in this Legislature and I know you're no bleeding heart. But I also know that you contemplate and think about what you do and the decisions you make very carefully and that you deliberate on your decisions. So I just wanted you to know that I have absolutely no hesitation in voting for your appointment to this board.

Mr Rollins: Thank you, Bert. I appreciate that.

Mr Smitherman: Mr Rollins, my condolences, not only for the fact that you had to sit beside Bert Johnson for two years but for what your bullet point resumé leaves out: that you were a Tory MPP. It also leaves out that you were a contestant for the Tory nomination to run again this time. So tell me how it is that you're before this committee today. Is this a consolation prize?

Mr Rollins: No, I don't think so. One of the appointees on the board, and our neighbour at the present time, Ted Parker -- not the Ted Parker who was here, but a person who is on the parole board at the present time -- I know that his time is expiring this summer. I want to be part of our community, and as a citizen I felt I could contribute something toward it and therefore I put an application in.

Mr Smitherman: Mr Mazzilli said, "... make these numbers do whatever you want them to do." He thinks that you can make any number dance and say what you want. I want to try a number out on you. Are you aware that 51 other former candidates and MPPs for the

Conservatives since 1995 have been appointed to government agencies, boards and commissions?

Mr Rollins: Has that made the board better or worse?

Mr Smitherman: Interestingly, in this format I get to ask you the questions.

Mr Rollins: Oh, I see. OK.

Mr Smitherman: Does that number --

The Chair: Actually, I should say, Mr Smitherman --

Mr Smitherman: Well, he doesn't have to choose to answer, but I --

The Chair: -- the nominee can answer in whatever way he sees fit.

Mr Smitherman: Your resumé shows no background in criminology, any experience with parole or early release programs. You've obviously done a little bit of reading in the last 10 or 15 minutes or longer. But interestingly, during your four years in the Ontario Legislature you never made any single reference whatsoever to parole. So is this just a new experience for you, boning up for today's presentation?

Mr Rollins: No, I don't think so. Having watched television and the channel here periodically -- have you made any statements on parole in the Legislature? I haven't heard you making them. I'm not saying you haven't made them, but I haven't heard you making them. I think when I was in government I stood up and talked on things that I was interested in, and at that time it was some different things.

Mr Smitherman: So this is a new-found interest?

Mr Rollins: It is new-found, per se, but I think it's something that our community needs and we need to be part of it.

Mr Smitherman: My last question would be: in a previous appointee we got a fairly good sense that the government whip, I think he is, Dr Galt, was a proponent for a candidate's moving forward. We heard that Mr Klees had been involved in an earlier one. What was your route of contact to this proposed appointment?

Mr Rollins: My route of contact was to send it to the appointments board. Having been here, I know that's the procedure it goes through, so that's whom I sent it to.

Mr Smitherman: Any phone calls or personal contact with any elected member of the Legislature around this?

Mr Rollins: No.

Mr Smitherman: None whatsoever?

Mr Rollins: None whatsoever.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good afternoon, Mr Rollins. You made some reference in your remarks that you understand that people who would be appointed to this board would receive some kind of training. Are you aware that the auditor has in fact significantly questioned the value of that training and has suggested that probably members of the board should also have a role in determining who would be on the parole and earned release board; in other words, there's really no way to assess whether the training you would be receiving is in fact preparation that really is valid?

1400

Mr Rollins: We have received some training and we'll be getting more, because we have started into the process --

Mrs Dombrowsky: Even before you're appointed?

Mr Rollins: Well, yes, because there was a process going on previously and we spent a few days on information, what's going on -- those courses that are being put on are by people who had previously been chairs of the parole hearings.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Just so that I'm clear, before you are appointed, you go through training?

Mr Rollins: As soon as my appointment went in, we started to receive information about parole, so I had to read up on it. It's probably about this thick, so it wasn't something that could be put in for a matter of one or two days' reading; it was more than that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: With respect, Mr Rollins, you've indicated you know the process. You should know that your appointment isn't valid until this committee votes on it.

Mr Rollins: That's true.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So the point that I think is important to be made is that you're being trained for a role you have not yet been appointed to.

You have indicated in your remarks that you obviously were a member of the Progressive Conservative government. Would it be fair to say that you wholeheartedly support everything this government does?

Mr Rollins: Absolutely not. I didn't when I was here and I still don't.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with this headline from the Belleville Intelligencer, April 26? It says, "Tories Lied Says Rollins."

Mr Rollins: Yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Can you perhaps tell us about what that headline refers to?

Mr Rollins: Yes. In 1995 or 1996, I believe -- what's the date on that?

Mrs Dombrowsky: It's 1996.

Mr Rollins: In 1996, when the education system was under change, our school board in Hastings county said that they had given pink slips to everybody who were teachers. Our member of Parliament at the present time, who was then chair of the board of Hastings county, Mr Parsons -- I believe you know who he is -- gave out pink slips to every teacher we had. The statement I made at Trenton High School was that if we had fewer teachers teaching in Hastings county after we had made our adjustments to it, then this government had lied. But the fact of the matter was, when it was all said and done, we didn't have fewer teachers; we had as many, if not more. The thing we did have fewer of was students. That was where they picked up the idea that, yes, the government had lied. I would back it up 100% that we as a government did not lie to the people of Hastings county in saying that we had fewer teachers in our system before than after. We had fewer students, but per teacher we had

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Mrs Dombrowsky: You were asked by a student to clarify your remarks. In fact, you are quoted as saying, "Yup, on that part, we did lie."

Mr Rollins: If that was to be. But it never did get to happen.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The point that I would suggest I'm trying to make here, Mr Rollins, is that you are being appointed to a quasi-judicial role, a role that should inspire some confidence in the people who would go there to seek a fair hearing. I guess I personally have some very serious concern, particularly given the quasi-judicial nature of the role to which you are intended to be appointed, that you suggest in very public forums that people lie, and whether you make an excuse for it or not, I do have some problem with that. I think that even within the community there may be some question around how solid you would be in this particular role.

Mr Rollins: If you want to ask some of my neighbours how solid Doug Rollins thinks he is or isn't, I'd feel free to let you go ahead and do that. My record is what it is and I'm not beyond standing up and saying exactly what I feel. If I don't agree with something, I'm not beyond saying I don't.

The Chair: I think that completes all the questions. Thank you very much, Mr Rollins, for being with us today. It's good to see you again. You may step down. The committee will now deliberate, as we say.

Mr Rollins: I hope you give it the right thought. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for being with us.

We will deal with the appointments review now. The first appointment is Rhea Sutherland, intended appointee as member, Social Benefits Tribunal.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence. To begin with, any discussion of this appointment?

Mr Smitherman: Yes. I would want to put on the record opposition on the part of the opposition party to this appointment. I think in testimony before the committee the intended appointee clearly indicated that she got here by political means. In my observation, that is the primary reason her candidacy has been brought forward: by her political connection to the PC Party, by the fact that her husband was last night nominated to run in a Toronto-area riding. Her association with Frank Klees from a golf course is where this was initiated.

I think under questioning she also exhibited a very narrow basis from which to be taking on responsibilities that are, for too many Ontarians, life and death. So we'll be voting against it and I'd ask for a recorded vote.

The Chair: Other speakers, please.

Mr Wood: I think that Ms Sutherland showed both the business background and the personal background that give her the potential to be a very good member of this board, so I, for one, am going to support it.

Mr Mazzilli: Likewise, Mr Chair. I just want to state for the record that what I heard and obviously from the resumé there is a strong background in nursing. When we look at the Social Benefits Tribunal, many of the people,

through no fault of their own, because of a mental illness, fall into going before a board like this and pleading their case. Someone not only with strong management skills and financial skills but with the compassion and insight on mental illness is an asset that is hard to come by. So I will be supporting this appointment.

Mr Wettlaufer: I can only say that I am offended by the tone of the comments made by Mr Smitherman. I think it displays a total lack of understanding that a woman today, with this woman's qualifications, can be independent of her husband. I thought we crossed that bridge 30 years ago, for heaven's sakes. To think that because a woman is married to someone who has been nominated -- not even elected -- for a political position, that she should be automatically discounted regardless of her qualifications and her abilities -- I'm sorry, I find it very offensive. I know the people in my riding find it very offensive and I believe the people in Ontario find it very offensive. I would say that I will be supporting her.

The Chair: Any others?

Mr Prue: I must admit that I do have a little bit of a problem with this application, and it's not because of who she is married to or what party she may or may not belong to. It's that the whole basis of the application appears to be outside the realm of what we hope the appointee will do. This is someone who, I would suggest, needs a very strong basis in social policy, someone who would have worked as a social worker or within the community most of their lives to gain the experience that would be necessary to sit in judgment on people who are at marginal levels in society. I do not see this here. What I heard is a strong business background, not only from the applicant but by those who are supporting the application. I must say that from the answers to the questions, I'm not sure that that strong basis in business background is there and I'm not even sure that it's appropriate.

I will not be speaking, I don't think, against the other two applications, but I think this one here is weak and there could be better candidates.

The Chair: Any other interventions? If not, I will call a vote. I've been asked for a recorded vote by Mr Smitherman so we will call the vote on this application on the motion by Mr Wood.

AYES

Johnson, Mazzilli, Wettlaufer, Wood.

NAYS

Dombrowsky, Prue, Smitherman.

The Chair: The motion is carried.

The next individual is Edwin Morton Parker, intended appointee as member, Quinte West Police Services Board.

1410

Mr Wood: I ask that the consideration of this be deferred to the next meeting.

The Chair: A request has been made that consideration be deferred to the next meeting and that is accepted. That is an acceptable request.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Could I just ask that you remind us what in fact that means; that we will be voting on it at the next meeting?

The Chair: That is correct.

Mrs Dombrowsky: We don't have an opportunity to make any comments on it today, but when we vote on it?

The Chair: I'll ask our clerk. Does that mean there's no comment, no debate?

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Anne Stokes): It will be moved at the next meeting.

The Chair: It will be moved at the next meeting. Whatever motion is forthcoming next meeting, there would be an opportunity for comment and a vote at that time. It has to be within seven days, I'm informed.

Mr Wood: We might seek unanimous consent to simply put it over to the next meeting.

The Chair: Yes, that is something we can --

Mr Wood: Maybe I'll ask unanimous consent that it be put over to the next meeting of the committee.

Mr Smitherman: No. Why would we?

Mr Wood: Otherwise, you have to meet in a week. It goes over a week or to the next meeting.

The Chair: A request has been made. Are you putting that in the form of a motion?

Mr Wood: I would ask for unanimous consent that this be deferred to the next meeting.

Interjections: Agreed.

The Chair: It has been agreed that this shall be considered at the next meeting.

Mr Wood: Thank you.

The Chair: The next intended appointee is Doug Rollins, intended appointee as member, Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Rollins.

The Chair: Concurrence has been moved.

Mr Johnson: Mr Chairman, just so that I don't ever be accused of lying -- I said I'd support him -- I'd like this as a recorded vote, please.

The Chair: Yes, we would certainly comply with that request.

First of all, any comment on Mr Rollins's appointment from members of the committee?

Mr Smitherman: We reject the notion that Mr Rollins stands out as the best candidate for appointment to this body. On the important matter of dealing with issues of parole, we think there needs to be a higher test than who you know and where you once served. Mr Rollins's appointment fits in rather well with the theme around here today, which is that you've got to be a Tory insider to move up the ranks in Ontario.

That he's been a public servant in his community is important and it's noteworthy, but the fact of the matter is that within the last few months he sought political

office in Ontario for the PC Party. He failed at his task of winning his party's nomination and coincidentally he throws together a bio of one-half page of one-liners to try and create the impression that he's ready to serve in this way. I think that on the eve of an election, in a desperate move by a government to reward their followers, it would send the wrong message about what we do with important jobs in Ontario to support Mr Rollins's intended appointment. I'll be voting against it.

Mr Wettlaufer: Methinks Mr Smitherman doth protest too much. He obviously hasn't been around Liberal politics long enough to remember that during the era of the David Peterson government, the David Peterson government made so many appointments based on no qualifications other than the appointment being a member of the Liberal Party that it was awful. It's really humorous that you would say what you have just said. It's ridiculous.

Interjection.

The Chair: Please do not interrupt.

Mr Wettlaufer: The people of my riding, I'm sure, would say it's something else, but I can't say that.

Interjections.

The Chair: Order. Mr Wettlaufer has the floor.

Mr Wettlaufer: Not any more; I'm done. Thank you.

Mr Mazzilli: I certainly want to add my support to Mr Rollins and remind the people of Ontario what these boards do and how they are represented. It's our feeling that you appoint people of all walks of life to boards and commissions. But the one thing we've forgotten in the abuse that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals dish out is that many of these appointments are volunteer positions. People come forward who want to represent their community on a police services board or on a hospital board of some sort, certainly with some profile, but with no money.

On the Ontario parole board, part-time members -- do you know what that pays? It pays \$135 a day to drive somewhere, to hear a parole and to make a decision; and to undergo training on your own time, to read materials. We're asking many retired people to give of their time, with some expertise, and all for what? The abuse that Dalton McGuinty and George Smitherman want to drag their names through the mud. That's what they continue to do. Dalton McGuinty is running around the province right now, saying he's going to increase taxes on just about everybody: seniors; you have tobacco taxes going up. There isn't anyone he's not going to screw by the time this is over.

Mr Chair, on that, I certainly will be supporting Mr Rollins.

The Chair: And I won't say what's in your pocket up there.

Mr Prue.

Mr Prue: I have listened to the arguments pro and con. To tell you the truth, I don't believe that belonging to a political party should be either a goal to get you an appointment or a hindrance from ever accepting one. One has to look at who the person is and what the

qualifications are. When I read the resumé I didn't know what the qualifications were. I will tell you, sir, that I will write "MPP" till the day I die on anything I do. I think you should be very proud to have been here for four years. I think it should be there. In my mind, that does not detract in any way from your ability to do this job.

I have to tell you that I was impressed with the way you answered my question. I was posing a question to see whether you were some hard-nosed guy who was going to stop parolees from getting out, and you danced around it quite well. I think you answered it appropriately. It certainly was the way I would answer it. I'm going to support your application.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm very concerned because this is a quasi-judicial role, one of great significance to anyone and everyone who comes before the board. I think they expect and would like to have some confidence that the people who will be hearing their cases, number one, might have had some experience in assessing past histories and understanding psychology. There are a variety of experiences that I think would be very appropriate background for someone intended to be appointed to this role. Unfortunately, I don't see in the resumé of Mr Rollins any of those that would stand out.

I am also concerned by the fact that in a role of some significant responsibility -- I thought it was a lapse of good judgment that the kind of headline I noted would have been attributed to an individual. I think that it very fairly gives me grounds to question his ability to make good decisions, particularly under pressure or under duress. For that reason I'm not able to support this particular appointment.

Also, the Provincial Auditor has flagged for us that the kind of training that is in place at the present time may not be adequate to ensure that people in this very important quasi-judicial role are appropriately prepared for the work they're required to do.

Mr Mazzilli: I just want to continue in this debate about people coming before this board for appointments. Again, we've heard many people come before us who applied for volunteer positions. The opposition talks about some people who are not qualified. The entire purpose of these boards is to have the community represented: how would the average person make a decision on the parole board? We see what Corrections Canada does. They appoint all the experts, and they let everybody out, they send them to jail at Club Fed institutions with golf courses and so on. We won't accept that in Ontario and we won't accept that kind of parole system.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Mazzilli. It's always great to hear from you.

Are there any other members of the committee who want to discuss this or anything else? If not, we're going to call a vote, and Mr Johnson asked for a recorded vote.

AYES

Johnson, Mazzilli, Prue, Wettlaufer, Wood.

NAYS

Dombrowsky, Smitherman.

The Chair: The motion is carried.

Other business similar to the business raised by Mr Wood. Mr Wood, as the government whip on this committee, we have three people -- Linda Franklin, John McLellan Johnson and Diane Mavrinac-Ross -- who are scheduled to come forward. We're looking at the next meeting, but we may need some extensions if we're not going to be meeting soon.

Mr Wood: I would ask for unanimous consent to extend the time for consideration of those three individuals by 30 days.

The Chair: Is unanimous consent granted? It is. We've had a 30-day extension on those.

Any other business? For the date of the next meeting, the Legislature is not due back probably till May 1, where we would actually sit. Our committee wouldn't be until the first full week of May, if it were then. We could have another meeting before then, if the members of the committee decide they want to meet before then. Any suggestions, Mr Wood?

Mr Wood: I'd lean toward a meeting. How many names do we have that have been submitted to the committee and haven't been dealt with -- three? I'd be inclined to take a crack at bringing us up to date before the Legislature comes back.

The Chair: What I will do, then, is have the clerk consult with the three caucuses to see what date might be mutually acceptable to all of us, if that is OK with the committee.

Any other business before the committee? If not, I'll accept a motion of adjournment.

Mr Wood: So moved.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved adjournment of the committee. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you, members of the committee.

The committee adjourned at 1421.

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