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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 11 January 2005

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 11 janvier 2005

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Susan Sourial

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Tuesday 11 January 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Mardi 11 janvier 2005

The committee met at 1107 in committee room 1.

The Chair (Mr Tim Hudak): I'm going to call our meeting of the standing committee on government agencies to order. First, welcome back, everybody. I hope everybody had a very nice Christmas and New Year's and Hanukkah, and nice celebrations with friends and family back in the ridings.

Interjections.

The Chair: Ms Scott and Mr Tascona are already, off the top, causing trouble to my left.

We have a relatively ambitious agenda today. We have hearings, our last one at 4:30. You may have noticed that we did have a couple of cancellations, so there is a bit more of a gap. There's a recess at 1 and then we're scheduled to reconvene at 3, as opposed to originally at 2 o'clock.

Secondly, because of water damage, we needed to move from the Amethyst Room to committee room 1. That having been said, translation services are still available for those who want to use them. I understand the translation services are monitoring this and are doing the active translation as we speak.

The other thing, and we can talk about this a bit, is that the tradition would be to do concurrence after we've completed all of the individual intended appointments. If folks have other views, we could adapt the schedule accordingly, but that's where I'll start as a presumption.

Mr Gravelle?

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Happy new year to you too, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr Gravelle: It makes sense to me, if possible, if there is agreement by all the members, to maybe move adoption after the session between 11 and 1 and get those done with, and then take the second part. It's been done before, and I think probably it would work as well, as long as you're all comfortable with that.

The Chair: I'm fine with that. Any other thoughts on that?

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): Mr Chair, what's he proposing?

The Chair: When we move to concurrence of the intended appointees, Mr Gravelle's suggestion was that we do the ones from the morning before our recess, so we'd do those four approximately between 12:30 and 1.

Mr Tascona: I'm in agreement with that.

The Chair: OK. Thank you, Mr Gravelle, for the suggestion. We will proceed in that manner.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair: I'll move forward. Our first order of business on the agenda is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, December 16, 2004. All members of the committee should have been provided with a copy of that report.

Anybody to move adoption? Mr Berardinetti moves adoption of that report. Any discussion?

Mr Tascona: I move adoption.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti beat you to that, but you could maybe move adoption of the next one if you like.

All in favour of its adoption? Any opposed? It is carried.

Order of business 2: the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, December 23, 2004. Mr Tascona moves its adoption?

Mr Tascona: Yes, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Tascona.

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I'll second that.

The Chair: Seconded by Mr Berardinetti.

Is there any discussion on the business report for the December 23 session? Seeing no discussion, all in favour? Any in opposition? None. The motion is carried.

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COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair: The third item is extension of deadlines. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)11, unanimous consent is required by the committee to extend the 30-day deadline for consideration for the following intended appointees: John M. Solursh, intended appointee to the Financial Services Commission of Ontario; Carol S. Perry, intended appointee to the Ontario Securities Commission; Sherene Shaw, intended appointee to the Social Benefits Tribunal; Su Murdoch, intended appointee to the Conservation Review Board; Maxine Coopersmith, intended appointee to Cancer Care Ontario.

Any discussion on this extension motion? Do I have unanimous consent from members of the committee? Thank you very much. We have unanimous consent to extend those deadlines to February 15, 2005.

Members have also been provided with a letter to Minister Chambers, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, signed by my Vice-Chair, Ms Horwath, following up on the meeting of December 15. All

members have been provided with that letter. I think the letter is according to the discussion that took place that day: a very good point of information.

Any other business before we proceed with the first intended appointee?

Mr Tascona: Just something minor. There's the memorandum to the clerk re the order-in-council appointments memo of December 3, the withdrawal of Thomas Little for the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp board of directors, and then Victoria Gerra from the Ontario Review Board. I'm not really clear what you mean by "withdrawn." Are they not going to be considered by this committee at all?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms Susan Sourial): The candidates have withdrawn their names.

Mr Tascona: Oh, is that right? OK. Thank you. That's all I wanted to know.

The Chair: Any other business? Thanks very much, folks.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

ANNE HOLBROOK

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Dr Anne M. Holbrook, intended appointee as member, Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee.

The Chair: We will proceed to our first intended appointee. The first, and we thank her for her patience, is Dr Anne Holbrook. Dr Holbrook is an intended appointee as a member of the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee, the very important and dreaded DQTC. Dr Holbrook, welcome to the committee.

Dr Anne M. Holbrook: Thank you.

The Chair: You have an opportunity to make some initial remarks about your qualifications and your interest in this position, and then members of the committee will have an opportunity to ask you any questions related to the intended appointment. With the assistance of the clerk, I begin questions with—

Interjection.

The Chair: The official opposition.

Dr Holbrook, the floor is yours.

Dr Holbrook: This is a reappointment. I'm not sure if the committee is aware, but I have been sitting on DQTC for about six years now, so this will be the second reappointment to the committee.

I think the reason I'm being reappointed is that the experience and training that I have is unique in Ontario, so it's very difficult to get well-qualified people to sit on this committee. For those of you who are not aware, this is the expert advisory committee to the drug programs branch of the Ministry of Health. There are about 12 members—mostly physicians, some pharmacists as well. We review primarily the cost-effectiveness of drugs, and their level of review is considerably beyond what's applied to, I think, probably any other aspect of practice. Certainly in health care it's well beyond what's applied

to other areas. The reason the drugs are under scrutiny, as probably many of you know, is that they are the most rapidly progressing cost sector in health care, so they continue at about 16%. With the new biologics coming down the pipeline, that's going to be a continuing struggle. There are very few clinical pharmacologists in Ontario, and even fewer who are trained to do this kind of economic evaluation and appraisal. I think primarily that's why I've been reappointed.

Just to summarize, I brought a short CV. Someone had asked me to provide one, so I have it with me and I'd be happy to provide it to the committee.

I'm the director of clinical pharmacology at McMaster University and trained in internal medicine, clinical pharmacology and clinical epidemiology, which is about research methods and appraising the literature. I'll stop there.

I'll mention some other appointments that might be relevant. I also sit on the Canadian Expert Drug Advisory Committee; this has been going on for a year or so. I guess it's relevant to say that probably the Ontario model has become the Canadian model, and a lot of your tax dollars go to pay for that level of drug review. That now takes care of the new drugs coming on the market, and Ontario, at the DQTC level, is left with more time to try to deal with improving the quality of prescribing and the cost-effectiveness of prescribing. That's a recent innovation.

I also sit on the formulary committees at the regional and local levels, deciding which drugs to approve and make available for patients.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr Holbrook, and on behalf of the committee, thank you for your brief 23-page CV.

Dr Holbrook: You have the big one.

The Chair: Any questions from the official opposition?

Mr Tascona: Thank you for coming here today. Being a McMaster University graduate, I'm very impressed by your CV. I think you're going to add a lot to this particular advisory panel.

We brought you here because of your expertise, and obviously you have some in this area. If I could ask you a few questions, and I know our time is limited, and if you can be as responsive as possible, I'd appreciate it.

We've heard from Fabry patients and other experts that the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee is not an appropriate vehicle to review catastrophic treatments such as those for Fabry's disease. Would you agree?

Dr Holbrook: No. I think Fabry's disease is a very good example. It's a very rare condition with, to date, no real true disease-modifying drugs available. That's not unique to Fabry's; that's very common. Virtually every disease you look at—and many, virtually all, are much more common—have no true cures and very few disease-modifying treatments. The Fabry's disease group, because it's small, readily identified and has a very active lobby group on their behalf, I think is to be commended. The public consumers should be more involved in their efforts to seek the drugs they need. Unfortunately in this

case, this is reviewed at the CEDAC level rather than the Ontario level. It's re-reviewed at the Ontario level, so I'm well aware of the situation with the drugs for Fabry's from the CEDAC perspective as well. They don't make the threshold that we typically apply in terms of cost-effectiveness.

The primary problem, and this is what I mentioned about the new generation of biologics coming to the market for every condition we have, is that the industry is bringing these products out at approximately 10 to 20, and sometimes several hundred, times the cost of previous drugs without the attending evidence we need to show that they're actually effective enough to be worth that cost.

For example, a year's worth of Fabry's treatment costs \$300,000, and that's a treatment without good evidence that it actually saves the important morbidity that Fabry's patients have.

Mr Tascona: Let me ask you that, then. Do you think that Fabrazyme should be funded?

Dr Holbrook: Fabrazyme has come to the Canadian committee before. You can look up the consensus on the Web, but my recollection is that it was unanimously turned down.

Mr Tascona: Do you agree with that?

Dr Holbrook: I'm part of the committee.

Mr Tascona: Well, I'll make sure.

Dr Holbrook: Yes. I think there is something to be done about what we call orphan drugs and orphan diseases, of which Fabry's is one, but I think that is not our role. We're the drug expert committee. We look at things in terms of effectiveness and economics. That is our expertise. The societal consideration beyond that is, in this very extreme and unusual case—and we have many patients that I take care of in hospital as well that are very extreme and unusual—should society pay for treatment for that individual or those few individuals? I think those sorts of decisions are not so much at the level of the committee; they need more societal involvement. A group like this should potentially be part of that as well.

Mr Tascona: I'll pass my time to Ms Scott, if I could.

Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): Thank you for appearing here today. You are on the CDR and you're just going on the DQTC?

Dr Holbrook: No. I've already been on the DQTC for six years. It's just a reappointment.

Ms Scott: Sorry, I just wanted to clarify that.

Dr Holbrook: The CDR is the working group, so that's the in-house secretariat within CCOHTA that does the legwork. I'm on the expert advisory committee that makes the decision based on the information the CDR comes up with.

I don't know if you know, but Ontario is part of a big endeavour across the country that's part of the national pharmaceutical strategy to get together a Canadian formulary committee. So CDR is basically a collection of federal and provincial ministries.

Ms Scott: I'm just going to review: So drugs go through three phases at the clinical trials. Health Canada

has a fast-track approval process and that allows the breakthrough drugs to be conditionally approved after phase 2 if they treat life-threatening conditions and no other treatment options exist. But the Common Drug Review has refused to endorse any of these medicines for drug plan use. The CDR says it can't evaluate a drug that has been fast-tracked.

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So it seems to be a bit of a Catch-22 situation. Health Canada acknowledges an urgent need for these medicines, but provincial governments are dragging their heels a bit with the help from the CDR. I know you addressed it a bit with Fabry's, but what do you think the DQTC can do to help patients with life-threatening diseases to get their hands on these medicines?

Dr Holbrook: I'll just remind you that Ontario's the most generous province in the country in terms of providing drugs, and that's probably as it should be. Alberta probably could be a bit more generous, by comparison of wealth.

The mandates are different. Health Canada is about, "Should this drug be on the market at all? Should it ever be available, other than investigative purposes, to Canadians?" The mandate's much more difficult after that.

I think it's relatively easy—and it's not easy, but it's relatively easy to say, "This drug is sufficiently effective and safe to be available to some people." Health Canada makes no arrangements to determine that those right people get that drug—so witness the withdrawals, including VIOXX, that you've seen. So we've got a big problem targeting drugs to the right patients.

The mandate then goes on to CDR, where CEDAC comes in, and then DQTC as well. Is this a drug that's sufficiently effective, sufficiently safe, and worth spending all of this money on for the public plan to pay?

Of course, in other countries where the public plan is not large, that doesn't matter a whole lot, but in Canada it matters a lot because so much of our health care is publicly funded.

I think it's the difference between, "There is a disease, there is a need for some therapy in this area," versus, "The public plan should pay for this drug because it meets very well accepted thresholds of cost-effectiveness."

To get back to your fast-track, if a drug comes to the market fast-tracked, then it comes to CEDAC fast-tracked. So it's not true that there's any sort of delay at the CEDAC level. In fact, CDR has very strict rules about how quickly they have to turn around drug decisions. The difficulty is that the drugs that are fast-tracked by Health Canada—for example, HIV drugs are virtually always fast-tracked, but there are actually many drugs to treat HIV.

In terms of cost-effectiveness, our opinion, that I can recall, has been that they're not sufficiently cost-effective compared to the drugs that are already available. I think that's the difference. It really hinges on the cost-effectiveness of the product.

Ms Scott: OK. Thank you.

There are three classes of approval in Ontario: general benefit, limited use, and those that are available under section 8.

The government now sends rejection letters, apparently, stating that certain medicines will not be available under section 8. So it suggests that patients can no longer be assured that their appeals will be considered for all drugs. You mentioned HIV and AIDS, and certainly cancer treatments fall into that. Is it your understanding that all drugs are still available to patients under section 8?

Dr Holbrook: There are very few products. You'd have to ask the drug programs. There is a very large section 8 part of the ministry. I neglected to follow up on that in your last question, too. So if a drug is not deemed cost-effective at all in any identifiable subgroup—because the identifiable subgroup gets the limited use status—then it goes to section 8 in Ontario.

Many provinces don't even have such a designation. So if it doesn't meet the formulary—and this is very common internationally. In Australia, the whole country is run like this. If it doesn't get on the formulary, it's not paid for at all by the public plan—so just to get back to Ontario being a very generous province.

Within the drug programs branch, there's an enormous effort made that if a letter is written that makes the case for this patient—it has to be by the physician who's treating the patient—and explains what the patient has already taken and why they need this particular product, it's very common for that drug to be funded in the individual case.

There are a few products we've evaluated at DQTC where it's very clear that there are usually at least a half-dozen other products. There's absolutely no reason to provide this additional drug. In other words, there's not a case that can be made that this patient has failed all the rest and would definitely respond to this drug. So there are a few cases where the drug is not provided at all, but I think those are really in a very small minority.

Ms Scott: So DQTC's role is in approving section 8, or should it be changed?

Dr Holbrook: No. There's a large formulary modernization undertaking going on right now. Part of it is to look at section 8 and what section 8 should really be providing, how the drugs should be evaluated once they're sent to section 8.

The Chair: Ms Horwath?

Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Welcome, Dr Holbrook. It's certainly my pleasure to meet you, as somebody who is very accomplished in your short, brief CV here, particularly because a lot of your skills are benefiting my community of Hamilton and the health care facilities that I attend as a patient many times.

I want to ask you a little bit more, particularly in regard to the Ontario Medical Association. The previous questions talked about specific drugs and specific illnesses, diseases and conditions. I wanted to get a perspective from you on what your opinion is on the thing you mentioned in your opening remarks; that is, the escalating cost of prescription drugs within the cost of

medical care—the cost for Ontario and of course across Canada. Particularly, do you have any feelings or opinions about whether Canadians or Ontarians are being overprescribed at this point in time, and if that's what's leading to these escalating costs?

Dr Holbrook: Actually, I think that's relatively small. At one time very early in my career it was kind of the mantra of clinical pharmacologists that there was a lot of overprescribing and polypharmacy—the prescribing of multiple drugs to patients is actually a bad thing. Unfortunately, the scenario has reversed entirely. It's probably more common that drugs are underprescribed. The difficulty is, if it's the eighth or ninth medicine that you need for your diabetes or vascular disease, can you actually take all those medicines effectively?

The huge problem now is having all these medicines that we know are effective and cost-effective actually taken by the patient. I think there's probably more underprescribing than overprescribing. There's probably overprescribing in a few areas, but if you look overall at what's important for the health care of people in Ontario, the important drug groups, you can show consistently that relatively there's underprescribing.

I think the cost overruns—by the way, I would encourage everyone to read Marcia Angell's book, *The Truth About the Drug Companies*, which I think is very good. There is a big problem with the pricing of pharmaceuticals right now. In my opinion the number one problem is the price.

Ms Horwath: Just for clarification's sake, when you were describing your position on that, are you saying that when there are a number of drugs a person has to take—for example, for a vascular situation that worsens over time—there are issues around how each drug may react to the others in this group of eight or nine drugs that a person is required to take?

Dr Holbrook: Yes. Typically that's not well studied. One of our latest research initiatives is a concept called prioritization. So of eight drugs that are very effective for diabetes, what should be the order of priority? We know patients probably don't take half the drugs they are prescribed, so it's a real problem figuring out how we can get this effective pharmacology applied to each patient so they get the maximum benefit; otherwise, that's another area of waste of resources.

Ms Horwath: In your work on generic and brand-name pharmaceuticals—you have your significant CV here and we took a little bit of time to look through some of the specifics, and you mentioned it yourself—can you expand a little bit about that particular project and some of the conclusions you came up with when you studied generic and brand-name pharmaceuticals?

Dr Holbrook: That particular project was quite limited; it was Warfarin. I don't know if you folks remember, but about four years ago, when generic Warfarin came out, there was quite a lot of noise in the press about how it couldn't possibly be as effective as the brand name.

There are a few drugs that we call narrow therapeutic index. What that means is that the threshold for risk is

very little above the threshold for benefit, so there's little room to move, and they tend to be drugs that require a lot of monitoring. Warfarin was always the standard in that group. So we used, if I say so myself, a rather elegant design, but a small number of patients, to show that the generic was as effective as brand-name Warfarin.

In general, generics are a very important group and a very important concept for Ontario—and this is international as well—to be able to save money after a drug has been on the market. I think probably our generics, when you look again internationally—there's room to move to make them somewhat less expensive than they are. In comparison with the US, they tend to be a bit higher initially, but generics have always been shown to be quite effective. In the US, you probably have been aware that there have been some scandals about particular brands of generics; they've been less than effective. Fortunately, we haven't had those troubles in Canada.

Ms Horwath: So it's fair to say that going more along the lines of generic drugs would be one of the ways to contain costs in the future?

1130

Dr Holbrook: Yes. I think there will continue to be movement around patents and how patents—there's a concept we call “evergreening,” where the brand-name industry will do whatever it can, including changing the label or things that are fairly trivial, to keep the patent going, and I think there will be some legislative move around that, potentially, as well.

Ms Horwath: That's great. Those are my questions.

The Chair: To the government.

Mr Berardinetti: On behalf of the government, Dr Holbrook, I want to thank you for coming forward today and for your excellent presentation and qualifications.

The Chair: Are there any other comments or questions?

Mr David Zimmer (Willowdale): Yes. Just coming back to this point you touched on, what I would describe as the law of unintended consequences—so to take your example of the diabetes patient who has three, four, six or nine drug regimes, I suppose each one individually and considered separately has some beneficial effect, but the gestalt or the collective effect of it often leads to unintended consequences and additional drug costs and health care management and so on. Do you see any role for this body to develop any initiatives to deal with this law of unintended consequences?

Dr Holbrook: I don't know what the body's mandate is, but I basically think it's a huge area for research. My main advice would be to fund research. It hasn't been a priority for anybody. Typically these sorts of difficult areas are areas where clinical pharmacologists tend to work. It has become a major, major issue because vascular disease is, by far, the number one cause of death—I shouldn't say “by far,” but it still is number one; cancer is second. In both of those major diseases now—and diabetes we just consider a vascular risk factor—polypharmacy is very common.

I wouldn't overstate that we know that multiple drugs are producing harm or causing adverse drug interactions. Actually, we see it relatively rarely, despite all the press you hear about drug interactions and their inclusion in medical-error scenarios. That's relatively uncommon, I think, but it's just that we don't know the additional benefit. We have lots of modelling that suggests that if you take all of these medicines, you actually lower, for example, in vascular disease, your risk by 85%, which is very impressive. But we don't actually know that that's the case based on good, high-quality randomized trial evidence.

I think what we hear on the street is that the trials are one thing, and our patients whom we see—I know, for example, that the average age of patients I see is 71, and that's in an acute care medical hospital—have great difficulty managing all these medicines: just remembering to take them all and keep them all straight, as to what they are and what they're for.

Mr Zimmer: What do you think should be the role of the pharmaceutical companies in assisting in those sorts of research projects or funding them?

Dr Holbrook: The pharmaceutical industry is obviously very active in funding research. It tends to be their own research. For someone like myself, for example, who has to be totally free of conflict of interest, it's of no help at all. So I can have no pharmaceutical industry funding, but a lot of my colleagues are funded in that regard. Actually, I think the industry is doing something very helpful in this regard. There's a concept called the “polypill.” So they've begun to look at combinations of drugs, different families of drugs, within a single pill, and I think that's one way to go at it. That will help.

Mr Zimmer: Do you see any role in this for the body that you're about to join?

Dr Holbrook: And have been on—the DQTC.

Mr Zimmer: Sorry, I didn't hear you.

Dr Holbrook: I have been on, yes. Unfortunately, DQTC is not about funding research. I think the first thing that really needs to happen is some better understanding of whether more drugs—at some point, more drugs is probably not better; it may be, but it's probably not. But we just don't know what that is. Is it four drugs or 10 drugs or 20? It's very common for me to have patients on my service who take more than 20 medicines.

Mr Zimmer: I know you don't get involved in funding, but do you see a role for your body in identifying areas that should have some research done?

Dr Holbrook: Yes, and that does happen. That's relatively common. I must commend the province—and I'm not sure that the money actually came through provincial hands primarily—but the primary health care transition fund, for example, when David McCutcheon was the assistant deputy minister, funded a large number of very practical projects looking at issues like that. So the province has stepped up, and I think more could be done in that. But I think that's exactly right: The DQTC tends to be people who work on drug policy, and our clinicians as well, so they are very familiar with the

issues that face other clinicians and patients, and we often suggest research initiatives.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): Does your committee get involved with gambling addictions at all?

Dr Holbrook: No. It's interesting you mention that, though. But that's another—it's my running life. I'm just dealing with gambling addictions, not the committee.

Mr Sergio: I see, the therapeutic part of your committee. So I was wondering what kind of therapy you would be able to offer.

Dr Holbrook: Well, it's an interesting area. I just gave grand rounds on alcohol, because I thought it was a perfect time of year to discuss the benefit-risk of alcohol.

Mr Sergio: Oh, I didn't think about that. I'm sorry.

Dr Holbrook: But gambling is somewhat similar. There are very few effective therapies for addiction. There is really a very small number and the drugs are not very effective for any kind of addiction.

The Chair: Dr Holbrook, a quick question for you. You mentioned a particular book on pricing, and an author.

Dr Holbrook: Yes, Marcia Angell. If you search Marcia Angell on the Web, you'll come up with this book on thousands of hits. It's called *The Truth About the Drug Companies*. It's a very good book.

The Chair: Thank you very much, and thank you for your service on the DQTC. As you probably heard, we'll be moving to concurrence votes when we're done with our presentation at 12:30, so around 1 pm or so.

LIAM McCREERY

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Liam McCreery, intended appointee as chair, Agricorp.

The Chair: The next intended appointee I would call forward is Liam McCreery. Mr McCreery is the intended appointee as the chair of Agricorp. Mr McCreery hails from Woodstock, Ontario. Welcome, sir, to our committee. You've been in the audience so you've seen how it functions. You have an opportunity to make a presentation on your qualifications and your interest in Agricorp, and then we'll do a round of questions, beginning with the third party. Mr McCreery, the floor is yours.

Mr Liam McCreery: Yes, I will make a presentation. Thank you for allowing me to present to this honourable group today. My name is Liam McCreery. I'll give you a brief background. I have a degree in economics from the University of Guelph, I have a graduate diploma in business administration from Wilfrid Laurier University and I've been farming in Oxford county since 1989.

I became involved in farm organizations about 12 years ago with the Ontario Soybean Growers at the provincial board of directors. Through my 11 years with that organization, I served as chair for two years and on the executive for six years. My major contribution to the

organization was around safety nets and business risk management for producers in Ontario.

In Ontario, I've also served on the board of directors of the Guelph Food Technology Centre and I've been vice-chair of the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council, the council that represents basically all non-supply-managed sectors in Ontario.

Nationally, I was president of a group called the Canadian Alliance of Agri-Food Exporters. I was able to successfully negotiate a merger with another group to form a group called CAFTA, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance. I'm currently president and chair of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance. This organization represents the majority of producers in Canada, as well as industries, from seed, feed and input suppliers to processors and exporters.

Internationally, I've been involved in groups in the United States, most notably the National Biodiesel Board and the American Soybean Association, and I've also been a participant in something called the International Oilseed Producer Dialogue, where I represented Canadian producers. So I have provincial, national and international experience on boards of directors.

I'm here today to talk about being chair of Agricorp. I am currently on the board of Agricorp. I was appointed by the minister back in October. I feel Agricorp has a vital role for producers in Ontario and I feel I have the necessary background to be an effective leader and team player as part of that organization.

Agricorp has some huge challenges in front of it right now. The government of Canada, the province of Ontario, the other nine provinces and the three territories have decided to change the way they handle safety nets and business risk management. We are at the beginning of a new generation of business risk management in Canada, and in Ontario Agricorp will play a vital role in implementing the plans put together by the province of Ontario and the government of Canada.

With that, I think that's enough of an introduction and I would entertain any questions you guys may have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr McCreery. That leaves the round of questions with the third party.

Ms Horwath: Welcome, this morning. It's good to meet you. I wanted to start by asking you about a certain description that's been given to you in the past on some of your more political rather than professional activities. My understanding is that at times you've been monickered as a big-time pre-election McGuinty supporter. How would you respond to someone who said that you were a big-time pre-election Dalton McGuinty backer?

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Mr McCreery: I'd see a bit of humour in that because I do not belong to the Liberal Party.

Ms Horwath: So aside from this particular article here from Canada NewsWire of December 23, 2002, where McGuinty is quoted as saying, "That's why my plan has been endorsed by agricultural industry leaders such as"—a couple of other people—"and Liam McCreery, chair of Ontario Soybean Growers"—I'm sure

you know about that—I'm wondering if there are any other political endorsements or any other places where you were endorsing the government, currently or previous to the last election.

Mr McCreery: Actually, that's the first I've seen of that newswire, Ms Horwath.

Ms Horwath: OK. It's December 23, 2002.

Mr McCreery: In 2002?

Ms Horwath: That's right, before the last election.

Mr McCreery: I was not aware that my name was used to endorse the current Premier.

Ms Horwath: Now you know. That's quite interesting. So to your knowledge, you have no understanding of that having taken place in other forums, other articles or periodicals or anything like that?

Mr McCreery: In direct support of Premier McGuinty?

Ms Horwath: Yes.

Mr McCreery: No, I don't.

Ms Horwath: OK. Thank you.

Now I'm going to get more on to the specifics around Agricorp. In your application letter—and you referred to it a little bit, briefly, in your opening remarks—you made mention of the fact that you have a significant interest in strategic policy development as things start to change and move forward into the future in regard to business risk management and how Agricorp is going to morph, if you will, into the future. Could you elaborate for our committee what your vision is? What strategic development do you see happening, what strategic plan, for the future development of Agricorp?

Mr McCreery: For Agricorp, we are the group that implements the policies of the government, and we are on the cusp, the genesis, of a whole new set of safety net programs. I see our role as being able to facilitate the implementation of these programs. These programs are fundamentally different programs than farmers in Ontario and in Canada are used to. The communication aspect is going to be fundamental to being able to move these programs ahead. On a policy basis, I think everyone in the room would agree we are on the right track, but the policy is only effective if it's implemented properly. It's up to the government of Canada and the government of Ontario to make the tough policy decisions, and it's up to groups like Agricorp to make sure they are implemented properly.

I see, strategically, not only administering the program correctly but having amazing communication systems, not only with producers but between governments as well, while taking a leadership role not in developing but in helping implement the policies.

Ms Horwath: So achieving the buy-in that's necessary for the program to be accepted by all parties?

Mr McCreery: Achieving the buy-in, but it's even more than that. It's not just buy-in; it's understanding that this is a new set of programs and they are going to evolve. So it's not saying we're married to one set of programs. It's saying, "Here is the program as it is today. How can we make it better? How can we help facilitate

evolving the program beyond today?" Because the program is going to change over the next couple of years.

Ms Horwath: Are there any particular changes that you would recommend or that you would like to see, on a personal note? Recognizing that it is the government's responsibility to create policy, what kind of recommendations would you bring forward? I know there has been some criticism currently about Ontario being out of sync in terms of the percentage of deposits required, based on Canada and other provinces. We're at 26%; others are at 22%. What specific things would you like to see as a farmer yourself, as someone who has been in the industry? Could you share that with us?

Mr McCreery: As a producer, over the last couple of years we've had a plethora of different programs called transition programs. The communication, to be frank, both at the provincial and federal levels, has been weak: what the transition payments are for and what the fundamental purposes of the new CAIS program are. It goes back to communication. The programs, as they evolve, are going to be more complicated than in the past, so they have to be consistent. Farmers have to understand why the programs are in place and what they are intended to do. So it really goes to communication.

Ms Horwath: When you say "consistent," do you mean consistent across Canada? Is that what you're suggesting?

Mr McCreery: Consistent, so producers understand that the CAIS program is the main pillar of safety net protection in Ontario. We understand that and were able to move ahead with that one program.

Ms Horwath: OK. Can I ask, then, specifically around soybean farming and the impact it's had particularly on dairy farming: You know there have been some shifts in terms of the move toward more soybean farming. Do you think that when there's a shift from one to another—for example, from soybean to dairy—that there should be some kind of compensation involved with that?

Mr McCreery: Are you talking about producers shifting industry?

Ms Horwath: Yes.

Mr McCreery: In terms of the CAIS program?

Ms Horwath: Yes.

Mr McCreery: I think the CAIS program is set up to reflect changes in margin, and if a producer is changing her or his operation and has a drop in their margin, they should be compensated. That's the idea of the program.

Ms Horwath: Regardless of the fact that they're changing industry?

Mr McCreery: Well, there has to be a mechanism in place because if you're changing industry, you should have a different set of margins.

Ms Horwath: Sure, OK.

Just one last question, since we're talking about agricultural issues overall—farming—what is your opinion of the position of agricultural workers in Ontario?

Mr McCreery: I really haven't taken time to think about their status. I understand there are some issues

around whether or not they can collectively bargain and things like that. But I haven't really looked at that file.

Ms Horwath: You have no opinion on that matter whatsoever?

Mr McCreery: No.

Ms Horwath: OK, thank you. Those are all my questions, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: To the government, Mr Berardinetti.

Mr Berardinetti: Mr McCreery, on behalf of the government, I want to thank you for your presentation here today. I would like, Mr Chairman, to waive the rest of our time so as to move on with the program today.

The Chair: Very good. Thank you very much, Mr Berardinetti. To the official opposition, Ms Scott.

Ms Scott: Thank you very much for appearing here today before us. Your background will certainly benefit the position that you've been considered for.

I come from the riding of Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, which has a big agricultural industry there, and it's in a crisis situation. We're trying to get some relief through the CAIS program and it's been very slow. As you said, communication certainly needs to be improved.

Do you see any way that we can get the payments to the farmers faster than it's going? I know it's a new program and not as many farmers from my riding as I had hoped applied for it, but I think it's because it was a little more complicated than what they were used to. I wondered if you had any ideas, having been on Agricorp, about expediting the process of payments to the farmers.

Mr McCreery: I understand there is a provision in CAIS for interim payments before the actual trigger happens. That's one possibility. I think, with any program, CAIS is designed to stabilize and, as we see with a huge disaster like BSE in Canada, maybe CAIS will need some supplement beyond just that one particular program.

It's very tough for your producers and my neighbours to wait for the payment. That's something the government should definitely be looking at, and Agricorp's role would be to implement it.

Ms Scott: Do you see them moving toward that right now? Agricorp took over December 1. We've had some briefings and I've been trying to get information out, which is somewhat difficult with the privacy laws, but we're just trying to get payments to the farmers before the banks foreclose. We've been waiting a long time now; this has gone on for 18 months. Do you know if there are any plans to expedite the process specifically?

Mr McCreery: I think there is a provision for interim payments; I'm not positive. I can look into it for you.

Ms Scott: That's fine.

The BSE crisis you mentioned: I always felt it should be separated from the CAIS program. Do you hear of any musings that possibly they would look at the BSE crisis as a separate issue? I know the border is to open in March, but that's just a first step.

Mr McCreery: Yes. Could you explain what you mean by "separated"?

Ms Scott: Should there be different funding? Should they have been separated—people who are affected more by BSE as opposed to the cash crops?

Mr McCreery: If you look at the current BSE funding that's in place, it is separate funding and new funding, not out of the CAIS account. Is that what you're asking?

Ms Scott: It doesn't seem to be enough, the funding that was there, yes, for the BSE. I just wondered; CAIS is all-encompassing, is it?

Mr McCreery: Yes.

Ms Scott: All commodities?

Mr McCreery: It depends what you mean by "separated," because if you're compensated for BSE under one program, do you think there should be an offset for your CAIS payment?

Ms Scott: I just don't think CAIS is encompassing the full loss that the farmers are feeling with the BSE crisis.

Mr McCreery: That's a—

Ms Scott: It's a big political question.

Mr McCreery: It is a political question, and I guess as a farmer I can answer it. BSE is devastating, and the government has responded, both levels of government, by having extra payments beyond CAIS. Both governments have announced BSE payments. As far as making them quicker, of course we want them to be as fast as possible and to be as fair as possible.

Ms Scott: OK. Thank you very much for being here today.

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Mr Tascona: I understand from your resumé that you're a cash crop farmer.

Mr McCreery: Yes.

Mr Tascona: Have you ever employed migrant workers?

Mr McCreery: No.

Mr Tascona: Do you have any opinion on the safety level that is provided for farm workers who operate large types of vehicles, tractors or others? Do you feel the safety levels in the industry are sufficient?

Mr McCreery: I have never looked at that file on farm worker safety. I apologize. I have a small farm and I do the work myself, so I can't offer you a meaningful opinion.

Mr Tascona: It's an issue. For example, I've been reading that in Florida they have issues with respect to safety for migrant workers and farm workers, especially in the cash crop areas, in terms of requirements to wear seat belts—or the lack thereof. So you haven't been privy to any of that information?

Mr McCreery: No, but on a personal level I can address it. I know my friends and neighbours who have larger operations are very wary and very careful of farm worker safety because, first of all, they're dealing with huge, expensive machinery that is computer-based. It takes a lot of training to drive a combine these days.

Mr Tascona: Yes.

Mr McCreery: It's not like picking fruit. You have to be computer literate and mechanically able. It's a huge job. But that's just a personal aside, not much use to—

Mr Tascona: Yes. Did they ever comment on the safety of the vehicles and the worker?

Mr McCreery: Again, from my personal example, my friends and neighbours are very careful, very aware of safety.

Mr Tascona: Those are all the questions I have.

The Chair: Great. Mr McCreery, as you probably heard, we move to concurrence—the votes—on the intended appointees just before 1 pm today, so you're invited to stick around. Thank you very much for your presentation, sir.

PETER GAVAN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Peter J. Gavan, intended appointee as member, North Bay Police Services Board.

The Chair: The next intended appointee is Peter J. Gavan. Mr Gavan joins us from North Bay, Ontario. He is an intended appointee as a member of the city of North Bay police services board.

Mr Gavan, welcome to the agencies committee. You're welcome to make a presentation about your qualifications and your interest in the intended appointment. Then we'll have questions from all three parties, beginning with the government first off. Sir, the floor is yours.

Mr Peter J. Gavan: Thank you very much, and happy new year.

Mr Chair and members of the standing committee, I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you here today. I do have a brief statement. The committee has already seen my CV, and I'd be pleased to expand any aspect of my background.

In this brief statement I'd like to cover three topics: my qualifications as they specifically apply to this appointment; how my proposed appointment came about; and a disclosure of my political activities.

To briefly review my qualifications, I have spent 32 years in education. I have spent all of my career in North Bay at St Joe's elementary school, St Joseph's College, a private girls' school, and St Joseph-Scollard Hall Secondary School.

In addition to my teaching and administrative duties over the years, I have also served as the district president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. As president, I was involved in all labour and employee relations for OECTA. I have served on the provincial scene as co-chair of the curriculum development conference.

This past year, I was the national co-ordinator for Interchange on Canadian Studies. This was a national exchange of students sponsored by the federal and provincial governments and hosted by the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board.

My education experience has taught me the importance of being entrusted with our most precious resource:

our children. Children and communities can never lose trust in their parents, teachers, doctors, nurses, politicians and police. These people must be trusted without question.

The other aspect of my experience that I'd like to discuss is a lifelong commitment to community: I have worked with and chaired our local and school board food drive for many years. I've been an active member of my faith community. I've coached volleyball teams locally and provincially for the last 25 years.

As an educator and president of OECTA, as well as in my community involvement, I've had a number of occasions to work closely with the local municipal police force. Those interactions revolved around matters where we sometimes have to involve the police in the educational scene: drugs, theft, child neglect, child abuse situations and alleged improprieties involving staff and students.

In reading Hansard, I noticed that prospective appointees are often asked how they came to be candidates for these appointments. In my case, I applied specifically for this position to the Public Appointments Secretariat. I knew there were vacancies and felt that with my experience and available time, I would serve my community by being a member of the North Bay Police Services Board.

I also note from Hansard that political affiliations have been of interest to members of the committee. I'd like to take a moment to fully disclose my political activities. I've been a member of the Nipissing provincial and federal Liberal parties for many years. I've contributed to them and raised money at both levels. I enjoy the political process. I feel it is an obligation of every citizen to be involved in the political process.

I believe that my skills and talents, combined with my training as an educator, would encourage me to fulfill my duties and responsibilities in a manner that would provide public confidence and pride, not only in the police services board but also in the police department in the city of North Bay.

Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Gavan, for your presentation. I'll welcome questions from the government.

Mr Berardinetti: Once again, Mr Gavan, on behalf of the government I want to thank you for your very informative presentation before this committee today. We would like to waive the remainder of our time in questioning, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, sir. And to the official opposition.

Mr Tascona: Thank you for coming here today. Are you a current member of the provincial Liberal Party?

Mr Gavan: Yes, I am.

Mr Tascona: And are you a current member of the federal Liberal Party?

Mr Gavan: I am.

Mr Tascona: I take it you were involved in the recent provincial election in 2003.

Mr Gavan: I was.

Mr Tascona: In what capacity?

Mr Gavan: I was the campaign chair.

Mr Tascona: Were you the campaign chair for Liberal MPP Monique Smith?

Mr Gavan: I was.

Mr Tascona: OK. You were also, I understand, involved in the federal election in 2004.

Mr Gavan: I was involved in 2000 as campaign chair for Anthony Rota, the MP.

Mr Tascona: How did you hear about this appointment? Did you talk to Ms Smith about this?

Mr Gavan: No. I knew there were a couple of vacancies—again, it's not a large city—and I knew that, coming up, a couple of people would be leaving. Having retired and having the available time, I felt I would put my name forward.

Mr Tascona: You didn't talk to Monique Smith about this appointment at all?

Mr Gavan: No. Mary McDonald phoned me, and I was interviewed at that time. After that, yes, I probably would have spoken to her.

Mr Tascona: Did you write a letter, or how did you communicate with Mary McDonald?

Mr Gavan: I sent in an application form and a letter to the Public Appointments Secretariat, and she phoned me.

Mr Tascona: And then you got interviewed by her?

Mr Gavan: I did.

Mr Tascona: What happened next?

Mr Sergio: He's here.

Mr Gavan: Yes. I thought that was it, and then I was notified that I would appear here.

Mr Tascona: I'll just ask you some issues on the policing in North Bay, if I could, because it seems you're familiar with the policing in that community.

Mr Gavan: Yes.

Mr Tascona: Recently, the police chief indicated that North Bay would not be able to participate in the provincial community policing grant program unless the provincial share was increased from 50%. Do you believe it's important that North Bay participate in this program or do you feel it has enough police officers?

Mr Gavan: No, I believe it's important that they do participate. In reading the North Bay Nugget, if I remember the figure, it was \$30,000 per officer. They were looking at a figure, with benefits and everything else, that was going to total \$100,000. What they were looking at was maybe not being able to bring in new police officers but being able to sustain the force at the level they presently have.

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Mr Tascona: The option 4 traffic ticket program has been used in many communities, including North Bay, and in the city of Barrie, which I represent. North Bay received about \$150,000 annually under the program, and the police chief said that cancelling option 4 would take away another important traffic safety tool. What are your feelings about the cancellation of the program?

Mr Gavan: Certainly, with budget restraints and population declining—there may be a lack of assess-

ment—\$150,000 goes a long way toward meeting the budget. I certainly would be in support of option 4. I know that the policy right now is to remove it, but in small communities and northern communities, that \$150,000 in the budget would certainly go a long way toward maintaining the present situation that we have.

Mr Tascona: I think there's been talk about the North Bay racetrack having a casino operation.

Mr Gavan: Slots, I believe.

Mr Tascona: Yes. You're familiar with that?

Mr Gavan: Well, it's been in the newspaper. As far as being familiar with it—

Mr Tascona: Do you think that would be good for the community from a policing point of view? Do you have any thoughts about whether that's something that would benefit the community?

Mr Gavan: I'm not quite sure. I know there has been lots of publicity about casinos and racetracks. It would probably, no question, be another thing the police department and the police services board have to look at—there could be added costs in dealing with instances that might arise from it. I haven't given that one much thought.

Mr Tascona: I have no further questions.

The Chair: The third party. Ms Horwath.

Ms Horwath: Thanks, Mr Chairman. I'm going to ask a couple of questions following up on Mr Tascona's questions about your political activity, just to make it clear. You're currently active politically with riding associations in your riding?

Mr Gavan: Such as?

Ms Horwath: Are you a member of your provincial or federal riding association or are you on an executive or anything like that?

Mr Gavan: No. I resigned from the executive of the provincial riding association. I still am a member of the executive at the federal level. I participate in picnics and whatever other things—

Ms Horwath: Fundraisers.

Mr Gavan: Yes, fundraisers. You know, whatever MPPs or MPs get involved in, I'd be there.

Ms Horwath: Sure. And it's your intent to continue to be politically active with the Liberal Party?

Mr Gavan: Well, I don't see any reason, what conflict there would be as far as being politically involved. I think it's part of the process.

Ms Horwath: Following on that, what would your opinion be of police officers, particularly, participating in partisan political activities and endorsing candidates and that kind of thing?

Mr Gavan: Having police officers endorse candidates?

Ms Horwath: Uh-huh.

Mr Gavan: No. No way.

Ms Horwath: You don't think that's appropriate?

Mr Gavan: No, I don't.

Ms Horwath: So for a member of the police services board, it's OK, but not for police officers?

Mr Gavan: Well, when you're looking at an officer sworn to uphold the law, I believe being non-partisan is

the rule. As far as my involvement in the political process and political parties, I see that I'm setting priorities and objectives for the police department. For a police chief or a police officer to become political, I don't see that as appropriate.

Ms Horwath: OK. Can I ask a little bit about your particular experience in the criminal justice system? I don't recall seeing a lot of that. Did you want to expand on that a little bit, if you have any particular experience in that vein?

Mr Gavan: My only experience would be from an educational point of view. I was a co-op teacher. I have placed students to work at the police department and had a student working at the courthouse with the crown attorney at one time. I would have been involved with the police in different instances with students and also with adults as president of the teachers' federation.

I think my educational background—you know, I've been involved with the police in activities where they would have a ball tournament with students. I believe it's so important for the police to be involved in crime prevention, to be visible and for young people to be able to approach them. The North Bay Police Service has done an excellent job. They're very visible; they're in the schools. So my experience would be in an educational setting.

Ms Horwath: I have a question about the issue of public complaints. I'm sure you're aware that there have been changes in the way that public complaints are handled post-1997. In fact, there's some controversy on both sides of the issue. Some people are saying that the current system is nothing more than police investigating themselves when there's a complaint. Others say that if you have a civilian oversight system, you're in a position where police are intimidated to do their job on the front line and might not make certain decisions for fear of being criticized or having a complaint issued against them. Could you give me some of your opinions on that particular issue and where you see things at this point?

Mr Gavan: I believe it's under review right now and that Justice LeSage is bringing forward a report on that.

As an educator, I know there was some concern that as teachers we were governing ourselves. The Ontario College of Teachers has since been instituted. There were lots of fears about that particular body, some legitimate. Teachers were afraid of what was going to happen in performing their duties in the classroom and that they would be brought before a review board.

I think it's been a positive thing. There have been revisions to it. There are appointed people, and there are people who are elected from the association. I think that somewhere down the line there needs to be a body so that public confidence—there has to be something that's transparent, that people are confident that the officers who are out on the streets are performing their duty and are not being the judge and jury for themselves. I think, in the end, they want that also.

Ms Horwath: If I could ask one last question, what would you say would be the major issue in terms of policing in your community?

Mr Gavan: It's to be able to make the budget—I think there will be certain budget restraints. I also see that there has been an increase in the reported number of assaults and sexual abuse charges. That, I think, has come about for varied reasons. One, the police department has done a great job, and I think letting families know that there are bodies out there that will support them—you know, the crisis centre—and if something is happening at home, you can get out of that situation.

Having been in education with zero tolerance—you know, you might happen to be standing there and all of a sudden there is a fight and someone hits you. There is zero tolerance. Those assaults are reported, so there's an increase. But I think it's a good increase, if I may say, because—

Ms Horwath: It's reporting rather than incidents, is what you're saying.

Mr Gavan: That's right.

Ms Horwath: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr Tascona has asked, through the Chair, an additional question for our intended appointee. It's a deviation from standard procedure. I'll ask that we stay within standard procedure, if members of the committee are OK with this exception at this point in time. Mr Tascona?

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Interjection.

The Chair: The procedure we've always used, since at least my time in the chair, is that each party has one third of the time. If they use it up, then we move on; if they don't use it up, I consider their questions closed. I'd like to continue to follow that.

Mr Tascona: I may have more than one question. I don't want to limit it to one, but I'll put it in a broad spectrum.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr Tascona: I take it you retired from teaching in 2002?

Mr Gavan: Correct.

Mr Tascona: And you were actively involved in the 1999 election for the Liberals?

Mr Gavan: The 1999 election would be—

Mr Tascona: The provincial election of 1999.

Mr Gavan: Would that be the by-election?

Mr Tascona: No, the actual provincial election of 1999.

Mr Gavan: Yes.

Mr Tascona: You were actively involved?

Mr Gavan: Yes.

Mr Tascona: You were president-elect from 1998 to 2002?

Mr Gavan: I was.

Mr Tascona: Your comments with respect to Ms Horwath's questions on police involvement in provincial elections: How can you reconcile that for teachers' versus police officers' involvement? It seems inconsistent to me that teachers could be involved and yet police officers couldn't be, based on your answers. How do you reconcile that?

Mr Gavan: As far as the federation?

Mr Tascona: No; as far as being involved in the political process of an election.

Mr Gavan: Are you asking me, should teachers be allowed to—

Mr Tascona: They are involved, and yet your comments—you were actively involved, yet you said police officers shouldn't be involved.

Mr Gavan: I did.

Mr Tascona: So how do you reconcile that?

Mr Gavan: I believe that police officers are upholding the law. They are in a position of responsibility where they have sworn an oath, and I don't see them taking one side or another. It's a law enforcement officer. As far as education, I don't see us being law enforcement officers.

Mr Tascona: I don't get the distinction. I think whether you're a union member, one way or the other, you should have a right to participate in the process. I understand your views, but I don't agree with them.

The Chair: Mr Gavan, thank you very much for your presentation. As you've heard, we'll move to concurrence after the next intended appointee, so you're welcome to stay and enjoy the show.

Mr Gavan: Thank you very much.

PIERRE BÉLANGER

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Pierre Bélanger, intended appointee as member, Ontario Educational Communications Authority (TVO).

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Pierre Bélanger. Monsieur Bélanger joins us from right here in the city of Toronto. He has provided us with his CV as well. Monsieur Bélanger is an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, aka TVO.

Monsieur Bélanger, welcome. You have an opportunity to make a presentation about your interest in the position and your qualifications, and then we'll have a series of questions beginning with the official opposition. The floor is yours.

Mr Pierre Bélanger: Thank you. I do have a statement.

Mr Chairman, members of the committee, je voudrais tout d'abord vous remercier de me fournir l'occasion d'exposer aujourd'hui mes motivations et qualifications pour siéger au conseil d'administration de TVO.

As you might have seen in my resumé, the appointment for which I'm considered today offers me the opportunity to serve one of my very first professional employers. Back in 1989, when I was working on my doctorate in educational technology, I was invited by the Ministry of Education of Ontario to oversee the French adaptation of a textbook on media literacy that became known under the label *La compétence médiatique* in the secondary level French-language schools of the province. Because of the saliency of this textbook in the early days of media convergence, over the following six years I was twice commissioned by TFO to supervise the research

material that went into the production of two 15-program series. The first one, in 1989, dealt with media literacy, while the second one, produced and aired in 1995-96, focused on the appropriation of new information and communication technologies in people's everyday lives.

Today I feel privileged to be given the opportunity to once again contribute to the fulfillment of TVO's mandate, albeit in a different capacity.

My formal academic training is in communications. I'm one of the rare scholars of my generation to have been entirely educated in communications in Canada. As such, I'd like to think that I bring to this appointment a definite awareness of, and sensitivity to, issues pertaining to educational broadcasting aimed at linguistic minorities.

Over the last 15 years, I've been a professor in the department of communication at the University of Ottawa. During this time I've had the opportunity to work not only with the Ontario Ministry of Education but also with that of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine and New Brunswick. In addition, over the last year I have participated in the working group set up by madame Dyane Adam, commissioner of official languages, to reflect on how new technologies can help the federal government achieve its goal of doubling the number of young Canadians fluent in our country's two official languages.

Between 1998 and 2001, I took a leave of absence from my position of professor at the University of Ottawa to work at la Société Radio-Canada, first as head of strategic planning, then as director of new media, and over the last year of my tenure, as chief adviser, new media development. This decision was a pivotal move in my career. While at Radio-Canada, I developed a network of provincial Web sites intended to serve as portals for the various French-speaking communities across Canada. Not only was I immersed in the implementation of a national new media strategy but, more importantly, Radio-Canada made me appreciate the indispensable role that public broadcasting plays in our society, especially in the era of media mergers and globalization.

As a senior member of CBC Radio-Canada's management, I also had the opportunity to represent the corporation at three CRTC hearings. This provided me with first-hand experience of the complexity of the public broadcasting institution, which not only operates in two media—radio and television—but which is also mandated to offer a variety of services in two languages. Those hearings helped me acquire a deep understanding of Canada's Broadcasting Act and the set of regulatory procedures that are involved in its application.

I believe that I bring to the appointment under consideration a wealth of academic, educational, strategic and professional broadcasting experience that can contribute to the development and promotion of TVO/TFO. As my resumé and publication record illustrate, I am driven by a strong understanding of, passion for and faith in the public interest in the broadcasting arenas. I look forward to your favourable consideration of my

appointment and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my credentials. I will gladly answer any questions members of the committee might have.

The Chair: Mr Bélanger, thank you very much for your presentation, and we'll begin with the official opposition.

Ms Scott: Thank you very much for appearing here before us today and for your impressive resumé. Last December, Minister Chambers indicated that the Liberal government might be looking at private sector investment for TVO. Does this concern you, and do you have any more comments to add as to why?

Mr Bélanger: Yes, it does concern me. I've been a strong proponent and supporter of public broadcasting. Over the last seven years, I think the core of my academic and research activities has been advocating the virtues of public broadcasting. So I think I would need to be convinced today of the tangible benefits that privatization would bring to an institution such as TVO, and TFO for that matter.

Ms Scott: A recent message was also sent by the Liberal government that TVO cannot be considered to be all that supportive. Madeleine Meilleur has confirmed that in 2005 TVO would receive a budget cut of \$2 million, and \$1 million for TFO. First of all, that seems discriminatory. Maybe you could comment about those possible cuts that might be in place.

Mr Bélanger: I always see it as bad news when public services get chopped, by definition. Unfortunately, that seems to be the prerogative of the government. Obviously, they can do whatever they wish to do with TVO. I think this will obviously force the organization to revisit some of its mandate and look for alternative sources of funding. I understand that sales have been going down over the last few years. Sponsorship might obviously be one avenue. Increasing membership might also be another area to consider at this point, to compensate for the loss in revenues.

Ms Scott: Are there any other places where you think cuts might be made?

Mr Bélanger: Might be made?

Ms Scott: Or will be made.

Mr Bélanger: Well, I hope that will be the end of it at this point in time. I understand it will be \$2 million for TVO and \$1 million for TFO, but we'll wait for the cuts to be confirmed and implemented into the next budget.

Ms Scott: So there's no specific programming or anything that you could see where these cuts are going to take place.

Mr Bélanger: I think it would be premature at this point on my part to say exactly where the cuts should be applied. I'd need to get more acquainted with the various files that TVO and TFO are involved in and probably take it from there.

Ms Scott: How do you feel about the current programming mix that exists now?

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Mr Bélanger: Because of the very mandate of the institution, I'm one of those viewers who feel relatively

satisfied. I particularly appreciate the film in the evenings. My kids watch a lot of the programs, mostly during the day on weekends and stuff.

Ms Scott: Thank you very much. Mr Tascona?

Mr Tascona: Thanks very much for coming here today. As you are aware, the federal Broadcasting Act mandates the CRTC to establish the conditions with which broadcasters must comply if they wish to access the country's airwaves. You're aware of that and you've got some experience, obviously, throughout the industry.

In terms of media concentration in this country, obviously TVO plays a significant role in terms of what its mandate is; the CRTC does have a role also. I'm aware that the Fox TV network has now come to Canada. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Mr Bélanger: Well, yes. I mostly have thoughts on why some other channels weren't allowed to come into Canada. I'm specifically interested in the Italian public broadcasting services that were turned down by the federal government.

Mr Sergio: It's coming now.

Mr Bélanger: It's coming now? Thank you.

Mr Sergio: When, I don't know.

Mr Bélanger: As for Fox specifically, I think this is the prerogative of the CRTC. It's one additional channel that's being made available. I simply regret that some other channels didn't get the same advantage.

Mr Tascona: How do you view that? The CBC has its role. You've worked for the CBC. The particular concentration that we have in the media is certainly a significantly small concentration in terms of the public broadcasters and the people who do own the other TV stations. Where do you think that's taken us in terms of the role of the CRTC and what people have to listen to?

Mr Bélanger: As an academic and as a citizen, I think it's my role to advocate the value and virtues of public broadcasting. It's been one of my chief battles over the last seven or eight years. I think I've been convinced and converted to public broadcasting ever since I started working for the CBC, and I've been carrying this torch ever since.

I'm obviously troubled by this notion of concentration, and I think this speaks of the importance of an alternative. I think public broadcasting represents one of those, and probably the chief alternative to media concentration, because it doesn't have any private interests, obviously.

Mr Tascona: Bearing in mind how the Liberal government has treated TVO in terms of its budget and TFO recently in terms of the budget cuts, do you think TFO, in terms of protecting French-language rights, should be separated from TVO in terms of being able to operate as an entity unto its own?

Mr Bélanger: This is the kind of question that I would feel more comfortable answering a few months from now, once I have a better understanding of all of the ramifications of such a move. At this point in time I'll say that I feel satisfied by the will of the government to increase the French representation on the board. I think

this will allow a better representation on the four various committees that exist at TVO/TFO.

Whether this is a desirable move, to have TFO as an independent governance body, I think if we follow the example of the education system and the way the various French school systems and school boards have been administered, it would be a logical and natural development down the line to consider seriously such a possibility.

Mr Tascona: Are you aware that Minister Sorbara is making an announcement at 1:30 pm today with respect to an upcoming asset review?

Mr Bélanger: No, I'm not.

Mr Tascona: Do you know whether the TVO people are concerned about this?

Mr Bélanger: I would think they would be.

Mr Tascona: OK. Thank you.

The Chair: To the third party and Ms Horwath.

Ms Horwath: I wanted to actually ask you to explain to us a little bit more your opinion of public broadcasting generally. I heard some of your passion when you were talking about the privatization issue. I just want to know, in general, how you feel about public broadcasting, and then, what would be your opinion of groups that rally to support public broadcasting, like Friends of Public Broadcasting and things like that? Do you see them as an opportunity for more revenue generation, for example, and things like that?

Mr Bélanger: Specifically for TVO?

Ms Horwath: Yes.

Mr Bélanger: It certainly would be an asset for TVO to have such a vocal support group. It certainly wouldn't hurt its cause—and correct me if I'm not getting your question straight. In my view, the fact that the CBC and TVO exist is one of the basic characteristics of the Canadian broadcasting system—this mix of private and public institutions—and I think this is something we should strive to protect and reinforce as much as possible because it plays a vital role in the democratic arenas of society.

Ms Horwath: Just to expand on that, what do you see as the major role of TVO/TFO and public broadcasting?

Mr Bélanger: To offer an alternative. This notion of “commercial-free” is in itself a very definite distinguishing factor from the private broadcasters. I think the fact that a lot of its programming is directly aligned to the school curriculum is something to be celebrated.

Ms Horwath: I know that the previous questions were talking a little bit about future budget cuts and what's coming down the road potentially. Do you have any understanding of the history of budget cuts to TVO/TFO in the past?

Mr Bélanger: Well, I presume this is not the first time. I'm not intimately familiar with the financing of TVO/TFO from a historical standpoint.

Ms Horwath: But I gather from your comments that you would like to see that trend reversed.

Mr Bélanger: Yes, definitely. I'm a strong supporter of public broadcasting, and I clearly hope these are the last cuts that will be applied to TVO/TFO.

Ms Horwath: What do you see as your particular role upon your appointment? What kind of input do you think you can provide that would ensure the sustainability of TVO/TFO? What do you see as the keys to its enduring success in the future?

Mr Bélanger: Because of my acquaintance with the education system in the province; the fact that I'm very familiar with one of its target audiences, ie, the college and university-level population; and the fact that I've got a fairly good understanding of new technologies, in terms of the Independent Learning Centre and distance education programs, I think I can contribute to the thinking going forward.

Ms Horwath: No further comments.

The Chair: To the government.

Mr Berardinetti: Mr Bélanger, on behalf of the government, I want to thank you for your presentation today before this committee and for your application.

Mr Chairman, I'd like to waive the rest of our time.

The Chair: Very good. Mr Bélanger, thank you very much for your presentation. We will now move to our concurrences. You're welcome to stay for that portion.

I think we had agreed at the beginning of this particular session of the agencies committee to do the first four concurrence votes before we recess.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Dr Anne M. Holbrook, intended appointee as member, Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee.

Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence?

Mr Berardinetti: Yes, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: Any discussion of Dr Holbrook's qualifications or intended appointment?

Mr Tascona: I'll second it.

The Chair: Any other discussion? A third from Ms Horwath?

Ms Horwath: Yes, I'll third.

The Chair: All in favour of Dr Holbrook's appointment? Any in opposition? The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Liam McCreery, intended appointee as chair, Agricorp.

Mr Berardinetti, you move concurrence?

Mr Berardinetti: Yes.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any discussion of the intended appointment?

Mr Tascona: I'll second it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Tascona. Any further discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Peter J. Gavan. Mr Gavan is an intended appointee as member, North Bay Police Services Board.

Mr Berardinetti: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Any discussion?

Mr Tascona: Yes, I'd like to discuss this appointment.

The Chair: Mr Tascona, you have the floor.

Mr Tascona: I won't be supporting this appointment. I think it's purely a political appointment. He was the campaign manager for MPP Monique Smith, who is

curiously absent here today—because it's the first one from this committee that she has missed that I'm aware of. He also has some views with respect to the election process of police officers, which I certainly find curiously inconsistent and troubling in terms of his attitude toward police and their participation in the election process. Be that as it may, certainly his history with the Liberal Party is more than obvious in terms of being a campaign manager for the last federal election and also this one.

I'm not in support of this. This is about as political as it gets.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti, a comment?

Mr Berardinetti: With all due respect to Mr Tascona, I don't think it's appropriate to mention the absence or presence of any members. We are in a break period right now. The House is not sitting. A number of members are out of town or are sitting on more than one committee. I don't know myself, personally, where the member from North Bay is, but if there's any curiosity as to her absence—others are away for other reasons as well.

As far as this appointment goes, he's clearly qualified for the appointment. On the issue of whether or not he wants to back a particular party or a candidate, we've had this issue come up before, and I think members have commented that as long as a person is qualified, then that person should be considered, whether or not they are a member of the Liberal Party or a member of the other parties. Not everyone here today is a member of the Liberal Party. We have people applying from other political backgrounds, or no political backgrounds.

I certainly support the selection and appointment of Mr Peter Gavan to the city of North Bay Police Services Board.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Berardinetti, for the comment. Ms Horwath?

Ms Horwath: My concern wasn't so much the obvious political participation of this particular intended appointee with regard to his support of the Liberal Party, but rather his belief that others shouldn't have the freedom of that same type of participation. I find that a little bit disconcerting, particularly in a position of power such as the police services board. It's very disconcerting. When you couple that with the fact that this particular intended appointee has no experience whatsoever in the criminal justice system, and admitted that in his own comments, then I have some concerns. So I too will not be supporting this particular appointment.

The Chair: Further comment from any other members of the committee?

Mr Tascona: I would just add that he seems to be of the view that he can continue his active political involvement. I find that inconsistent with respect to the role of a police services board member in terms of what's going on. Those are all my comments.

The Chair: Seeing no further comment, we will now proceed to the vote on the motion with respect to Mr Gavan.

Mr Tascona: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Berardinetti, Gravelle, Jeffrey, Sergio, Zimmer.

Nays

Horwath, Scott, Tascona.

The Chair: Seeing a preponderance of votes in favour, the motion is carried for Mr Gavan.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Pierre Bélanger, intended appointee as member of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (TVO).

Mr Berardinetti: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any discussion concerning Monsieur Bélanger's intended appointment?

Mr Tascona: I'd like to say that I find him very qualified. I think his views are well taken with respect to what role French-language rights should have with respect to the broadcasting arm of the provincial government. I think he'll serve well, and I support him.

The Chair: Any further comment from members of the committee? Seeing none, I'll proceed to the vote. All those in favour of Monsieur Bélanger's intended appointment? Any opposed? Seeing none, it is carried. Monsieur Bélanger, congratulations, and thank you for sticking with us this afternoon.

Folks, we have now been through our first four intended appointments. I remind members that we are resuming discussion at 3 pm today in this committee room. The committee now is in recess until 3 this afternoon.

The committee recessed from 1234 to 1502.

The Chair: Thank you, folks, members of the committee. We're calling the government agencies committee back into session. We have four more intended appointees to deal with this afternoon. I think we'll follow the same procedure, where we'll move to concurrence after the four have completed their presentations.

DIANE DESAULNIERS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party and third party: Diane Desaulniers, intended appointee as member, Ontario Educational Communications Authority (TVO).

The Chair: Our first is Diane Desaulniers. Madame Desaulniers, welcome to our committee. Please make yourself comfortable.

Madame Desaulniers is an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, aka TVO.

Ms Diane Desaulniers: And TFO.

Le Président: Et TFO, oui.

Madame Desaulniers, you have an opportunity to make a presentation about your interest in the board, your experience and background, and then we'll have questions from the members, beginning with Ms Horwath of

the third party. The floor is yours. I remind members too that translation services are available with your handy translation gadget.

M^{me} Desaulniers: Monsieur le Président, membres du comité, if I may, I would like to make my opening statement in French and then take questions and answers in English. Would that work for you?

The Chair: Very good.

M^{me} Desaulniers: Merveilleux. Everybody has their little doohickeys? Great.

Monsieur le Président, mesdames et messieurs membres du comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux, merci de m'accorder la possibilité de vous présenter ce qui me motive à vouloir siéger au conseil d'administration de TVO/TFO et, également, à la fin de ma présentation, répondre à vos questions.

C'est la première fois que je viens dans cet édifice. Alors, je le trouve absolument superbe. Vous êtes chanceux d'avoir un endroit pareil comme lieu de travail.

Dans un premier temps, nous sommes à l'ère des communications et dans l'industrie du savoir, dans l'économie du savoir. Donc, il va sans dire que le fait de siéger au conseil d'administration de TVO/TFO est particulièrement palpitant pour moi, et voici ce que je peux y apporter.

Dans un premier temps, je regarde régulièrement TFO. Je peux vous assurer que l'émission Panorama est un véhicule extrêmement important pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, car c'est la seule télévision qui nous ressemble et qui nous rassemble. Je regarde également TVO. Ce sont deux bijoux à la disposition du gouvernement.

Également, j'apporte une perspective quasi provinciale. Je suis née à Kirkland Lake, j'ai grandi à Sudbury, je demeure maintenant à Ottawa, et mon neveu préféré demeure à Toronto. Je suis également impliquée dans plusieurs organisations provinciales, ce qui me permet de rencontrer différentes personnes de différentes régions.

Comme une grande partie des résidents de la région de la capitale nationale, j'ai servi la Couronne de manière loyale pendant une vingtaine d'années. J'ai travaillé dans huit ministères fédéraux. J'ai quitté la fonction publique en 1995 pour lancer ma petite entreprise d'experte-conseil en ressources humaines en leadership.

J'ai d'ailleurs publié un deuxième livre au printemps dernier à l'intention des jeunes qui arrivent sur le marché du travail, à l'intention des gestionnaires et ceux qui veulent le devenir éventuellement. Donc, je fais bientôt 10 ans en affaires. Ça veut dire que je ne ferai pas partie des statistiques des entreprises qui finissent tristement.

J'apporte également une expérience considérable à siéger au conseil d'administration depuis que je suis à l'école secondaire. J'étais au conseil étudiant, et ça fait plus de 30 ans que je siège soit comme membre ou présidente de différentes organisations. J'aimerais vous présenter quelques réalisations dont je suis particulièrement fière.

J'ai été présidente du Regroupement des gens d'affaires de la Capitale nationale, le RGA, qui est

l'équivalent de la Greater Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, version francophone. Dans les réalisations, j'ai augmenté le membership des gens d'affaires. On a positionné l'organisation comme le lien de la communauté des affaires entre l'Ontario et le Québec. Ottawa étant une région frontalière, donc on doit se positionner. On a une grande région économique, et plusieurs personnes considèrent que le recrutement des gens d'affaires est un chef de file des gens d'affaires.

En 2001, le RGA a utilisé les Jeux de la Francophonie pour lancer une campagne—Ici notre bilinguisme vous sourit. Here our bilingualism smiles at you—en partenariat avec les associations de gens d'affaires et les zones d'améliorations commerciales. Ce fut un succès retentissant du point de vue des médias locaux et également nationaux.

J'ai été coprésidente du Comité des citoyens sur la gestion publique dans Ottawa-Carleton. Ce comité avait le mandat de regarder à différentes formules de gestion, voir si on restait une municipalité régionale et 12 villes. Le comité a décidé de se saborder à cause de l'interférence des politiciens, des maires et des conseillers.

Je suis présentement membre du conseil d'administration de la caisse populaire Trillium. Je préside le comité de vérification. Le travail du comité, en partenariat avec la direction générale, a permis d'économiser plus de 50 000 \$ par année, d'économies au niveau de police d'assurances, parce qu'on a une meilleure gouvernance et donc les risques sont plus petits.

J'ai siégé au Partenariat économique Ottawa, the Ottawa Partnership, qui était présidé par le maire Bob Chiarelli et également Rod Bryden, que je considère—je vénère cette personne et je le considère un peu comme un mentor. On avait comme mandat d'établir le plan maître de développement économique pour la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa.

En outre, pendant trois ans, j'ai animé l'émission Projet PME à la télévision communautaire Rogers. C'était un partenariat avec le recrutement des gens d'affaires. On présentait à chaque semaine deux petites entreprises membres du RGA.

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Donc, ces expériences ainsi que les années m'ont appris qu'il faut séparer clairement le rôle du conseil d'administration et celui de la direction générale afin d'éviter de faire de la microgestion. Il faut également que les membres d'un conseil d'administration fonctionnent comme une équipe et voient à établir le plus de partenariats possibles avec les parties intéressées et intéressantes lorsque c'est pertinent de le faire.

Je mentionnais au début de ma présentation que nous sommes à l'ère des communications et dans l'économie du savoir. Il va sans dire que siéger à ce conseil d'administration est intéressant. Je tiens d'une part à contribuer à ma communauté. Pour moi, ça serait une courte apprentissage qui serait sans doute intéressante, et puis je pense que c'est un moyen d'y avoir du plaisir.

Monsieur le Président, mesdames et messieurs membres du comité, vous voudrez savoir également que

j'ai été membre en règle du Parti libéral. J'ai participé à des activités de prélèvement de fonds pour John Baird. J'ai travaillé à la campagne d'Evelyn Gigantes il y a plusieurs années. J'ai participé au Premier's dinner quand M. Harris et M. Eves étaient là. J'ai assisté au Trillium dinner avec M. McGuinty.

Maintenant, je suis prête à répondre à vos questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Merci. That was a very extensive, enthusiastic presentation. As I mentioned, we begin any questions with the third party.

Ms Horwath: Thank you for coming forward this afternoon. It's really important that so many francophone people have come forward, particularly at this time in the ongoing history of TVO/TFO.

You talked quite extensively about your background and the various boards you've been on, the various community activities you've undertaken and your work in both public and private sector initiatives. Could you maybe bridge the gap and tell me particularly the kinds of things those experiences gave you that you can give to the board of TVO/TFO?

Ms Desaulniers: From what I hear, one of the challenges that the organizations will have will be to refine, maybe, their governance, because with the budget cuts, that means you have to look at the way you do business. One of the last things I did as a public servant were the program review in 1995 to look at whether we are doing the right things in the best way possible. My experience, from working with a variety of clients and as a small business, is that you need to be able to look at things differently. Challenging the status quo is one of the things I do very well, to the detriment of some of my colleagues. I can easily see all the facets of an element. So, are there partners we can go get? That might be useful at this time.

Ms Horwath: Excellent. Can I ask what your opinion is of public broadcasting generally and, as well, of various groups that have been established to provide advocacy or help with public broadcasting facilities?

Ms Desaulniers: I think public broadcasting is a very important tool. There are enough private stations contributing to the downsizing of Ontario. I feel that a public broadcaster also has a responsibility, in its mandate of education, to raise that bar a bit for people. The challenge is to make sure that the taxpayers feel they're getting their money's worth. That is also a part of things to consider.

Ms Horwath: So, then, what would you say is the particular role of TVO/TFO in our Ontario market?

Ms Desaulniers: To almost be a beacon of quality in broadcasting. One of the advantages of having a small business and working from home is that sometimes for my union break, I'll zap and—I shouldn't be telling you this—one of the shows I enjoy in the afternoon is Dora the Explorer. I find that it's good television. When I watch TFO, there are some very good shows.

I have a sister who's a teacher in Sudbury, and when she comes to Ottawa, she goes and gets some of the products that she saw on TFO. Because of the sheer

territory of the province covered, those are tools that are very important to unify the community.

Ms Horwath: I'm going to switch track a little bit. What's your opinion of the idea of privatization of part or all of TFO/TVO?

Ms Desaulniers: I could not cheer for something like that. As I mentioned, there are enough organizations or private chains that contribute to the downsizing of Ontario and, from what I have seen so far of both TVO and TFO, they have quality. A lot of francophone teachers look at TFO as their main source of resources to teach the children.

I even read in the documents—I'm not sure if they're on the Web site or in some of the other documents, but I would see an important cultural role that is part of education that should be expanded. So that would be an important tool.

Ms Horwath: Do you have much of an understanding of what the history of funding has been for TVO/TFO in terms of budgets, where they are now, where they were before, what the pieces are?

Ms Desaulniers: Yes.

Ms Horwath: Could you explain to me what your perspective is, what your understanding is of the budgets?

Ms Desaulniers: The understanding was that there were budgets and they have separate entities, each managing their own. From what I understand, the licence that TVO/TFO has does not allow for private advertising, but there are provisions for corporate sponsorship and partnership.

I know that TVO is much more dynamic in getting membership and encouraging private subscription. It's something I would like TFO to do more of—finding ways to generate contributions from the community—because people speak with their pockets as well.

Ms Horwath: Lastly, I just wanted to ask you a little bit about your opinion of the governance structure. You raised that in your comments, particularly around some of your skills. There have been some discussions, some issues around the representation of francophones on the board and then whether or not there should be separate entities for TVO and TFO. Can I just get your opinion on both the current structure and whether you see a division being necessary.

Ms Desaulniers: As a consultant, I'm a firm promoter of mastermind alliances. The rationale behind mastermind alliances is that if you have a group of people with the same type of background, the same type of information, that's as far as you're going to go, but you grow from the diversity. Personally, I like the formula where you have both communities at the same table because each can make the other aware. Especially when we're talking public funds, better decisions are made when you have a good appreciation of the full line of products.

Ms Horwath: OK. Just lastly, if you wanted to comment on what you see as being the key to the future success of TVO/TFO. What's the key to stabilizing and making it successful in the future?

Ms Desaulniers: To make people aware of the wealth of information, the jewels that those are, and trying to position strategically in the downsizing approach so that people turn to TVO and TFO when they want quality, when they want to increase knowledge or their culture about different elements. That would be good strategic positioning.

M. Berardinetti: Nous n'avons pas de questions, mais je voulais vous dire merci, madame Desaulniers, pour votre présentation aujourd'hui devant notre comité.

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M^{me} Desaulniers: Merci, monsieur.

The Chair: Very good. To the official opposition, Ms Scott.

Ms Scott: Thank you for appearing before us here today also, and for your presentation. You've been very active in your community for a lot of years, so I commend you for that. My nieces like Dora the Explorer also—good show.

Ms Desaulniers: Do I want to know how old they are?

Ms Scott: OK, they're still 10 and under, so it's acceptable.

M^{me} Desaulniers: D'accord.

Ms Scott: I want to ask you a little bit about the cuts that the government has said they will be making, the \$2 million to TVO and the \$1 million to TFO. Do you have any idea where those cuts may be coming from, or what programming?

Ms Desaulniers: I don't know enough—

Ms Scott: Suggestions?

Ms Desaulniers: Suggestions? Firstly, different things come into play. Hopefully, if there is a program review, the province will have learned from how the feds did it, and the lessons learned. There are different ways. I can theorize on a lot of things—I have opinions galore—but in this case I don't have enough information. It would be looking at how business is done and what could be done differently.

As I mentioned earlier, it would be, for example, for TFO to be more dynamic, to recruit members, to become more important or stand out more in the community. I don't have enough information on how things are done on a daily basis, but it might be a matter of looking at, are we doing the right thing? Are we doing it in the optimal manner? Do we do it for the right people in the proper manner? If I'm on the board, I'll be able to give you a better answer in a couple of months.

Ms Scott: OK. I don't know if I missed it, but had you made comment before on how you felt about private investors, private investment in TVO?

Ms Desaulniers: That is something, when the decision not to put TVO/TFO on the market, to go get private sponsorship—I'm sure the decision was the right decision to make at that time, but it might be something we may want to look at, for whatever reason. It's an option; it's a possibility. Is it a good one for TVO/TFO? I don't know, but it might be worth looking at.

Ms Scott: My colleague has some questions for you. Thank you very much for coming today and answering.

Mr Tascona: I just want to ask you: Do you have any involvement with the Liberal Party?

Ms Desaulniers: As I mentioned, I was a card-carrying member.

Mr Tascona: You're not any more?

Ms Desaulniers: My subscription lapsed at the end of December.

Mr Tascona: You can renew it this year. You've been a donor to the party too, haven't you?

Ms Desaulniers: The only party I contributed to was for the fundraisers for John Baird.

Mr Tascona: OK. So John Baird's your MPP?

Ms Desaulniers: No. Madame Meilleur is my MPP.

Mr Tascona: OK. So you're in Ottawa-Vanier?

Ms Desaulniers: Yes, sir.

Mr Tascona: I'm a little surprised by your comments about being that open, if I understood it correctly, to the privatization of TVO or TFO. Or are you just open to the idea?

Ms Desaulniers: Let me reposition that. I would not privatize, but I would go get private funds for advertising, as partners, contributors, other than just the corporate partners or sponsors. It would be very sad if the government would sell TVO and TFO.

Mr Tascona: Let me ask you about the role of TFO in terms of French language school boards. Do you think they should be having more involvement with the French language school boards, because, as you know, there would be some complementary relationship there?

Ms Desaulniers: That could be one of the possibilities that we look at. There are other elements; for example, there is the Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques, which is like a clearing house of pedagogical material for the schools. So there might be partnerships to make, because by being partners, then that could be greater distribution. There might be other avenues. For example, when I left the public service in 1995—again the pleasure of working at home—I discovered on TVO there was a series on how to start your small business that was done in partnership with Algonquin College. Afterwards, people could order the workbooks, cassettes and stuff like that, which I felt was just great. I have not seen a similar product or similar partnership with the French side. So that might be another opportunity to get that information—

Mr Tascona: I'm not aware of any educational instruments with respect to TFO as opposed to TVO, although I do know there is a relationship with the print media. There are two French newspapers that generally go through the French school board system that the students are given, as opposed to materials TFO could provide that would be educational, which has not been evident.

Ms Desaulniers: It might be part of the governance and looking at how we do things. On the French side, for example in Ottawa, when we have Winterlude, Frimousse comes and goes with monsieur and madame

Glamotte, the little groundhog characters there. In one of the shows in TFO, one key character is Frimousse, and children just love Frimousse, and there is also Caillou. You have Caillou on TV, and when the Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques that I was referring to did their official opening, there were lineups for streets. Little kids wanted to go see Caillou. So those could be some of the partnerships that we look at and do things differently.

Mr Tascona: I'm just suggesting there could be a stronger partnership. I think that's something you should look at. I remember when TVO was here doing a presentation with Isabel Bassett and they were showing some English-language educational tools; they were quite impressive. But there wasn't any presentation with respect to French educational instruments.

Ms Desaulniers: That might be another market to court and make it even more "rentable," make it more profitable.

Mr Tascona: I wasn't suggesting that. I was thinking about the French-language school system from a supportive viewpoint, not as a point of making money from them.

Ms Desaulniers: Well, you can do both. Another value added with TFO is that people in New Brunswick, in Acadie, can see it. So that also strengthens the linkages, and there are now little parts of programming from New Brunswick. To me, TFO is a beacon of quality with regard to television.

Mr Tascona: OK. Thanks very much.

The Chair: Madame Desaulniers, thank you very much for your presentation and response to the members' questions. As you may know, we move to concurrence, the votes on the intended appointees, after we get through our three, which should be about 4 or 4:30?

The Clerk of the Committee: At 5.

The Chair: At 5 o'clock as a worst-case scenario. So you're invited to stick around and enjoy the show.

Ms Desaulniers: I have to go back. Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Have a good day.

NORMAN PURVES

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Norman Purves, intended appointee as member, Ontario Realty Corp board of directors.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Mr Norman "Bud" Purves. We had a chance to meet Mr Purves in his previous position as president and CEO of the CN Tower during some very difficult tourism years, 2001-02 and into 2003. But the tower still stands and Mr Purves still stands, and he stands before us as an intended appointee to the Ontario Realty Corp.

Mr Purves, welcome to the committee. You're invited to make a presentation about your interest in the ORC and your qualifications. Then we'll start into questions with the government members. The floor is yours, sir.

1530

Mr Norman Purves: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Yes, I do have a statement to make. It is indeed a pleasure to be here. It's quite thrilling for a person to come in off the street; we don't get to come to this building too often.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I do feel honoured to appear before you as a candidate for the board of the Ontario Realty Corp. As you can see from my resumé, which I hope you have before you, I have had significant real estate and governance experience, all of which I believe would contribute to the value I could bring to the Ontario Realty Corp board, if appointed. My experience covers all aspects of the property industry, from zoning, public policy and servicing to infrastructure; also commercial, institutional and public residential projects; and financing, leasing and property management, as well as the acquisition and sale of property.

I'm a graduate of the urban studies program at York. In my early working years I managed the rezoning of projects in many areas of Ontario, from North Bay to Markham, Burlington, Lindsay and Ottawa. While in Ottawa, Mr Robert Campeau approached me to go to Alberta and open an office for the Campeau Corp in Alberta. In Calgary, I did a number of residential and commercial projects and eventually went out on my own, offering real estate consulting services. As such, I did a joint project in downtown Denver with the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, which was a very interesting project. As well, in Calgary I provided management services to such clients as Great-West Life, which had large holdings in southern California; Atlantic Trust, which had holdings in the Maritimes; and Misener Steamship, which had property throughout the province of Ontario.

In 1989, I was offered the job at A.E. LePage Investments of running that corporation. A.E. LePage Investments is not Royal LePage; it's a separate company which was the offshoot of the merger of A.E. LePage. A.E. LePage Investments had \$250 million worth of projects in Ontario and Florida. As well, they had a joint project with the Department of Housing and Urban Development of the United States government in Syracuse, New York.

From that job, I went to CN Real Estate, where my responsibility was to achieve the rezoning of the railway lands. That was one of my main responsibilities in downtown Toronto, in and about the CN Tower, as well as many other significant sites throughout Ontario, Quebec and eastern Canada. Today I look with pride at some of these sites. The railway lands and the nice project we did on Merton Street in Toronto have all been turned into vibrant real estate projects.

When CN was privatized, I went into the TrizecHahn Corp. As a senior VP there, I was responsible, among a number of things, for capturing the right for Trizec to acquire the management of the CN Tower from the federal government. During my time at Trizec, we saw a great improvement, I believe, in the tower experience for the millions of tourists who came there each year, and we strengthened the tower's importance as a voice for Ontario and the tourism industry in general.

While I was managing the transfer of the assets of the CN Tower back to the federal government in 2002, York University approached me for a role in the corporation which develops all their land. I am now president of that company. At York University we have an ambitious program to supplement the university's finances by maximizing value within the terms of the university guidelines on certain real estate assets.

I believe that all of this is highly relevant experience, given that the Ontario Realty Corp is one of Canada's largest real estate and management companies, with responsibility for over 6,000 buildings, which is a startingly large number, representing some 50 million square feet of office space and 90,000 acres of land across the province.

My governance experience includes sitting on boards of various institutional building corporations, such as the opera house that is being built now—a \$150-million project—and the \$300-million MARS project. Previously at the University Health Network I chaired their Project 2003.

My real estate and governance experience has given me great respect for the importance of stakeholder communication, particularly in such public institutions as the CN Tower, the opera house and York. I believe it is essential to engage all stakeholders impacted by the real estate actions of such institutions. I also believe in the ethical value of civic duty, as evidenced by the time I have donated to the opera house, the UHN and the MARS project.

I was born and bred in Ontario. I've lived in many parts of the province, from Red Lake to Sudbury, and also in southern Ontario. As a youngster going through school, I was a bush pilot in northern Ontario, so I saw many parts of this province and have quite a respect for the south as well as the north.

If appointed to the ORC board, I would work hard to help the board fulfill its responsibilities to the shareholder—the province of Ontario—and maximize the value to the Ontario taxpayer.

I'd like to thank you for allowing me to make this brief presentation, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Purves, for the presentation. We'll begin any questions with the members of the government.

Mr Berardinetti: On behalf of the government, I'd like to thank Mr Purves for coming here today. We have no questions and we'd like to waive the remainder of our time.

The Chair: That's very generous of you. We'll pass on to any questions from the official opposition.

Mr Tascona: Thank you, Mr Purves, for coming here today. I think we've met in the past, haven't we, when I was on the city of Barrie council?

Mr Purves: Yes. We met in the early 1990s with the waterfront. Councillor Perri—was that his name?—was quite involved in that.

Mr Tascona: That's when we expropriated your lands to make sure that you didn't build houses on our waterfront.

Mr Purves: Yes. I think, in the end, it all worked out pretty well.

Mr Tascona: It just caught my eye, because when I was looking at your CV here, you mentioned you managed the rezoning of several major railway sites including the extensive railway lands downtown and the Barrie waterfront. I don't think you rezoned those lands, or did you?

Mr Purves: There was an interesting case. Prior to my days at CN Real Estate, the railroad and the city of Barrie entered into some arrangement whereby zoning was conferred on those lands. Then we came along to implement that zoning, and the city of Barrie thought otherwise. So the issue was, how do you control getting maximum value for CN and yet get the city of Barrie its waterfront? We went through a protracted arrangement and eventually—

Mr Tascona: I think you acted pretty professionally through that once we expropriated you so we could make sure that there were no houses built. That was the area from the south shore centre out to Minet's Point Road. I think it worked out well because it's all under public ownership now.

Mr Purves: That's great. Also, CN did get a subdivision south of that. There's a little plaza in there and it all came out. It's been to the betterment of everybody.

Mr Tascona: I remembered you from that. Certainly this is a good opportunity for you right now. I just wanted to indicate that I think you're a good, qualified candidate for this.

Mr Purves: Thank you, sir.

Mr Tascona: My colleague may question you.

Ms Scott: Thank you very much for appearing here before us today. I don't know, in my short time on this committee, if anyone has ever said that they were honoured to appear before us, so I thank you for that.

Mr Purves: It's quite an honour to come off the street, walk into this big building and get your pass. It's quite a hallowed institution. You're probably used to it, but it's a wonderful building.

Ms Scott: It is a wonderful spot. Thank you very much.

You did mention in your comments that you had done work in Lindsay. What did you have there?

Mr Purves: In Lindsay, in my very first job out of school, I worked for a company that owned a manufactured housing plant in Woodstock called Great Northern Capital. Great Northern Capital had to find lots on which to put their manufactured houses. This is back in the early 1970s. At the north end of—is it Evangeline Street?—

Ms Scott: Angeline.

Mr Purves: —there's a subdivision. There was a piece of land in there that we acquired and put draft plan approval on and created about 100 lots in that area in there.

Ms Scott: They're still developing lots of houses at the north end of Angeline.

You have a background in tourism. Tourism is a very big part of my riding, Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, which includes Lindsay, and that's why I asked you that question originally. But we also have the Frost Centre. I don't know if you've been following the news about the sudden closure of the Frost Centre there. It's in the northern part of the riding by Dorset. There's a huge outcry for it not to be sold, but it is in the hands of Management Board and the ORC right now. There is a local committee working to come up with a solution for what they could do with the Frost Centre and they've been working with the ORC. There have been some communication problems and not enough sharing of information. Like I said, they only have a year to come up with it.

Would you be able to help make sure that they can get the information they need? Do you know enough about the ORC and the communications? There just seems to be a big gap between Ontario Realty Corp and this committee specifically, but I'm sure there are other instances.

Mr Purves: I don't specifically know the nature of the ORC's communication process. I am aware of the Frost Centre. I know that my children attended there and I had read in the papers in the north of the closing. But I believe that communication is important and I believe that there is a policy in place, which—if I read the mandate of ORC, it's the mandate of the directors of ORC to carry out government policy. Having said that, I do think you're quite right in talking about communication. I think communication around sensitive assets helps in the smoothing out of the process. So that's something I would look into for you on your behalf if I were appointed.

1540

Ms Scott: I appreciate that. Thank you.

The minister approved a new class environment assessment process in April of last year. Do you have any thoughts on the environmental responsibilities of the ORC? The Frost Centre is also going through an environmental assessment right now, along with a heritage assessment.

Mr Purves: Yes. In preparation for this, I did download that from the Web site and was impressed by the amount of material that came out. I did a little historical research to realize that it was a priority as a result of previous criticism that the ORC received.

I don't know whether the criticism is worthy or not, but I do believe that the EA process, in some areas, is a misnomer, because in most instances it's about a communication process of choices and options as well as the significant aspects of a property as to whether there are actually historical, archaeological or, in certain cases, environmental concerns.

I believe that as a public body, such as the ORC and other public bodies I've worked with, you are held to a higher standard than the normal citizen is expected to

operate under. So without being fully conversant with the EA process to which the ORC has submitted itself, other than downloading about 100 pages from the Internet and realizing it's significant, I think it is something that needs to have a lot of attention paid to it, because with real estate and assets such as that, there are a lot of feelings around them and you have to be sensitive to those.

Ms Scott: I appreciate that you seem quite qualified and I'll be sure to hope for some co-operation with the Frost Centre when your appointment is official.

Ms Horwath: Welcome this afternoon. It's very nice to meet you, Mr Purves. I'm wondering if you can tell me if you have an affiliation to any political party or if you've donated to any political party in the past.

Mr Purves: I'm not a member of any party. I have donated to the Liberal Party. If anyone I personally know runs for any elected office, I will donate to that person's campaign, and I've donated to the Conservative Party in the past as well. I have supported certain members of the NDP, but I don't know if I've actually ever donated. I've never been asked.

Ms Horwath: I'll put that on my list. Thank you.

I'm wanting to ask, particularly around the comments you made about the EA process and the necessity of having at least the perception of being at a higher standard in terms of the general public or general business or companies—I want to take that comment and put it toward some other issues and ask you if you realize that the ORC has in the past been accused of political influence when selling land. What would you be able to do or what do you think some suggestions would be, if you have any, to prevent the appearance of political bias or interference in the selling of lands?

Mr Purves: That's a very interesting topic. With the land business, everyone's an expert after something is sold. Wherever you live, in your own neighbourhood, if someone down the street sells something, you say, "Gee, if I had known that, I'd have bought it for that price." So it's always subject to that, and being in the political area, it's another heightened need.

Throughout my days, I have been involved in many land transactions. I've been involved in valuation processes and I've been involved in sales processes, and I think my eye for a process when something comes to me—as a matter of fact, what was intriguing when I was reading the materials about the ORC was that they talked about major transactions getting reviewed by the board. I don't know what it meant by "reviewed by the board," whether that meant approved or reviewed or passed by. So I'd be interested in finding out what the governance of the ORC meant by the words "reviewed by the board," and also that transactions get approved by an order in council above a certain level.

I think many steps have been taken over the last while to talk to the perception of politics in land sales, and I think a further attempt has been made where they're looking to outsource their sales activities. I presume the ORC is attempting to make someone who's a third party directly accountable for an independent transaction.

That's the theory of how that is to work, and I would hope that, as board members, we'd have the opportunity to see that's how it does work.

Ms Horwath: I just want to follow up on some of the comments you made, particularly around your personal background and some of the connections and the people you have come to know and work with—even Mr Tascona here at the end of the table. I'm wondering if you could tell me if you have any concerns at all with the number of developers and real estate contacts you have, that you don't have any conflicts of interest, and, if some arise, how would you prevent both a conflict and the appearance of a conflict from happening or occurring when you're conducting business on behalf of the ORC?

Mr Purves: That's a very good question as well. Personally, if there was a piece of property involved in which someone was interested and was lobbying me directly, I would be offended by that. I think there's a process through which the ORC goes and I think, as a board member, I'd be ensuring that it happened.

I think there's a certain need to talk with the management of a company such as the ORC if a board member is lobbied. I'd be advising the individual involved in management that I'd been approached by this person. I think that's the best way you can do it. Open and fair communication is the way you can get around that sort of an issue.

Ms Horwath: You're probably quite aware of the ORC's mandate in terms of selling off properties and raising revenues for the province. I'm wondering if you have any comments to make on a target that was mentioned by Minister Sorbara about a month ago of \$50 million in savings, to help the ministry save that amount of money in rent and reduced energy consumption in terms of the ORC mandate over the next little while. Do you think it's feasible that the ministries could save \$50 million in both rent and energy costs?

Mr Purves: Not knowing the portfolio in depth, I can't actually answer to the facts upon which the minister made that statement. I would assume that, given the size of the portfolio and the size of the transactions and then benchmarking the expenses within the ORC for ORC buildings against buildings across the province, he may have been able to come up with a gap. A common technique in the real estate business is to benchmark and expense one building versus another building. Real estate and leasing agents use benchmarking all the time to drive one tenant from one building to a lower-cost building.

I think benchmarking and expense management is a common practice in the industry, but I've been in the industry long enough to know that you can pretty well get any number you want after a while. So I would be looking for a management of services. One thing I found at the CN Tower is that it's quality of experience versus cost of experience which ends up giving you value for money. I think value is something that's important, and bottom line is also very important.

Ms Horwath: That's fair, thanks. Do I have another minute or two, Mr Chairman?

The Chair: Certainly.

Ms Horwath: You mentioned earlier in your comments the idea that everybody comments after the deal has been made, whether it's a huge amount that was paid or a great deal that was accomplished by your neighbour down the street. But I think you're probably aware that the ORC has been criticized with regard to some of the deals that have taken place over the last several years, and I have several examples here. On Tomken Road in Mississauga, 9.2 hectares sold for \$1.9 million. The same property was flipped in November of the same year, 1999, for \$4.39 million. I'm not going to bore you with every single one, but there are several examples, many more than the ones that are on my pages here, that perhaps may indicate some problem with the way these properties are marketed or the way they are obtaining value.

I'm wondering if you can tell us if there is a way that we can ensure that bad deals, or what appear to be bad deals for the taxpayer and for the government, can be avoided or at least reduced so we can get the best value out of all the sales that occur.

1550

Mr Purves: That's always a problem in a rising market. During the recovery of a real estate market, something can be sold one day and for no apparent reason, six months later, something else can happen, because the fellow next door to that piece of property obtained zoning for a high-rise, so that high-rise zoning might be thought to accrue to this property. There are a lot of facts around property. I think you can't control those things.

What you can control is to make sure that you have the most open process that you can and that the liabilities associated with a property at the time of sale are properly known so that at some point in time there's always somebody who has a view on how we can manage a liability or not take a liability or pass it on to someone else or leave it with the taxpayer. So it's through homework and diligence in the sales process.

It's a constant fear, I know. I've dealt with public land in the United States, in Florida and Denver, and in Toronto and in areas from all agencies. One of the biggest embarrassments any government agency can have is to sell a piece of land and have it resold for more money later. I'm aware of that problem.

Ms Horwath: Thank you. Those are my questions.

The Chair: Great. Mr Purves, thank you very much for your presentation. It's good seeing you again. Continued success at York University. If you have a chance to stick around, please do. We'll probably, between 4:30 and 5:00, move to our concurrence votes.

CAROL GRAY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Carol Gray, intended appointee as member, Ontario Realty Corp board of directors.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Carol Gray, also as a member of the Ontario Realty Corp board of directors. Ms Gray, among her accomplishments, manned the CIBCs down in the Niagara Peninsula, including Fort Erie, the town where I was born and raised. My account with the CIBC is still in order, as far as you know?

Ms Carol Gray: As far as I know.

The Chair: Ms Gray, welcome to our committee. You have some time to make a presentation about your own qualifications, background and your interest in the ORC, and then any questions we have will begin with the official opposition. The floor is yours.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I too am honoured to be here. I look forward to answering your questions, so I'll keep my introductory remarks brief.

As you can see from my short biography, I have had a successful banking career. I also have a degree in history and political science and an MBA from the University of Western Ontario. It is obvious that I do not have any experience in the public sector nor am I a real estate, construction or facilities management expert. Given my background, therefore, you may be wondering what contribution could I make to the board of the ORC. Let me explain how I think my corporate experience is a good fit with the mandate of the ORC board.

In the Management Board Secretariat 2002-03 business plan, the ORC was described as "working to combine private sector best practices with public sector accountability." I bring to the table 25 years of experience working in large organizations and leading transformational changes at a senior executive level. I believe there are many parallels to the issues and challenges of working in a competitive industry at a highly visible, profit-driven organization to the complexities facing the ORC in successfully achieving its broad mandate.

Firstly, my experience has taught me how to balance the demands of diverse stakeholder groups. Profit-driven shareholders, value- and service-driven customers, employees, special interest groups, auditors, regulators and service providers were all part of a complex stakeholder group whose competing interests I learned to reconcile.

My successful career taught me to rely on the time-tested values of good dialogue, transparency, accountability and integrity. This is the character set that anyone who worked with me at CIBC would use to describe my values.

Secondly, when I was a senior executive at CIBC, my first and foremost job was to maximize shareholder value within the boundaries of good governance. In a mature market such as banking, this often meant that managing costs required greater attention than maximizing revenues. Achieving cost reductions is easier in the early stages of a cost-reduction program by capturing the low-hanging fruit; however, to be a cost-effective organization over the long term, a performance-based culture must be pervasive throughout the organization. Benchmarking other companies in other industries brings new

insights to define performance objectives and achieve results.

Because I am not an expert in real estate subject matter, I am not tied to the status quo nor attached to industry trends. I also have no conflicts of interest. I bring a different corporate perspective and strategic thinking that is grounded in the pragmatic experience of getting a job done well.

Thirdly, I learned my reputation for successfully leading transformational changes in a large and often bureaucratic organization, but my performance was always evaluated on achieving the bottom line budget.

I think you need to know that while the profit objective was always a serious consideration for me, it did not drive my behaviour. My leadership was driven primarily by the employees and customers, and not the shareholders. It was through them, our employees and customers, that we were able to create shareholder value in a sustainable way.

If I am a successful applicant to the board of the ORC, I know there will be a significant learning curve for me. I must understand the business sufficiently in order for the management experience I bring to the table to have relevant context. I am a quick study. Since I am no longer employed, I have the time to learn what I need to know.

Lastly, I would like to explain my personal motive for applying for this position. Since leaving CIBC 18 months ago due to an organizational restructuring, I've reassessed my life's priorities. Spending time with my family and giving back to the community are my major occupations. I think becoming a director of the ORC board, in addition to my other volunteer activities, allows me to contribute to our community in a meaningful way.

Thank you for considering my application, and I welcome any questions you may have.

The Chair: Great. Thank you very much, Ms Gray, for your presentation. It's time for questions, beginning with the official opposition.

Mr Tascona: Thanks for coming here today. Who have you been dealing with in the government to get this appointment?

Ms Gray: Michelle DiEmanuele, who is the deputy minister for the centre for leadership. I worked with her at CIBC. She knew that I had left CIBC and approached me a few months ago, wondering if I would be interested in a director position. I said yes, I had the time, and left it with her.

Mr Tascona: What draws you to this position?

Ms Gray: I think because the board is made up of a mixture of people both from the industry and outside the industry, both in the private sector and in the public sector. I think from my background that, as I explained, while I don't have specific experience in the real estate industry, my general management experience and my experience working in a large organization have a lot of relevance.

Mr Tascona: Is there any compensation for this position?

Ms Gray: It's my understanding that there is a per diem of \$150 for when the directors sit on the board. So it's not for the money that I'm doing this.

Mr Tascona: My colleague has some questions.

Ms Scott: Thank you again for appearing before us here today and bringing your CV, which does have a lot of corporate and community experience.

One of the ORC changes that is to be made is the campaign to conserve energy.

Ms Gray: Yes.

Ms Scott: OK. You're aware of that. There's a timeline of a target reduction of 10% in consumption by 2007. I'm putting a plug in for another Frost in my riding: The Frost campus at Sir Sandford Fleming College in Lindsay has one of the most energy-efficient buildings in Canada.

Ms Gray: I wasn't aware of that.

Ms Scott: Yes. I know that Donna Cansfield had mentioned that she had been looking at that as a model. I didn't know if you wanted to develop any further energy conservation guidelines, and a reminder to maybe look at the Frost campus as a model.

1600

Ms Gray: Thanks for passing that on. While I don't know the specifics of what the ORC has already undertaken to work toward that targeted 10% reduction, I think one of the ways to do that is to benchmark the best practices and to know what's out there and what is achievable, and then to have the measurements in place to know how each building is currently performing to identify the priority buildings that can perhaps be retrofitted or where you can get the greatest benefit from making changes, and then implement the changes and monitor them. So thank you very much for passing on one of the best practices in your riding.

Ms Scott: I'd appreciate if you'd look at that. They've done a lot of work and need to be commended on that.

Back to the other Frost Centre in my riding, you probably heard my other comments about the closure of the Frost Centre, just south of Dorset. It's now in Management Board and ORC hands. I just wanted to get your opinion. I raised some issues about communications and the short timeline they have to find alternatives. Do you have any comments about communications in the ORC presently?

Ms Gray: I do. I'll put it in the context of the Leslie Frost Centre. I have a country home in Haliburton, so although I haven't used the Frost Centre for some time, I spend a lot of time in Haliburton. I think that it goes back to my opening remarks around managing stakeholder groups that often have, on the surface, conflicting interests. They often appear to be conflicting because their time horizons are perhaps different. The information I have on the Leslie Frost Centre I've only learned about through what I read in the Haliburton Echo.

Ms Scott: It's a very good paper.

Ms Gray: I think that a dialogue with the community in the early stages would have perhaps surfaced alternative solutions. I understand that dialogue is going on now, so I'm hopeful that a solution will come about that

is acceptable to all parties. It's the time frame in which they have to work which may be the challenge today.

Ms Scott: Upon your successful appointment to the board, I'd appreciate any co-operation that we could have with the Frost Centre on that.

Do I have any more time?

The Chair: You do, actually.

Ms Scott: I will also bring up, then, the changes of the class environmental assessment process they brought in last year, and any comments you have about that with respect to the heritage aspects that they're also looking at.

Ms Gray: I don't have a lot more to add than the gentleman before me. I, too, believe that the ORC has to hold itself accountable to a higher standard than perhaps we would expect of the normal citizen or private organization. That's obviously because it has a responsibility to carry out the government's policies in an efficient manner, but it also becomes a role model for others in the manner in which it carries itself. I think how it looks at those issues requires good communication, dialogue and transparency in demonstrating that it can be a role model in setting itself up to a higher standard in carrying out those policies.

Ms Scott: I'd certainly encourage you to continue to read the Haliburton County Echo when you're up on the weekends. If you'd like to go by the Frost Centre, I'm sure that once you're appointed to the board, you're going to have more authority to go in and assess the situation.

Thank you for appearing here before us today.

Ms Horwath: I'm going to ask a couple of questions following up on those asked by Ms Scott around policy initiatives that the government has undertaken. Of course, one that has been fairly recent is the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities. I'm wondering if you have any opinions on how the ORC might be able to proceed with making the buildings that are under its control fully accessible to all Ontarians over the short term and the long term.

Ms Gray: First of all, I don't know the specifics of what measures have already been taken. However, I would say that once a policy of the government has been put into effect, then it's the ORC's responsibility to carry out that policy as efficiently and effectively as possible. I would assume that the ORC would do the analysis to determine which buildings could be retrofitted in the most timely fashion and then, by learning from that experience, may be able to tackle the buildings with more complexities.

I think also, as it's already currently doing in many of its other practices—and that is bringing in private sector contractors, people who have developed competitive practices, and through that, by bringing in third party, private sector contractors, get a fair price for the work that has to be done and ensure that the taxpayers ultimately are not paying something more than they have to.

I think, ultimately, bringing those buildings up to the standards that would comply with the act would encour-

age and show how other private sector companies, which will therefore have to follow, can also quickly retrofit their buildings to comply with the act.

Ms Horwath: One of the things I meant to ask at the beginning, the first question, was, are you currently a member of the Liberal Party, or do you make donations to the Liberal Party, or any other party, for that matter?

Ms Gray: No. I'm not a card-carrying member of any party, and I do not make donations.

Ms Horwath: Do you make political donations?

Ms Gray: No, I have not.

Ms Horwath: I'm not sure if you're aware, but if one looks at the history of salary information from the organization, it's really clear that over the last couple of years, not only has the number of employees earning over \$100,000, over \$150,000, over \$200,000 increased, but then, of course, the amount of dollars has increased significantly in terms of salary. I'm wondering if you have any opinion on that issue and if you see any concerns with that.

Ms Gray: I think when you look at numbers such as compensation, they have to be put in the right context. Because the ORC has introduced elements of the private sector and is competing with the private sector for the best talent, perhaps a better way to assess those compensation numbers to determine whether they're adequate or inflated is to compare them with private sector companies that are doing similar jobs, have similar roles as the ORC, because if you want the best talented people, then you're going to have to pay market value.

Ms Horwath: There was another question that I had, and I can't find it now. Oh, I know. One of the questions that I was going to ask Mr Purves, but our time was starting to run out, was the question around recent charges that have been laid, fraud charges against—I'm not going to name names, but there have been police anti-rackets-branch charges laid recently against certain executive staff members of the ORC.

Without dealing specifically with that case, I'm wondering if there are any concerns you have about that and/or any suggestions or ideas that you might have of steps that could be implemented to ensure that things of a similar nature don't occur in the future.

Ms Gray: Obviously, the objective of good governance is to prevent those things from happening. I think some of the steps that the ORC has already taken, such as the use of brokers, for example, where their profit motive is going to ensure that you get the best competitive price—the various levels that any sale of assets has to go through ensures that there is a check and balance and a structure that is followed.

Beyond that, what I would need to know are more of the specifics of the procedures in place today to ensure that there is sufficient good governance. All I can do is bring it back to a lot of my banking experience where, it being a fairly regulated industry, I do have a lot of knowledge around good risk management policies and procedures—risk management in the broad sense of the word.

Ms Horwath: Thank you. No further questions, Mr Chair.

The Chair: Great. To the government members.

Mr Berardinetti: I'd like to thank the nominee, Carol Gray, for making a presentation today. On behalf of the government, we waive all further questions at this time and look forward to hopefully having an approval today.

The Chair: Outstanding. I thank government members. Ms Gray, thank you very much for your presentation here today. You're invited to stay around. We'll move to our concurrence votes after Ms Mulvale's presentation.

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ANN MULVALE

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Ann Mulvale, intended appointee as member, Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Board (OMERS).

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Ann Mulvale. As you folks will know, Ms Mulvale is the ongoing mayor of Oakville and past president of AMO. Your Worship, welcome to our standing committee. Ms Mulvale is an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Board (OMERS). Your Worship, the floor is yours for a presentation about your interests in this position, and then any questions will begin with the third party.

Ms Ann Mulvale: Good afternoon, Mr Chair and members of the committee. I welcome this opportunity to be with you this afternoon to speak to this potential nomination to the board of directors of OMERS and to respond to questions that you may have.

As has been alluded to, in my role on the AMO board, as a member, as twice the president and as the immediate past president, I've been involved in a number of conversations over the years about the importance of the OMERS board. In fact, the president of the board has routinely, probably once a year, appeared before the AMO board.

Obviously, the OMERS board has a multifaceted stewardship role, a vitally important stewardship role: the stewardship of management of monies vitally important to the quality of life for the retirement of former municipal employees and the responsibility to ensure money contributed by individual municipal employees and the property taxpayer is managed in a sensible, responsible and ethical manner.

As a person widowed at 45 who has received a pension since then, I have a greater awareness of the importance of pensions than many people of my age. In my role as the mayor of a community, I understand that benefits are an issue in attracting and retaining the intellectual and physical capabilities that are essential to a well-run municipality.

With the demographic shift occurring at the end of the employment cycle of the baby boomers, the growth in the number of people drawing pensions will continue to

increase. Challenges in the equity market have put pressure on all pension funds, especially OMERS because of the federal requirement to deal with the surplus of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Since becoming mayor in 1988, I've had the privilege of serving with five Premiers of all three political parties during their tenure in power. It has been my practice not to carry a card provincially since becoming a municipally elected official in 1980. I have always respected the democratic process and whomever the people choose, whether locally on municipal councils that I've had the privilege of serving and leading or at the provincial or federal levels of government, I have always seen my role as an elected official to be to work for the best possible outcomes for the people that we together serve.

Over the past two years, I've worked with former Premiers Bill Davis and Bob Rae on the Toronto City Summit Alliance's work. Former Premier Bob Rae was kind enough to offer a supportive quote for my 2003 campaign Web site.

I believe the OMERS board has taken a position regarding P3s and, where there are potential conflicts between municipal employees, it's quite clear that they're investing in bricks and mortar, not in operations that might take away public sector jobs. Given the change in provincial leadership, there also seems to be less likelihood of P3s becoming an important matter of investment opportunities for OMERS. That conflict seems to have diminished.

Municipalities and their employees enjoyed the contribution holiday. However, now they are faced with the possibility of increased fees to fund in a financially responsible way the benefits that OMERS pensioners receive. An increase in fees is an issue for both the employee and the employer. Both sides are very conscious of the need to ensure the financial integrity of the pension plan.

In preparation for today's hearing, I had the opportunity on Saturday to speak to an OMERS board member, Michael Power, the former president of AMO, who I followed into that role. AMO, although not able to appoint members directly to the OMERS board, has always taken an interest in the membership of that board.

I would like to serve in this capacity and deploy the skills I have gained in over 20 years of municipal life. Through my roles as AMO president, as a widow who has been a pensioner for almost 10 years and as CEO of an organization that employs over 800 current OMERS members, I understand the need to listen and learn while sharing and serving.

I am prepared and anxious for your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Your Worship. We begin any questions with the third party. Ms Horwath.

Ms Horwath: A couple of the comments you made during your presentation covered off some of the questions I had, Your Worship, so that's very positive. I guess one that's outstanding is, you talked a little bit about the concern of both employees and employers in regard to the funding that's required. In your opinion,

what position are municipalities in, overall, as employers to be able to absorb the costs of increasing contributions?

Ms Mulvale: In my own community, the overall budget of the town of Oakville is impacted to a 2.9% amount of pension benefits. When you look at the tightness of the revenue streams that the municipal order of government has, any increase is significant. Some municipalities have had great difficulty blending back in the holiday from OMERS, so the increase to the employer in terms of municipalities must be seen in the wider context of pressures on the property tax base.

We've been pleased to work with the provincial government and the federal government, both past and present, to draw their attention to the need to increase the revenue streams of the municipal order of government. We've seen positive moves in that regard with the sharing of the existing gasoline and fuel taxes both provincially and federally. With any increase from the employer sector for municipalities, it must be realized that those funds are primarily going to come from increases in property taxes.

Ms Horwath: I'm sure you're aware that there's likely going to be an increase. I think OMERS has already announced that. Do you support that decision within the context of—

Ms Mulvale: There are two things that we need to look at. We need to see it in the wider context that I've spoken to, but we also need to see it in that we have an obligation to be stewards of those resources. I don't think the people benefiting from pensions are going to want to have an issue of rollback of benefit gains that they achieved during the days of the surplus, so we need to balance that.

I am increasingly confident that my colleagues at the other orders of government understand the dilemma facing the municipal order of government and that monies of a sustainable nature will flow to assist us.

Ms Horwath: The cities' agenda, I would imagine.

I forgot to ask at the beginning: How did you find out about this particular vacancy?

Ms Mulvale: The AMO board always monitors that. As I indicated, we have no opportunity to directly appoint but we do maintain an awareness of when these openings are coming up. Typically, Pat Vanini of AMO will have contact with provincial staffs on these items, and if there are any people who have been expressing an interest or if there have been discussions at the board about who would be interested in doing this—that process has been one I've been aware of for a couple of years. As the immediate past president, the timing seemed right, and I'm pleased to step forward, if that's the decision of this committee.

Ms Horwath: May I ask your opinion on the governance structure currently at OMERS? Do you think it's the appropriate one? Do you think there needs to be more autonomy?

Ms Mulvale: Well, it's balanced in terms of the employee and the employer by the six appointments from each area of interest. It's easy to look from the outside in.

Once you're able to serve on a board, you get a better idea of how that functions.

I understand there has been a change, a little bit, in the tone of meetings and the ability for people to listen to the issue rather than challenge the individual in the last few months. I think that's a positive sign. I think it's healthy to understand that there are diverse interests on a board such as OMERS, and you need to have a very positive environment that encourages decisions to be made on a factual basis and active listening to the concerns of the employee and the employer groups.

Ms Horwath: In that vein, apparently there has been some criticism of the investment strategies of the Borealis infrastructure, the investment arm, particularly by employees who are covered by the OMERS plan. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on the investment strategy.

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Ms Mulvale: I pulled the text of a speech that the new president and CEO, Paul Haggis, made to the Economic Club of Toronto on June 11. Some of the strategies that have now been viewed, with hindsight, as questionable have had the same impacts and the same questions raised in other private sector pension plans as well. So it's been a real learning curve with what has happened to the markets. There's always that belief; we just have to see the optimism, which some would call greed, of the Nortel investment frenzy and how far they can fall.

I think it would be prudent for anyone who came on to the board to look at the present strategies, to look at the checks and balances, and certainly to have an understanding of where the new CEO, president and the board feel their directions are going. Most individuals, no matter what their worth, like to have a diversified portfolio, because there is always some exposure. If you're in minerals too heavily or if you're in the banking industry—no disrespect to the previous speaker—you try to mitigate those risks. That's why you have a balanced portfolio. It recognizes that there will be peaks and valleys within the individual categories.

Ms Horwath: We've spoken of your leadership role in AMO as well, so I wanted to ask you quite frankly—in fact, I come from the municipal sector. I was a city of Hamilton councillor for many years. Some municipal leaders, rightly or wrongly, have felt that AMO doesn't really represent them and their communities in any great way. I'm wondering if that's going to affect your ability to deal with them, particularly as their OMERS representative. For those who are not enamoured of AMO or don't feel that AMO is representative of their interests, how will you be able to mitigate that concern?

Ms Mulvale: First, the reality is that AMO continues to represent the vast majority of municipalities in this province. You may be referencing the dispute between the city of Toronto, which I believe is really with the provincial government, and AMO got caught in the crossfire. I had the privilege of signing the memorandum of understanding at the AMO conference in October. The advancement in that was very significant: having a signed agreement between AMO and the provincial gov-

ernment that indicated that if the federal government dedicates funds through the municipal order of government, there will be no delay, there will be no clawback, there will be no conveying premium. The municipality that benefits most significantly from that change, oddly enough, is the city of Toronto, in terms of social housing and child care.

I am a politician; you are a politician, Madam. There are always politics that come into play in some of those sabre-rattlings. Recently, we even had the Premier of Newfoundland take down this nation's flag as a negotiating tool. I would suggest to you that the situation in Toronto, which must be the member you're speaking of, because we have the confirmed membership of virtually everybody else, was a tool. The negotiations continue and I have every hope that AMO will see Toronto back as a member.

I also just ceased chairing the affordable housing and homeless task force for AMO, and one of the key participants, although they're not a member of AMO any more, is the city of Toronto. We're working very well with one of the key people out of the mayor of Toronto's office.

Ms Horwath: Thank you. Those are my questions.

The Chair: To the government members.

Mr Berardinetti: I just wanted to thank Ann Mulvale for her excellent presentation. I think the government members are satisfied with her presentation and her application and would waive any further questions.

The Chair: That helps me run the committee on time. Much appreciated, sir. To the official opposition.

Mr Tascona: Thanks very much for attending here today. I just want to ask you a few questions. One has to do with the OMERS plan. My understanding is that there are currently 93,000 OMERS pensioners. The president of OMERS has indicated that by 2025, the OMERS pensioner population will exceed 200,000. Adjustments have been made to the investment strategy to hopefully achieve double-digit returns that would maintain the benefit but, obviously, if that doesn't occur, some potential options would be increasing the contribution level or decreasing the benefit level, because funding sustainability is a big issue.

What we're seeing out there is a trend in the private sector moving from defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans, which are individual RSPs. Of course, we here at Queen's Park have that. We have an individual RSP as a pension instrument.

What's also occurring out there, from what I've been reading, is that the Governor of California is proposing for the two main public sector pension plan systems, because of the funding problems they have there—I think they just recently issued a \$12-billion bond because of the funding problems they have with respect to supporting their current public-sector-type pension, which is a defined benefit plan. The option they're looking at is that the new hires who would come on would be under the individual RSP, which is what we have here at Queen's Park, as opposed to going into the defined benefit plan.

I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that, because certainly the sustainability of the funding is going to be a big issue, in my view. That's something that seems to be out there. There seem to be trends of moving away from the defined benefit plan in the private sector, but there's something happening in the United States at the public sector level. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms Mulvale: Not all things that happen in the States are beneficial or should be transferred to Canadian traditions, is the first comment.

Second, many of the people who are in the OMERS benefit and pension plan have collective agreements. This issue would definitely have to be dealt with in the confines of honouring collective agreements, so we would have to look at that.

We have some experiences in municipalities of unions in negotiations entering into discussions about redefining, for instance, their dental plans. As we entertain contract talks, we always try to be very honest with our people: "This is how much money we have. This is where our money comes from. Is there a menu that you would like to pick from?" So if there were going to be any changes to OMERS, we'd have to be heavily focused on respecting the collective agreements that are in place.

Mr Tascona: And there's no doubt, but obviously when you're looking at a potential funding problem—because double-digit returns in the current environment could change. I think it's going to be a fairly significant accomplishment to achieve double-digit gains, but if you can't, I'm just saying, those are the options out there. Certainly that's something I see as a trend out there. I don't know whether you see that at all.

Ms Mulvale: Obviously, the deficit is not peculiar to OMERS. It's reported that the deficit in Canadian pension plans, 60% of which have \$160 billion in combined deficits—so that is again looking at a diversified portfolio.

Many people whose personal portfolios went down, whether they were in mutual funds and they're working people or whatever, their property values went up. So if you look at it as an asset mix—and of course, what OMERS is striving to do is have the right asset mix. The individual net present worth of many Ontarians, although they've lost money in the stock market, has not diminished; it has increased because of their property assets.

So in a pension plan that has wisely invested in a diverse way, it is not beyond the realm of possibility to get above single-digit increases. I'm approaching this as a positive person. We'll see where it goes, but I don't think we should approach it from the point of view that they're not going to be successful, when they have retained some new resources to readjust their investment strategy in that balanced approach to have better counter-balances.

Mr Tascona: Time will tell.

Let me ask you another question, though, because we've been meeting with the firefighters' association and

we've met with the police associations. They both want out of OMERS. What's your opinion on that?

Ms Mulvale: I need to learn more about it. I certainly am aware, from AMO's perspective, of these negotiations and these suggestions.

One of the difficulties that happens with OMERS is that if you separate any, you lose some of the critical mass, number one. Number two, any changes that are negotiated for fire and police will be used at the bargaining table municipally. That's the reality. So we have to look at that. We already accommodate, quite rightly, early retirement ages for firefighters because of the exposure of their occupation. I need to understand the issue. I need to see what it is they're trying to achieve by that and what the ripples would be to other employee groups within the OMERS plan, so at this point it would be premature for me to have a position.

Mr Tascona: Yes, but you're aware that's what they want.

Ms Mulvale: I'm aware that there are discussions. I think that was part of the discussion during the last provincial election.

Mr Tascona: Being the mayor of a municipality, and this is OMERS, is there any conflict in your being on this board?

Ms Mulvale: No. In fact, I've only just got into the OMERS plan. Oakville, as a community, didn't put their municipal officials in. So in terms of any pension that I would get when I retire, I'd have to try to equal Hazel McCallion at 70 and 80 to get anything meaningful. So I don't think there is. I am in the plan, but in a very, very small way.

Mr Tascona: OK. No more questions.

The Chair: Mayor Mulvale, thank you very much for your presentation and for coming before our committee today. We will now move to our concurrence votes, so please stick around.

We will go to the first of this afternoon's intended appointments. It was Diane Desaulniers. Diane Desaulniers was an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, TVO/TFO.

Mr Berardinetti, do you move concurrence?

Mr Berardinetti: Yes, Mr Chairman, I do.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any discussion on Madame Desaulniers's intended appointment? Seeing none, all in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Norman (Bud) Purves, intended appointee as member, Ontario Realty Corp board of directors.

Mr Berardinetti: I move concurrence, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any discussion on Mr Purves's intended appointment to the ORC? Seeing none, all in favour of the intended appointment? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Congratulations to Bud.

We're now considering the intended appointment of Carol J. Gray, who earns bonus points for sticking around to the end of the committee. Ms Gray is the intended

appointee as member of the Ontario Realty Corp board of directors.

Mr Berardinetti: Mr Chairman, I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any discussion concerning Ms Gray's intended appointment? All in favour? Any opposed? It is carried.

Congratulations and all the best at the ORC.

Our fourth and final of today's session, Mayor Ann Mulvale, intended appointee as member of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Board, OMERS.

Mr Berardinetti: Mr Chairman, I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any discussion? All those in favour of the appointment? Any opposed? It is carried.

Your Worship Mayor Mulvale, congratulations and all the best with OMERS.

Folks, before we end our session, we are anticipating additional intended appointments to come through

between now and our next meeting of February 16. As members know, the House resumes on February 15. Are members interested in meeting in the next couple of weeks to try to clear up some appointments? I'm gauging the interest of my colleagues.

Mr Berardinetti: So February 16 is the next date?

The Chair: February 16 is the currently scheduled next meeting of the agencies committee. We anticipate some appointments coming through the next few Fridays. I will circulate a message to gauge members' availability between now and February 16, noting not a great deal of enthusiasm for meeting before the 16th. We will see what develops.

Any final business for today's session? Great. Thank you very much, folks. We are adjourned early. Have yourselves a good afternoon and a good evening. We'll see you soon.

The committee adjourned at 1634.

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