



ISSN 1180-4335

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 38^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 19 April 2006

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 19 avril 2006

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Tim Hudak
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Copies of Hansard

Copies of Hansard can be purchased from Publications Ontario: 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. e-mail: webpubont@gov.on.ca

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'Index

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

Exemplaires du Journal

Des exemplaires du Journal sont en vente à Publications Ontario : 880, rue Bay Toronto (Ontario), M7A 1N8 courriel : webpubont@gov.on.ca

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 19 April 2006

Mercredi 19 avril 2006

The committee met at 1004 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good morning, folks. I'm pleased to call to order the standing committee on government agencies for our regular meeting of Wednesday, April 19, 2006. How's everybody doing? Mr. Fonseca is defying the red tie memo today, by the way.

Interjections.

The Chair: Well, we will look the other way, but please have that corrected for the next committee meeting.

Folks, we'll get through ordinary business, and I'll defer item 3, which is the subcommittee on agency review discussion, until the end of our session so that we can proceed with the interviews in a timely fashion.

First, I'll dispose of items 1 and 2. We have a report of the subcommittee on committee business dated April 6, 2006.

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I would move adoption.

The Chair: Mr. Parsons moves its adoption. Is there any discussion on those minutes? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed? It is carried.

The next order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, April 13, 2006.

Mr. Parsons: I move adoption.

The Chair: Mr. Parsons, without hesitation, moves its adoption. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed, if any? It is carried.

Folks, again, I'll move item 3, which is the report of the subcommittee on committee business, agency review, to the end of our interview process and concurrence votes as well as other business, so we can begin our appointments review.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

GLORIA CONNOLLY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Gloria Connolly, intended appointee as member, Ontario Judicial Council.

The Chair: We have with us today, as our first interview, Gloria Connolly. Good morning, Ms. Connolly. Ms. Connolly is an intended appointee as a member of

the Ontario Judicial Council. You're welcome to come forward, Ms. Connolly, and make yourself comfortable; if you want to grab a glass of water, or there are other beverages to your left. As you may know, you're welcome to make opening remarks about your interest in the position and your background, and then we'll do a rotation method for questions from all members of the committee. Our rotation is to begin with the third party, Mr. Bisson, so hopefully we will see Mr. Bisson shortly. If not, then we'll move to the government members.

Ms. Connolly, the floor is yours.

Ms. Gloria Connolly: Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to present and discuss my credentials. I believe they will demonstrate that I am qualified to be appointed to sit on the Ontario Judicial Council. I understand you have a copy of my resumé, and rather than go through a litany of my skills, I'd like to recap what I would like you to know about me, and then I'll be happy to answer your questions.

I retired in 1992 as a manager with Bell Canada after completing 32 years of service. I held many different positions during my career, and I developed the skills that one would expect one would as they move upward in a large corporation. During my career, I was responsible for non-management employees, and later on I was responsible for management staff. At one point in my career, I taught six-week management courses to newly appointed managers to assist them with the transition from non-management to management.

I am a strong and skilled communicator. I speak effectively one-on-one and in groups, I encourage open expression of ideas and opinions from others, and I am comfortable making my views known, even in unfamiliar situations. I have demonstrated the ability to make sound and timely decisions, even under conditions of uncertainty. I always gather and analyze pertinent information. I consider both sides of any story, and I look at other factors that may have contributed to the situation. I am focused when doing a task and I approach situations with a fair and unbiased attitude.

If you were to read my letters of reference, they all carry common themes: my ability to analyze and make sound decisions; my strong organizational skills; my positive interaction with others; and my exceptionally high level of energy.

During my time in human resources with Bell, I was involved with labour relations, and I also taught labour

relations protocol and conflict resolution at Georgian College. So I am familiar with disciplinary issues.

While at Bell, I was invited to teach at Georgian College in their Ontario management development program. I taught for 12 years various management courses to adults, and I also taught courses to the staff of Georgian College, such as effective business communication. These were evening courses.

I feel I bring a balanced blend of corporate, non-profit and volunteerism experience to the council. I have always felt a commitment to my community, and I continue to have a concern for the well-being of those who are vulnerable in our society.

I spent a year as a volunteer for the Special Olympics winter games in Barrie. The position was full time for 10 months, and I was responsible for the 900 volunteers it took to make those games successful. I managed all volunteer teams, from visitor services to police and medical response teams. I also raised over \$100,000 from local businesses and individuals for the games. I consider this to have been one of the best experiences of my life.

1010

I then spent two years coordinating 120 breakfast programs in the schools in Simcoe county. For the past year, I've been doing fundraising and volunteer coordination for the MS Society of Canada.

Last but not least, for several years I was a volunteer consultant on the archbishop's staff for the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. I provided facilitation and consultation services to parishes who were having difficulty managing their churches. I was appointed by the bishop to a two-year term on the board of management for two local churches to provide expertise with planning and conflict resolution, and those assignments have been completed. I continue to facilitate workshops on sexual misconduct policy to volunteers, clergy and laypersons upon request from churches.

I was interviewed last month by a panel chaired by Mr. Warren Dunlop regarding this appointment. He is with the ministry.

I'm happy to answer your questions.

The Chair: Great, Ms. Connolly. Thank you very much for your opening presentation and remarks.

As I said at the beginning, the rotation was to start with the third party. Welcome, Mr. Tabuns, by the way, to the committee. Nice having you join us at the agencies committee.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Tabuns hasn't had a chance to sit on this committee before, I think as members know, so I'm going to propose that we begin the rotation instead with the official opposition. I do need unanimous consent for that, so that Mr. Tabuns can see how the questions proceed.

Interjection.

The Chair: We'll proceed then with the official opposition, followed by the third party. Ms. Scott.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): Thanks, Ms. Connolly, for coming here today to appear

before us. Thank you for all your volunteerism and your work in your community. It's more extensive than the resumé we received, so I appreciate that background that you filled in there.

I know Mr. Tascona, my colleague, knows you and so I'm just going to ask a couple of questions to start with. We have about 10 minutes to ask questions and then he'll finish off. So thank you again for appearing here before us.

Can you explain how you knew about the appointment or why you chose the Ontario Judicial Council to sit on or serve as a member?

Ms. Connolly: When I was doing the breakfast programs in Simcoe county, I worked with a colleague who was applying for some of these positions, so he told me about them. Then, at the end of the year, I decided to make some changes in the volunteer work I was doing and it came back to my mind, so I called Mr. Tascona's office and asked what the website was because I'd forgotten. I got the website and went down and looked until I found something that I thought would interest me.

Ms. Scott: And then you just applied online?

Ms. Connolly: Right.

Ms. Scott: At the end of last year, was it, and then submitted—

Ms. Connolly: I think January maybe; but anyway, yes, I did apply online.

Ms. Scott: And then someone called you and followed up with the appointment?

Ms. Connolly: Right, and then I went down and was interviewed by the panel chaired by Mr. Warren Dunlop.

Ms. Scott: That interview took place when? Sorry.

Ms. Connolly: Maybe February, March. Then I got a call and I had to sign forms for background checks, etc.

Ms. Scott: Okay.

Ms. Connolly: Then I was told my name had gone before cabinet and I was told to appear here.

Ms. Scott: We usually ask some political questions, so I will start. Are you currently or have you been a member of the provincial or federal Liberal Party before?

Ms. Connolly: Yes.

Ms. Scott: Are you presently?

Ms. Connolly: Yes.

Ms. Scott: Is that both provincial and federal?

Ms. Connolly: Federal.

Ms. Scott: I notice one of your references was Aileen Carroll, the former Liberal MP in the Barrie riding.

Ms. Connolly: Yes.

Ms. Scott: Okay, good. Have you ever donated to the Liberal Party?

Ms. Connolly: Yes, I have—federal.

Ms. Scott: Okay. I'm just going to pass it over to my colleague Mr. Tascona for further questions. Thank you.

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): Thank you, Gloria, for attending here today. This is a pretty prestigious appointment, if I may say so, because I think the judicial council, which is made up of eight judiciary and four laypersons—and you would be one of

the laypersons—plays an important role in terms of transparency and dealing with complaints about the judiciary.

I looked at your background, and certainly I'm aware of some of the things you've been involved with. I just wanted to ask you about this particular council. Was there something that compelled you that you wanted to be involved with this Ontario Judicial Council so that you applied for it?

Ms. Connolly: I've always had an interest in the law. Even as a young woman growing up in Lindsay, I would have gone to university if circumstances had allowed me to. I come from a large family, five brothers, so it wasn't to be. But then when I retired from Bell, I applied for a justice of the peace position and that really didn't go anywhere. I saw this and it was in that interest of the law, so I read it all over on the Web and felt I was qualified to do it.

Mr. Tascona: Okay. I know in your background you were involved—and I was involved with you—in the Eat Well to Excel student nutrition program from April 2003 to 2005, lead coordinator for Simcoe county. I thought you did a fabulous job there. I think you represented the children and everybody properly before that program was unfortunately ended. The work you're doing with the MS Society now in fundraising is to be commended. I take it there's a walk there this weekend?

Ms. Connolly: Yes. Saturday we get ready and Sunday we go. We'll have about 900 walkers in Barrie.

Mr. Tascona: Where is that walk being held?

Ms. Connolly: In Barrie?

Mr. Tascona: Yes. Where in Barrie?

Ms. Connolly: It's going from the Army Navy and Air Force Club and then there's either—that's where it starts, at the Army Navy and then there's either a five- or a 10-kilometre route. I have the walks in Barrie, Collingwood, Midland—we have a new one in Alliston, New Tecumseth. Orillia, Midland, Collingwood, Barrie and New Tecumseth: So we have five in Simcoe county.

Mr. Tascona: So the MS walk in Barrie is going to be Sunday, April 23. I think it's about 9:30 when they're doing that.

Ms. Connolly: Nine or 9:30, we're starting off. We should raise about \$100,000, if everything goes well.

Mr. Tascona: That's great. That's going to complement—you're doing that work with the MS Society fundraising and you're also going to be doing the work with the judicial council. I understand that pays about \$100 per diem. Do you know how often they meet, this judicial council? Have they given you any idea how often you'll be meeting or doing things?

Ms. Connolly: It's ad hoc, so as needed. I think on the Web, if I remember correctly, it says about 10 times a year, but it could be more or less.

Mr. Tascona: Do they meet in Toronto? Do you know where they meet?

Ms. Connolly: I understand Toronto.

Mr. Tascona: Okay. In this particular board I think you made it very clear that you're very candid with respect to your opinions and you get your point through. I

think this will be a real challenge because you're going to be in there with eight other lawyers, judges and whatever, who would have pretty strong opinions. I take it you feel confident expressing your views, even if it's contrary to the Chief Justice of Ontario, a regional senior judge of the Ontario Court of Justice and the Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice. You're going to be in there with a whole bunch of judges. How do you feel about that in terms of the role that you have to play, which is to deal with the judiciary and complaints?

Ms. Connolly: I really don't have any problem with it, Mr. Tascona. As I say, I was raised with five brothers, and coming up through Bell when I did, things weren't the same, the way they are now. I had to fight for non-traditional jobs. I came up when we were told to our face, "You can't have that job because you're a woman." So to get to the level of management I did, I fought lots of battles. I don't intimidate easily.

Mr. Tascona: You were with them 32 years. That's a long career. What do you think the priority of the board should be in making recommendations for new judges? You said you had applied to be or you had shown some interest in being a justice of the peace, but with respect to new judges, what do you think the priority should be in making recommendations for someone to become a new judge?

Ms. Connolly: I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer that, Mr. Tascona. I can tell you how I feel personally what—

Mr. Tascona: That's all.

Ms. Connolly: —I would like to see in a judge. I would have to assume that they're qualified. I think that's a given. A judge should not only be impeccable on the bench; I think they should have an impeccable personal life because I think one carries over into the other. When someone holds that high a position in a community, I think that's what the people expect.

Mr. Tascona: That's a fair comment. Service on a disciplinary body such as the council—because that's what it is—requires the ability to assess human behaviour, see both sides of the story and judiciously weigh the consequences of rendering decisions which may have the effect of blighting or even terminating a professional's career. You indicated that you had some experience in labour relations, which I think is helpful. What skills do you think you bring to that position to deal with that type of situation where you're going to discipline somebody?

1020

Ms. Connolly: I think from my work at Bell, I was in situations where I had to discipline managers who worked for me. I was also involved with non-management employees when I was a first-level manager and had experience dealing with two Bell unions at the same time, because I had employees reporting to me who were under two unions. I taught labour relations at Georgian College and also facilitated for the archbishop at the diocese of Toronto, so I know a fair bit about that area. It may be a bit different, but I think the skills are transferable over to the judicial council.

Mr. Tascona: I'll just give you a little history. I think you're aware of this. On September 23, 2004, the Ontario Judicial Council released its most serious finding since its creation in 1995. After accepting the complaints of six women, the council ruled that a Barrie judge was guilty of sexual misconduct. The judge resigned in November 2004, before disposition of the case. Are you aware of that particular case?

Ms. Connolly: What was in the newspapers?

Mr. Tascona: Yes. Did you follow that?

Ms. Connolly: I followed it, but not too closely.

Mr. Tascona: That's the type of work that they do. It seems interesting; that was the most serious situation they had, and that was in Barrie about a year ago. Is there anything else you want to comment on with respect to your interest in the position?

Ms. Connolly: The only other thing would be that I'm really interested, I'd like to have the position, and I'll give it 150%, which I always do in anything I take on, as you know.

Mr. Tascona: Okay, that's great. Thank you, Gloria.

The Chair: Mr. Tabuns, the floor is yours.

Mr. Tabuns: Ms. Connolly, again, thank you for coming in this morning. I look forward to my colleague Gilles Bisson being here soon and contributing more than I can to the proceedings today.

I can quite believe that if you had five brothers, you've had experience dealing with intimidation; unfortunate but true. It's quite correct, as Mr. Tascona said, that you will be dealing with people in a situation who have a lot of authority, expect to be listened to and often are in a situation where they are not challenged. Can you give us some examples of situations where you have had to challenge authority to move things forward and how in fact you've steered yourself for that?

Ms. Connolly: Certainly even working on boards of directors—in the last two positions I've held, I've reported to boards of directors. When you're trying to keep eight or 10 people happy, sometimes you have to make your point and make it quite forcefully. Not all people, as you know, who sit on boards have a lot of background and experience and can't always see the path that something should take. That sort of situation.

I can't think of anything off the top of my head, but at Bell, again, I often had to make my case known, especially when I was in human resources. I was responsible for all the management job evaluations for all levels of management up to but not including the vice-president, so I had to decide what level of management they would be and what their pay scale would be. That was not always an easy sell. Everyone thinks they should be a higher-level manager than what you assign them.

Also, at one point in time, I was doing the budgets for the general manager, and my budgets determined what staff levels he could have. Again, that was not always a popular meeting to be at. So I've been in a position where I've had to sell some pretty strong cases that I was putting forward.

Mr. Tabuns: One of the qualities we're looking for is an ability to assess human behaviour. When you're dealing with someone in a situation where you're trying to determine how they will act in a given circumstance, what's your method for approaching that? How do you try to elicit their real behaviour and their real thoughts?

Ms. Connolly: I find you can find out the most by being a good listener and getting them to talk by asking open-ended questions and trying to draw them out: if it's a problem, what they see the problem is, what they see the solution is, how can I help you and that sort of thing. I think you should try and get as much as you can from the person or persons involved, rather than you putting your opinion or ideas on them first.

Mr. Tabuns: On the question of gender and racial bias, very few people these days show bad manners in these matters. They know what's politically or culturally acceptable to say but still may harbour a deep racial or gender bias. What do you look for in a person's behaviour or thoughts to determine, in your mind, whether they have a gender or racial bias?

Ms. Connolly: That would be very difficult if there aren't any spoken words or actual actions that you could point to. Sometimes body language is an indication, but it certainly wouldn't be enough to make a determination that you were racially biased or whatever. So I think that's a tough one. I'd have to think about that.

Mr. Tabuns: I agree; it's a tough one.

Mr. Chair, I don't have further questions at this point. Thank you.

The Chair: The government side?

Mr. Parsons: I would thank you for coming. We actually were impressed enough with your qualifications that we wouldn't have called you this morning. But thank you for coming.

How did you become aware of this opening?

Ms. Connolly: I went on the Web and looked.

Mr. Parsons: Did you speak to an MPP or their office?

Ms. Connolly: No; all I did was call Mr. Tascona's office to find out what the website was; I had forgotten it or lost it. No, I didn't speak to anybody.

Mr. Parsons: Your answers regarding being on the board: It's my understanding that there are four who are not to be judges or lawyers, so you're amply qualified for that.

That concludes our questions.

The Chair: Ms. Connolly, thank you very much for your presentation and your responses to the members' questions. Please, if you have the opportunity, stay with us. We do the concurrence votes after the interviews are concluded, so in one hour's time, we'll move to concurrence votes. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Connolly: Thank you very much.

KENNETH LOUCKS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Kenneth Loucks, intended appointee as member, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

The Chair: Our next appointment interview is with Dr. Kenneth Loucks. Dr. Loucks is an intended appointee as a member of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. Welcome to the standing committee. I will note for the record that Dr. Loucks is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario, which is always very impressive to the Chair, and secondly, is at Brock University, which is our second-favourite university at this committee. Is that correct?

Dr. Kenneth Loucks: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): Says who, Chair? I don't think we have unanimous consent on that.

The Chair: The Chair has the floor, although we will tell Ms. Marsden when she appears at the committee that York University is also part of the good list.

Dr. Loucks: I should check, Mr. Chairman, if this committee is stacked with alumni from Western.

The Chair: That may be the case. There's a couple.

Ms. Smith: Oh—

The Chair: Oh, I'm just teasing. I'm sorry. The Chair shouldn't show that kind of bias for Western graduates, but we wanted to say that it's always good to see an alumnus here at the committee.

Dr. Loucks, you've been in the audience here and you've seen how the process works. You're welcome to make an opening statement about your interests and qualifications for the position, and then we'll begin rotation with Mr. Tabuns of the third party. The floor is yours.

Dr. Loucks: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm pleased to be here to offer whatever skills and knowledge that I have for public service on the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. This is a position for which I feel I'm qualified. I'm not only an alumnus of the University of Western Ontario, but I have three degrees in business administration from that school. On top of that, I have taught at university for over 30 years in the field of business administration, including two adjunct appointments at two universities in Australia.

1030

My undergraduate work was primarily in accounting. My master's level work was primarily in marketing. My Ph.D. was in organizational behaviour, and I spent most of my career teaching business policy and corporate strategy. That subject included governance topics as well.

I also, if you've had a chance to review my application, had considerable relevant experience, and by that I mean both board and commission experience, on public and private sector boards, commissions as varied as the airport commission, hospital councils, senates of universities and so on. So I have a considerable range of experience in these fields.

In addition, I'd done a lot of consulting work for both private and public sector corporations and in international development fields. I've worked for a variety of foreign aid agencies, the Dutch government, the German government, the US government, the Canadian government and UN agencies as well. Most of this involved everything

from troubleshooting program design to developing and recommending policy, particularly in the field of small enterprise development, entrepreneurship development and local economic development.

In terms of my background, I have lived in St. Catharines now for 20 years. I previously lived in Sudbury for 16, and I previously moved around the province a bit. I'm a native of the Owen Sound area. But in my years in St. Catharines, not only was I involved in the university, but I was involved in a number of outreach programs, including the Institute for Enterprise Education and the Niagara Enterprise Agency. I served on the Niagara Region Development Corporation, predecessor to the current development corporation, including a term as chair. I learned through that a fair amount about the operation of the economy and the socio-economic makeup and some of the issues and the geography adjacent to the bridges, including participating in a number of cross-border committee meetings and discussions in terms of economic development.

On top of these things, I would say that I did submit my application through the public service appointments committee. My application then went to the bridge commission. I was interviewed by that commission, apparently successfully, because I'm here now. So presumably, that is some other validation of my qualifications for the position.

Why am I interested in serving on this? First of all, I'm not in the habit of seeking public service appointments, but I'd had a number, and all of them had been because I'd been asked to apply and to serve. That was true with my present position as chair of the Niagara District Airport Commission: A member of the local municipal council asked me to put my name forward. It was true of the previous Niagara Region Development Corp.: A sitting member of that was the vice-president of the university, who asked that I put my name forward and serve on that committee. Similarities happened when I was in Sudbury, and I served on the regional development corporation up there and the hospital council up there.

I've always been willing to do public service but it's not something that I sought out or have gone after. This particular commission I think has some interesting issues and some interesting challenges. Since I'm retired now from the university, I'm always interested in having challenges. It keeps my mind alive and active and going. This one, I gather, has had its share of challenges when I look at some of the past news releases on the place, and I understand the changes that have taken place on the commission and so forth. So there are some substantial issues there that are challenges on the governance side of the corporation, an area that I've had both formal educational exposure and some experience in. In magnitude, it's significantly larger in terms of the dollar amounts and the capital structure that's involved in the organization than I've dealt with previously. That poses some interesting tasks.

It's topical. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, in the current environment of homeland security issues,

cross-border trade and so forth, is very timely and important to the Niagara region for tourism and business and the economy. So these make it of interest to me.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Loucks, for the presentation. We begin any questions with the third party.

Mr. Tabuns: Dr. Loucks, thank you for coming this morning. I appreciate the presentation. Could you elaborate a bit more on the major challenges that the bridge commission has faced in the last few decades?

Dr. Loucks: I really haven't immersed myself in the issues that way, Mr. Tabuns. I did do kind of a casual Google search on the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. I found out that there had been some issues with the American appointees to that commission at one point in time. I understand there are legal issues going on there—some dissatisfied tenants or prospective tenants, and legal issues coming about. I didn't immerse myself in those things at this point in time. I know the Ontario government, at one point, dismissed their appointees and had civil servants come in to deal with some of the issues, so there are some ongoing issues there. From the public's perception in the area, of course, there have always been questions about congestion at the border and access and so forth.

I know, as chair of the airport commission, that we are dealing with tourist organizations—we get inquiries from them—the casino and so on, in terms of the ease and facility of access of Americans to the Canadian side, because it impacts dramatically on their business. Questions about congestion or delays, or the pending identity card issue and the cost of that, are very important issues locally.

Mr. Tabuns: This board, as you've said, has faced some difficulties in the past. If all of the appointed members were taken off by a government and replaced by civil servants, they may well have gone through some stormy times.

Your role will be to look out for the public interest, obviously, and there will be times when you'll have to go against the current. As I asked the previous applicant for the Ontario judicial position, can you tell us about situations where you've had to go against the current, where you've had to challenge authority and withstand pressure to change your mind?

Dr. Loucks: I guess whether there are dramatic ones or not is something else, but it kind of goes with the role of being on a board and a commission. For instance, the current position I'm in as the chair of the airport commission: When I joined that board, the previous manager had sued the previous chairman of the board for constructive dismissal. The airport was in the newspaper considerably, politicians calling for withdrawal of support from the airport—a number of issues from the public ownership side, from the tenant side and from the administrative staff side. Shortly after joining that commission, I was asked to take the position of chair—I think it was within two months of being appointed—because of these issues, and to steer it myself through those.

1040

I think I've successfully done that, but there continue to be issues: the politicians on the one side trying to respond to issues from tenants or from the public or what have you, and trying to pressure it one way; tenants trying to pressure it some other way; and the commission, particularly the chair of the commission, having to be objective in the midst of that and trying to bring about some reconciliation and a way forward.

I've done that on this particular commission; I've done it on previous ones that I've worked on. All of them seemed to have issues, some explosive and some dramatic. When I first joined Laurentian University in Sudbury, I was on the senate. We were involved in an issue with one of the professors where Interpol was involved. We were having in-camera meetings of the university senate at 6:30 on a Saturday morning and so forth.

The big challenges are always—you cannot suppress emotional and what some might consider irrational behaviour from occurring, but to try and steer those things back to fact-finding, analysis, and reconciling how people look at issues differently and trying to bring about some kind of reconciliation between them. So that's been my experience in the past.

Mr. Tabuns: Thank you, Doctor.

The Chair: Mr. Tabuns, thank you very much. The government side?

Mr. Parsons: No questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: No questions from the government side. The official opposition?

Ms. Scott: Thank you, Dr. Loucks, for appearing before us here today and coming from Niagara Falls. How long have you been in the community of Niagara Falls now?

Dr. Loucks: It's actually St Catharines I live in, and I've been there for 20 years now.

Ms. Scott: Okay. That's good. You have quite an extensive background. I'm going to lead off by saying that this is a committee that reviews appointments. I just wanted to get your opinion: Do you think it's a good idea for government committees to have the ability to ask members who are appointed to boards to come forward and to ask questions about what their role is, what their background is, before they go on these boards?

Dr. Loucks: Absolutely. I think it's your responsibility to do that.

Ms. Scott: That's good. We also feel that way. I'm leading up to the fact that on March 22, 2005, Minister Takhar appointed four hand-picked Ministry of Transportation bureaucrats from Toronto to be on the committee. They did it for less than a year, so we couldn't call them, and then they extended their period to 2008; again, we couldn't call them. Do you think that this committee should have the ability to call those four people that Minister Takhar had appointed from the Ministry of Transportation?

Dr. Loucks: As a general principle, I would say yes. Of course, general principles are just that; I don't know the circumstances. There could be extenuating circum-

stances. Clearly, the press releases I read about the untended contracts and actual thuggery going on in terms of treatment of tenants and so on may have called for unusual procedures and pretty close control of what's taking place for a period of time.

Ms. Scott: I know you had mentioned, and maybe I'll just get you to summarize again, that you do have extensive community experience. You've been in the St. Catharines area for 20 years, but you've been involved a lot in your community. I just wondered if you could summarize again your past boards, commissions.

Dr. Loucks: The principal services that I did in the community—as I say, I served on the Niagara Region Development Corp., including a term as chair. I currently serve on the airport commission as chair. I was involved in the creation of an organization in the community with a colleague of mine, a chap by the name of Eugene Luczkiw, an organization called the Institute for Enterprise Education. This was a not-for-profit organization created at the time to deal with the fallout from industry restructuring there. It involved people in retraining programs for small business creation and entrepreneurship development.

I was similarly involved with initiating and creating, and I currently serve as chair of a thing called the Niagara Enterprise Agency, which is a not-for-profit organization dealing with facilitating local industries that have established themselves but are on a growth pattern in terms of accessing relevant management expertise and experience. We also administer a \$5.5-million venture capital fund.

Ms. Scott: You do have extensive background; I wanted to bring that to the forefront again, because the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission has that 70-year history of appointing people who have been active in their community locally. The fact that the McGuinty government and Takhar had those appointments from the Ministry of Transportation to the local boards upset a lot of local people. We wanted to bring attention to that and get your opinion: Do you think that the minister violated the tradition? Mr. McCuaig has been appointed until 2009. Why is he continuing to violate that tradition, and your comments on, should we look back at that, should we try to bring that more to the forefront, to interview them? How do you feel that's going in the community?

Dr. Loucks: I'm really not immersed in the background of all of that, and the issues in that. Other than to say what my general principle was, I don't know what could justify exceptions at this point in time.

Ms. Scott: Okay. I don't know the area that well; we've done some research before, but just up the Niagara River and Fort Erie, for example, the Peace Bridge has local and active appointees, all from Fort Erie or Port Colborne, as its Canadian board members. It is a federally appointed bridge commission. Do you believe that the department of transportation bureaucrats should populate that board as well, or other bridges or tunnel commissions across the province?

Dr. Loucks: From my understanding, these commissions were created under different legislation. The

Niagara Falls Bridge Commission is in fact an American commission. The extent of the province's involvement here is to identify and appoint four members from the Canadian side. They're not involved in funding that commission or that board and so on, so I don't think it's quite a different role than in the case with the Peace Bridge.

Ms. Scott: But they think the point is that they are locally appointed members from their community, and in this case, it has broken a 70-year tradition. They weren't local members of the community; they were Ministry of Transportation. That's what I'm trying to ask, if you agree with that process.

Dr. Loucks: I can't reflect on that. It took place before I was involved. I'm not completely familiar with the issues and why that action was taken.

Ms. Scott: Okay. The names of the Ministry of Transportation bureaucrats who were appointed were Patricia Boeckner, Roger Hanmer, Larry Smith and Bruce McCuaig. They've been there for a year now. Can you name an event in the community in which they've participated?

Dr. Loucks: No. I've never met any of them except Mr. McCuaig.

Ms. Scott: You haven't heard their names on the radio or anything?

Dr. Loucks: No.

Ms. Scott: Okay. Going back to the MPP from Niagara Falls, Kim Craitor said, "When the Liberals broke with the tradition of appointing local people in favour of bureaucrats from Toronto," they were going to be doing a "thorough review" of bridge security, because the ministry wanted to be more 'hands-on' with the bridges in light of ongoing concerns about border security"—you mentioned that before. He said that each one had been assigned a specific task to review, including homeland security, engineering and administration.

"Despite the lack of written instructions, Craitor said Monday the government's review of the bridge commission is 'certainly going on' and the senior officials assigned to it shows it's happening at 'a very serious level.'"

What do you know about these studies? Have you seen anything about these studies?

1050

Dr. Loucks: Nothing.

Ms. Scott: So there hasn't been anything going on in the community that you know of?

Dr. Loucks: No.

Ms. Scott: One of the topics was homeland security, according to Mr. Craitor. It's a very important topic, especially given the post-9/11 world and Canada's role in the war on terrorism. No doubt neither the MPP nor the minister would claim such an important study was happening without releasing it and having community meetings on it. So you've heard of no community meetings specifically on homeland security?

Dr. Loucks: No.

Ms. Scott: Do you think these studies should be made public? If they've been given instruction to do these studies, do you feel in your role on the commission that these studies should be made public?

Dr. Loucks: The question of homeland security is not something that's in the mandate of the bridge commission. The bridge commission provides a piece of infrastructure—a bridge. It provides accommodation for Customs and Immigration. But it has nothing to do with the administration of homeland security issues, as I understand it. So whether those should be made public or not is an issue that I don't see is within the mandate of the bridge commission.

Mr. Parsons: Mr. Chair, on a point of order: I think it's unfair to ask questions as if he were a board member. The questions are considerably off topic.

Ms. Scott: An opinion.

The Chair: I appreciate that, Mr. Parsons. I do give a lot of latitude to members to ask questions of those who come before the committee. I think it's within that latitude, but I'll keep an eye on things.

Ms. Scott: It's commenting, too, on instructions that were in the paper, according to Mr. Craitor, that were given. That was all. I was just getting an opinion about the process.

Mr. Parsons: I believe at this stage he's not a member of the commission.

The Chair: Let's proceed.

Ms. Scott: Are you aware of any major problems the bridges have had in the last number of years?

Dr. Loucks: Other than what I've already indicated, no.

Ms. Scott: Was there bad publicity surrounding the inability of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission to solve problems? Did they have some dysfunctionality on the board to solve problems?

Dr. Loucks: As I say, other than the issues that I have a superficial knowledge of, I'm not aware of any.

Ms. Scott: Okay.

The Chair: Last question.

Mr. Parsons: Thank goodness.

Ms. Scott: We've discussed a lot of topics, but what would be the top two most significant issues you think the bridge commission will be facing over the next few years?

Dr. Loucks: For me, personally, it's this question of the role that that piece of infrastructure can serve in facilitating or hindering the free flow of trade and exchange between Canada and the United States, and being on top of that. I think there is an immediate issue, but I need to find out how much it has been or is being dealt with, in terms of governance of that commission. When you have the kinds of dramatic stories appearing in the newspaper about thuggery, tendering that was not done, favouritism and so forth, I think there are some pretty substantial governance issues. The details of those, I'm of course not familiar with.

Ms. Scott: Thank you very much, Dr. Loucks, for appearing here today. I appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Loucks, for your presentation and your interest in the position. You're welcome to stick around. In about 45 minutes' time, probably, we'll move to our concurrence votes.

Dr. Loucks: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I actually have some other work to do.

The Chair: Then you'll have to tune in to the Hansard to see how the play-by-play happens. Thank you for making the trip here to Toronto from St. Catharines.

To Mr. Parsons's point, I think the tradition of the committee has been to allow a decent latitude on questions pertaining to somebody's qualifications or interest in a position. I listened closely to Ms. Scott's questions. I think she was asking about the history of the bridge commission and how the member will approach issues. I think that's typical. I think the member responded in a similar fashion, as somebody who is in the community and, in his view, he spoke to general principles. I'll keep an eye on these things, but I think we know—

Mr. Parsons: I respect your right to be wrong.

The Chair: Secondly, I think this committee maintains a very high level of decorum and politeness. I find that members always ask questions in that vein as well and I think the questions are positively done here at the committee. That would be my other grounds for intervening, if it was badgering or something like that. I don't think we've hit that territory in this committee.

Mr. Parsons: We've tried to serve as role models on questions we ask.

The Chair: We will continue.

JANICE THOMSON

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Janice Thomson, intended appointee as member, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

The Chair: Next, I'd like to invite Janice Thomson. Ms. Thomson is an intended appointee as member, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. Now that we're on a roll, Ms. Thomson, greetings. Nice to see you again. I want to say hello, as a member from Niagara. We've worked together quite extensively on tourism issues. Nice to see you here.

Ms. Janice Thomson: Nice to see you also.

The Chair: Things are going well in Niagara-on-the-Lake?

Ms. Thomson: They are.

The Chair: Excellent.

Ms. Thomson: It's brightened up already.

The Chair: Maybe we'll take the committee on the road some day and you can show us around the sights in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Ms. Thomson, you've been here; you've seen how the committee operates. You're welcome to make opening comments about your interests and background. Then, according to our rotation, there will be questions, beginning with the government and then the official opposition and third party. The floor is yours.

Ms. Thomson: Thank you for the privilege of appearing before you to discuss my qualifications as a potential appointee to the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

I'm presently a resident of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and I have been since 1995. I have over 25 years of senior management experience, including extensive industrial logistics, marketing, public relations, conference planning, incentive travel, market research and sales training experience, gained primarily in the import automotive industry. I was the national sales manager for BMW Canada for a period of six years, until 1995. Prior to that, I had a 13-year career with Jaguar Canada Inc.

When I moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, I owned and operated a 100-seat licensed restaurant with three hotel rooms for a period of five years. During that time, I was extensively involved in the promotion of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a destination for motorcoach operators and group travel organizers. So I certainly know the importance of a constant flow of visitors and customers.

Prior to being appointed to my current position as executive director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, I served on the chamber's board of directors for six years, including two years as its president. I have served as a board member of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's economic management corporation for three years, I have been on the town's parking and traffic committee for the past six years, I have served on a local physician recruitment committee for five years and on other town committees, mostly related to signage, by-laws, town licensing regarding accommodation. I'm presently serving on two of the Lord Mayor's committees: communications and property tax assessment. We call him Lord Mayor. I'm sure the committee knows there is only one Lord Mayor in Canada, and it happens to be in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

I represent the town's destination management organizations as part of our chamber and I serve on tourism committees within the Niagara economic development corporation, the Wine Council of Ontario and Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership. I'm presently a board member of the Binational Tourism Alliance and, as of this week, I'm also a board member of the Ontario Tourism Education Corp.

I feel I have much to contribute, much that I wish to share. The experiences that I gained through my other committee work I think will be very valuable in working with the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. Also, in my experience in various roles—as executive director of a non-profit organization, as chair and member of a board, as an executive of a major corporation and as the owner/operator of my own business—I think I've covered the whole spectrum in terms of ways that one can serve in a working environment. I believe that would allow me to assume an appropriate role, focusing on policy and its implementation within the bridge commission.

My thorough appreciation for transportation systems that work extends to the Niagara Falls bridges. I can tell you, when everything there is going smoothly, business

on both sides of the border has an optimum chance of achieving its full potential.

Through my broad experience, which is beyond tourism, I know the importance of keeping goods and people moving smoothly and safely across the bridges. Those bridges affect industries relying on just-in-time production and therefore they affect jobs and the overall economy of this province and this country. They affect our agricultural and horticultural industries, which rely heavily on rapid and safe transport. Also, our youth who cross the border to participate in sports tournaments or educational trips rely on those bridges as well, as do those who are going to conventions or vacationing and visiting friends and family across the border. Those bridges are an integral part of the community of Niagara, with their importance reaching far beyond the border communities in both directions: into Canada and into the United States.

If accepted as an appointee to the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, I give you my word that I will commit my knowledge and my experience to the greatest possible benefit of the bridge commission. Thank you.

1100

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Thomson, for your opening remarks.

To the government members. Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Parsons: Joe is not here, so perhaps I'll ask the question for him: Are you a member of any political party, federally or provincially?

Ms. Thomson: Both, actually. I'm a member of the Conservative Party provincially and the Liberal Party nationally. If you'd like me to explain why, I can.

The Chair: I think it's obvious.

Ms. Thomson: Is it obvious?

The Chair: No. Sorry; go ahead. I was just making a joke.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): You're supposed to be unbiased.

Ms. Thomson: I'm also unbiased, and I believe in good government.

Our Lord Mayor, Gary Burroughs, declared this year that he wished to stand for federal election, so he requested that people he knew help him get through the process, and I took out a membership to help him at that time. I'm proud to be a Liberal nationally and a Conservative provincially.

The Chair: Good question.

Mr. Parsons: I think I was wrong. I think Joe probably wouldn't have asked that.

Ms. Thomson: Could I just add, though, that in my job, I have to be totally non-partisan. That's my personal side. In my position at work, I'm very used to working with the government of the day.

Mr. Parsons: You are very passionate in your non-partisanship.

Ms. Thomson: I work with the government of the day.

The Chair: Thank you. To the official opposition. Ms. Scott.

Ms. Scott: Thank you for appearing here before us today and for the extensive community work you have done and the contributions you have made, and maybe for the favouritism to the provincial Conservatives; we'll work on the federal scene with you later. Anyway, enough of the political kind of stuff.

When you were approached to sit on the board, did you know there was a position coming up; did you apply online; what did you do?

Ms. Thomson: I wasn't actually approached. What happened was, every Monday I go to our town council meetings in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a spectator and observe. I watch where things are going and watch the votes. Last June, one of our councillors commented on the fact that there were no local representatives on the bridge commission at that time. He put forward a motion to go to the province requesting that some Niagara representation go on the board. I then researched it on my own—it was interesting to me—to find out how one could become a commissioner. I went on Google and put in “Niagara Falls Bridge Commission appointments,” and up came a site I had never seen before, which was the Public Appointments Secretariat. I actually wasn't familiar with that.

At the end of August, I applied online and received a form letter saying that my application would be kept on file for a six-month period, and then I was contacted at the end of September for further information. The next I heard was from the bridge commission: I was requested to go for an interview in February, when I was interviewed by the general manager, the chair and the vice-chair.

Ms. Scott: We certainly appreciate that members of the community, like Dr. Loucks and yourself, are going to be on the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. We have made many points while you've been sitting here, realizing that bureaucrats had been appointed—four people had been removed and four bureaucrats, not local, had been appointed.

Why do you think the minister did that? Why do you think the minister appointed four bureaucrats to sit on the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission instead of choosing local people, which had been a 70-year tradition?

Ms. Thomson: Without knowing all the background, I can't second-guess the minister. I would only say that the process I have observed has been open and fair and shows great responsibility on the part of the government. I can only guess that he was showing a similar sense of responsibility. Perhaps it was necessary at the time, but I honestly don't know the details.

Ms. Scott: I'm kind of asking that question because you see the local papers and that, and I don't. I'm sure there's a lot of discontent in the community. The fact that he was actually extended—you heard me say that the process is that you are appointed for less than a year; therefore, we didn't get a chance to review the committee members, and in one case it has been extended until 2009. How do you feel, as a member of the commission,

about that Ministry of Transportation bureaucrat being there until 2009?

Ms. Thomson: It's my understanding, and I may not be correct, that that gentleman is going to be the chair. There are is an alternating chair. One year it's Canada and the next year, the US, I believe. But I could be incorrect. I thought that was perhaps for continuity.

Ms. Scott: Are you referring to Mr. McCuaig, who is going to be the chair?

Ms. Thomson: Yes. I don't know why I assume that. Because he's the vice-chair, I'm making that assumption.

Ms. Scott: That was one of my other questions: Have you ever been approached to possibly—I know you're not on the board yet. As Mr. Parsons says, we're here to interview and then approve or disapprove people to go on boards. Do you think a bureaucrat should be the chair, or do you think it should be a local person when it's Canada's turn to chair the commission?

Ms. Thomson: I can't comment. I would say it should be the person who has the most experience and the best vision and understanding of that board. I don't know how the chair is chosen. I don't know if it's done by the board members themselves or if it's done by the government.

Ms. Scott: Okay. I don't have the answers either, but I'm just kind of asking to see if you have been approached or if anything like that had come out when you were interviewed.

How do you feel that there are going to be three bureaucrats on the board with the local people—one is going to be the chair? Was there a lot of dysfunctionality? What was wrong with the board that the minister felt he had to go in and appoint the bureaucrats?

Ms. Thomson: To be honest, I don't have that background. I don't know. What I know is that my own dealings with the bridge commission have been superb, frankly. It's a very professional organization, which is one of the reasons I was interested in it when I heard they were looking at appointing commissioners. I have only known it to be very professional, and the work they've done, particularly in the last year, in combination with the federal and provincial governments, on putting that fifth lane in, is tremendous. It's been wonderful. It came in under budget, I understand, and ahead of schedule. That's wonderful for everybody involved. I can only judge by what I see.

Ms. Scott: I'm glad you are applying and that the process for you has been good.

I've mentioned the other concerns. I'm also going to ask: In 2005 the government stated that it would be conducting a review of Ontario's role on the commission in security and engineering issues. Do you know if any of this review has taken place?

Ms. Thomson: The annual report for the bridge commission that I read mentioned that a review had been conducted of the internal operations of the bridge commission itself and that some policy changes were in the process of being made as a result of that. With regard to security, I know that an enormous amount of money has been invested in upgrading security at the operations

centre for the bridge commission. They have, I believe, 142 video surveillance cameras on the bridges, on the six customs plaza areas and the bridge commission office itself, and the employees are subject to very stringent security. I don't know what it was before, but I do know they have taken great strides in that area.

Ms. Scott: When you were interviewed for the board, did they mention that these reviews were going on and that you would be part of the process, or what the process might be? I mentioned before about public meetings. Would they be having public meetings?

Ms. Thomson: No, I was not aware of that.

Ms. Scott: So you're not aware of the appointees from the ministry having any meetings or reviews in process?

Ms. Thomson: I'm not aware of that.

Ms. Scott: All right. You mentioned the fifth lane and how that has had a positive effect—for sure, the Niagara Falls bridge is important to all of us. Can you expand a little bit more on the most significant issues that you think are going to face the bridge commission over the next few years?

Ms. Thomson: Clearly, security is a major issue. I would also say that maintaining revenue is a huge issue, with the passport issue that is facing us now, the WHTI. That is a critical issue, and we need to come to some sort of conclusion on it, where people can get a document of some kind affordably, quickly and close to where they live; something that's easy for them to get. That has to be put in place to maintain traffic over those bridges. From a tourism point of view, it's critical to the province.

Ms. Scott: Absolutely; no question about it. Do you have any numbers, or what do you think the impact would be? They were requiring some type of identification to come across; it didn't have to be a passport, necessarily. This is the United States, right?

Ms. Thomson: Right.

Ms. Scott: And that's going to be in January 2007, or 2008?

Ms. Thomson: It's 2007 by air or sea, and 2008 by land.

Ms. Scott: That's when it's going to have the impact you're going to see most: by land.

Do you think we should move more quickly on the review that might be able to deal with the identification issue prior to its becoming such a big issue? Do you have any thoughts about how we're going to deal with that on land—Ontario in general, but specifically Niagara Falls?

Ms. Thomson: Interestingly, I just made a deputation to our local council two weeks ago on that subject, saying that it's wilful neglect if we stand back and do nothing and just wait for the date to roll around, and suddenly it's January and we say, "Oh, dear." We know this is coming, so we've been putting pressure on any area of government we can to try to come to some solution.

1110

There was a meeting last year in Niagara Falls with—oh, dear; I've forgotten the gentleman's last name. He's in charge of passport issuance for the United States. His first name is Frank. I beg your pardon; I've forgotten his

last name. He came to meet with us. The bridge commission was there and the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce as well, and some of the ministers from the government. They were talking about the alternative. He produced a trusted traveller card that he had in his wallet. He said, "Here's the card. This is what's already been prepared, and this is what we're going to be going ahead with." So at that point, we said, "Well, then, please give us the application forms. We'll start getting them into visitors' hands."

It was going to be around \$50, but I know the government is now taking other steps in the United States to potentially delay the implementation of the plan while they do an economic impact study, but I'm not entirely a fan of delay, either. I'm a big fan of getting resolution, getting something so that we know it's black or white, because in the meantime, people are still unsure if they need a passport to visit Canada or not, and we want to make sure that they understand: no passport and no delays at the bridges.

Ms. Scott: I appreciate your progressive thinking in attacking this, because you're right: We're going to have to deal with it, so let's start to plan to deal with it now. I appreciate you being here today and someone locally being appointed onto the board. You have our support. So thank you very much.

Mr. Tabuns: Ms. Thomson, again, thank you for coming down today to speak to this committee. Could you talk a bit more about the impact on the bridge should this passport requirement or identity requirement go forward without action being taken?

Ms. Thomson: Certainly. The estimates that I'd seen put the impact at between a 20% and 30% decline in the number of visitors who may come. That, looking at it strictly from the bridge point of view, is a revenue reduction from the totals right away. From the economic impact on the province and on our country, it's huge, both from an import and an export point of view. So I think it's absolutely critical, and it's the most critical issue we have facing us right now.

Mr. Tabuns: Do you have a sense of how the bridge commission itself might move things forward in the interest of cross-border travel?

Ms. Thomson: That's an interesting point. Mr. Garlock, who's our general manager, is always involved in meeting with, for example, the Binational Tourism Alliance—and, as far as I know, the government's on the other side—to try to put forward solutions and ways that they can help. The gentleman who spoke before me mentioned that the bridge commission is, in a way, simply the host. They are the infrastructure, and I think they need to provide safe, secure infrastructure. Perhaps that's the solution: to say to the US government, "Our bridges are safe." We'll put in place things that give them a feeling of security, and also the increase in the use of the NEXUS card. I know the bridges are implementing that. Queenston-Lewiston will shortly be on board as well with that. That's a way that we can get people across more quickly.

Mr. Tabuns: If in fact we're not successful, if in fact the implementation goes forward and we actually see those reductions in revenue, what sort of strategies would you press for the bridge management to adopt to deal with that drop in revenue?

Ms. Thomson: Because I don't know their budget and I don't know their capital requirements and what their plans are for the future, I don't know how much of a revenue drop they can afford to take, if I can put it that way. I do know that there hasn't been an increase in tolls for the past five years. As a tourism professional, I would hate to promote increasing tolls on the backs of also needing a passport. I'm not saying that, but I don't know what flexibility there is for movement there.

Mr. Tabuns: One of the questions I've asked previous witnesses and I'd like to ask you: At times, sitting on a board or a commission, you have to challenge established wisdom. Management, generally speaking, is hired for being strong. They will put forward positions. They will try and pull you along. I'd like to have some sense of your ability to resist going with the tide when you see that going with the tide would be the wrong thing. Could you give us a sense of or some examples of times when you've stood up and said, "The direction we're being led in is the wrong direction. I think we should be going elsewhere"?

Ms. Thomson: I'd be happy to do that. I won't do it with my impassioned speech about MPAC. I'll leave that one aside.

Mr. Tabuns: I would be happy to hear a speech about MPAC.

Ms. Thomson: That's one of my famous speeches, but I'll leave it on the side. I'll go back further, into my car business experience, when I was asked to join BMW Canada from Jaguar. At that point, BMW was just setting up their own national organization. They were taking two independent companies in eastern Canada and western Canada, owned by private individuals, and bringing them back under the parent company from Germany. I was brought in at that time to manage their sales division for the country. I had a meeting with all the dealers in the country, and there was almost an uprising in the room—which is the only way I can describe it—with people saying, "Who do you think you are, a young lady coming to us from Jaguar?" This was unbelievable. "We're not going to listen to you. We're not going to do any of these things." Well, "Sorry, that's it. This is the franchise. Here are the new rules."

We struck a great dealer council. We worked with the dealers over a period of three years and brought the satisfaction level—at that time, the dealer satisfaction level with the manufacturer was the lowest in the country, of any manufacturer—to the highest over a three-year period. But that was through conciliatory meetings, through understanding their problems, getting all the information on the table, and fixing them.

Mr. Tabuns: In your experience working in Niagara Falls, have you had experience with binational commissions, binational boards? Can you tell me, if you

have, what are the unique problems you encountered in dealing with them?

Ms. Thomson: I'm actually a member of the Binational Tourism Alliance, and I'm also on that board. The AGM was just last week. We saw one unique thing: the filing of information. You're dealing with two governments, so there was that unique thing: "You can do this in Ontario but you have to do this in New York state." That's one of the things. Another is the level of government involvement in funding operations.

We see it also even at our local level. We're working right now with the small town of Youngstown across the river and trying to work out a cross-river ferry. In this environment of, "It's difficult to get across the border," here we're trying to bring in yet another way of getting across, but we're running into situations where the US government is willing to invest millions and millions of dollars in infrastructure for what seems to be a small solution.

Mr. Tabuns: Thank you, Ms. Thomson.

The Chair: Ms. Thomson, thank you very much. It's good to see you again. Thank you for your responses to the members of the committee. Shortly we'll be doing our concurrence votes, so you're welcome to stick around and see democracy in action, as you do at the Niagara-on-the-Lake council with His Worship the Lord Mayor on a regular basis.

Ms. Thomson: I'll look forward to it.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair: Folks, I've been notified that Lorna Marsden is on her way. She's our next intended appointee. Her scheduled interview is 11:30. We're just ahead of schedule, so what I'm going to do is proceed with other business at this time, since we have about 10 minutes to fill.

I'm going to go back to item number 3 on our agenda, which is the report of the subcommittee on committee business, agency review. I think we'll need a member of the subcommittee to read it into the record. Mr. Parsons, would you be so kind?

Mr. Parsons: It's lengthy and I'm an engineer, but I will try.

The Chair: I think, for the sake of the record, we do need it read into the record. Thank you.

Mr. Parsons: The standing committee on government agencies, subcommittee on committee business, report of the subcommittee meeting.

Your subcommittee on committee business met on Tuesday, April 4, 2006, to consider the method of proceeding on agency reviews and agreed to the following.

(1) That the standing committee on government agencies conduct agency reviews with a view to:

- Improving the accountability of agencies, and
- Rationalizing the functions of agencies.

(2) That each caucus select in rounds two agencies per year.

(3) That three agencies be reviewed during the summer recess in September and three agencies be reviewed during the winter recess in February.

(4) That the committee ask permission of the House to sit in each recess.

(5) That up to one day of hearings be allotted per agency review, and that the committee by majority vote extend the number of hearing days per agency, if required.

(6) That the subcommittee on committee business may meet to determine whether any travel will be involved in conducting the agency reviews.

(7) That a questionnaire be sent out to each agency selected, including a deadline for response back to the committee.

(8) That the committee advertise the agency reviews on the OntParl channel and on the Legislative Assembly website, and that any additional decisions regarding advertising be made by the subcommittee on committee business.

(9) That the committee sit from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. when conducting agency reviews (subject to change and witness availability).

(10) That the Chair/CEO and agency staff be invited to make a presentation to the committee on behalf of each agency selected.

(11) That each agency be allowed a five-minute opening statement which would then be followed by questioning by each of the three caucuses in 20-minute rotations.

(12) That one half-day (from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.) be allotted for stakeholder presentations if required, and that 30-minute presentation slots be offered to stakeholder groups, if required.

(13) That if stakeholder presentations are required, each caucus select two stakeholder groups to be invited to appear before the committee to comment on the agency selected.

(14) That the research officer provide the committee with background material on each agency selected.

(15) That the clerk of the committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized, prior to the passage of the report of the subcommittee, to commence making any preliminary arrangements necessary to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

1120

The Chair: Thank you. I'm sorry, Mr. Parsons; did you move its adoption?

Mr. Parsons: Yes, I move its adoption.

The Chair: Mr. Parsons moves its adoption as well. Before I get comment from the floor, I do want to thank the subcommittee members. We met on a couple of occasions to bring this forward to committee. I know that the subcommittee members also took the time to get input from their caucuses, so I want to thank Mr. Parsons, Mr. Tascona and Mr. Bisson for their assistance in that.

The floor is open to debate on the motion.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): It's pretty well as we discussed. I'm just wondering, from the sub-

committee member from the Liberal side, has your caucus actually agreed to this at this point?

Mr. Parsons: Yes, I've moved adoption. We are supportive of it.

Mr. Bisson: You're supportive. I guess the only part, and it was the bone of contention we had at the subcommittee, and just to canvass members who are here—item 5, which basically says that in the intersession you get one day per agency. For some odd reason—let's say we decide to review agency X, and all of a sudden we decide that there needs to be a longer time to look at that. This reads a "majority vote," which means to say the committee controls it, which means to say the government controls it. Is there any willingness on the part of the government to make that a decision of the subcommittee rather than the committee?

The Chair: Any debate or discussion?

Mr. Parsons: The answer is no.

The Chair: The subcommittee did meet and agreed to these 15 points. Mr. Bisson, just by way of example, made an interesting point at the subcommittee. He said, for example, that if the ONTC—the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission—was selected by one of the parties, you may want to travel to northern Ontario to actually meet with folks there. The subcommittee then decided also that it should be up to the committee to decide whether we would travel on such an occasion, and that's the report that's come back before the committee as a whole.

Mr. Bisson: The other thing is, as far as the choice of which agencies are to be reviewed—what point is that? I'm just going through it really quickly here. What is the process?

The Chair: Number 2. It says, "That each caucus select in rounds two agencies per year."

Mr. Bisson: So we're going to do the same process as estimates, basically; the same thing under the standing orders. Okay. That's all I got.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bisson. Any other comments or questions?

Mr. Parsons has moved that the subcommittee report be adopted. All those in favour? Any opposed? It is carried.

Again, thank you to the members of the subcommittee, and thank you to the clerk and research counsel, who looked back on how this process had operated in the past to advise the subcommittee members. We'll look forward to that.

We will confirm this again with committee members, to be on the safe side: At the May 10 meeting of this committee, the general meeting, I'm going to ask the parties to bring forward their recommendations for the first round of interviews. We need to do this early, because we will be developing, for the first time, a questionnaire for those committees. We want to give those agencies the opportunity to respond to those questions and contact stakeholder groups. This is also the first time this has happened in probably a decade or so. We do need that time. Of course, the plan is to actually schedule

those interviews in September, but I think several months' head start will be very helpful.

Again, I will ask members to bring forward their suggestions for the May 10 meeting of this committee. We'll make that part of the agenda for that day, to finalize a first round of agencies for interviews.

I will at this point ask if there is any other business to discuss before the committee.

Mr. Parsons: Is it appropriate to discuss the coffee quality?

The Chair: Certainly. It is well within the standing orders to discuss—

Interjection.

The Chair: Oh, isn't this interesting? The clerk, at her second meeting of this committee, is continuing to make an excellent impression on committee members by suggesting that perhaps Tim Hortons coffee may be brought in in the future, if that pleases members of the committee. So there's something that we are working on.

Mr. Parsons: I think that would actually be a health and safety issue, to support the Tim Hortons coffee.

The Chair: In the absence of a motion, we will defer the coffee question for further debate.

Is there any other business to discuss? Seeing none, we will now revert back to our intended appointments.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

LORNA MARSDEN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Lorna Marsden, intended appointee as member, GO Transit board of directors.

The Chair: I want to welcome Lorna Marsden to the room. Welcome to the standing committee on government agencies. We appreciate your appearing before us. Dr. Marsden, as folks know, has an outstanding and very interesting background, as you'll see by her sheet—a former Senator, of course. I want to say, Dr. Marsden, that York University is among the favourite universities of the committee on government agencies. We may disagree if it's number 1, 2 or 3, but it was mentioned. Was it not mentioned in high favour earlier on?

Dr. Marsden, I know you're no stranger to the committee process in government. This one functions with you making some opening comments about your background and interest in this position. Then we'll follow a rotation basis from the three parties, beginning with the official opposition, for any questions. The floor is yours.

Dr. Lorna Marsden: Thank you very much. I'm very pleased to be here today. I was indeed very pleased to be invited to apply for a directorship on the board of GO Transit.

GO is a terrific asset to the people of this region. You're all aware that transit is a major issue, especially for our population at York University. We have about 65,000 students, faculty and staff on our campuses on a daily basis—in fact, all the working people in the northwest quadrant of the GTA. We see the need for

transit both to go to study or to the workplace, and the service-oriented attitude that GO has towards serving the people of our region is really quite striking.

Just as a little bit of background, we have 1,600 buses a day rolling through the centre of our campus, and GO accounts for a very large proportion of them. They bring students, staff and faculty from Hamilton and Unionville. Those of you who know our campus will know that they come right into the middle. This is something that's been going on for a short number of years, but very effectively. Of course, it really does help in every way: It's safe, it's economical and it's environmentally sustainable in a way that cars are not. We also park 35,000 cars a day in 11,000 parking spaces, so convenient public transit is absolutely essential.

We also know that if you offer the population of our university public transit, they will choose it above cars wherever they possibly can. For all these reasons, I think public transit, in whatever form it takes, is extremely important and a very interesting topic, both for planning and in other ways.

I was very pleased that the minister asked me to consider applying for this position. I think it's a very important public board. I'd be very honoured to serve on this board.

Let me conclude by saying what I bring to the board. I think there are three things. One is a genuine interest in the effectiveness, the efficiency and the building of public transit and regional transit throughout the province. Let me just add that I was previously the president of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, and it was the dearth of rail transit there that had a real impact on the daily life of that whole community, certainly on the university's, because it left thousands of workers and students and others at the mercy of the 401, which is clogged, icy, foggy and all of the other things. If there was a major accident, students or staff just didn't make it to the university. There was no rail alternative. I have no idea if GO contemplates working with other systems or indeed that area, but that is the kind of issue that I think is really interesting and important for the whole province.

Of course, the situation only gets worse on the roads. One of the things I bring is real interest and enthusiasm, although, at this point, not a great depth of knowledge of how this is all going to work out.

You probably are aware that I have considerable experience on boards in both the public and the private sector. I initially served on the board of Air Canada when it was still a public utility a number of years ago. I learned quite a bit there about load factors, scheduling, sustainability, capital investment, how to read those kinds of financial statements. I currently serve on both private boards.

I should tell you and want to tell you that at the annual meeting of SNC-Lavalin coming up next month, I am a candidate for election to that board. I am aware that SNC-Lavalin sometimes has interaction with GO Transit. I checked with the minister's office and with the chairs of both GO and SNC-Lavalin to see if they saw any conflict

beyond the usual conflict guidelines, which I would follow anyway and all of them would follow. They all agreed that this was very congenial. Apparently, there was previously a GO member on the board of SNC-Lavalin at some point in the past, so this was not a new situation to them. I may not be elected, but if I am elected to that board, I just wanted you to know about it in advance.

1130

I have therefore worked on audit, governance, environment, planning committees of boards and of course I serve, as you know, on the board of my own institution, York University. Therefore, I understand and appreciate the vital difference between being management and being directors—the very great differences in the roles and the skill sets that are involved on both sides of the table. I believe that experience would be—I hope it would be—helpful to the GO board if I should be appointed. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your opening comments. Any questions from the official opposition first?

Mr. Tascona: I want to thank you, Dr. Marsden, for attending here today. I certainly appreciate your interest in GO Transit. I represent the areas of Barrie, Innisfil and Bradford, and we have GO service in Bradford. Expansion of that area is ongoing right now, to go from three trains to perhaps six trains. Right now there are ongoing discussions with the province and the city of Barrie for expansion of GO Transit to Barrie, which is important to our area, and I think somewhat to York University because a lot of students come from Barrie to York University.

Unfortunately, GO Transit was removed from Barrie in the 1992 budget of the NDP government when Bob Rae was the Premier. I think that was a short-sighted decision, and we haven't been able to get it back since. Also unfortunately, it's been reported in the newspapers that there are difficulties going on with the city of Barrie and the province of Ontario with respect to expanding it to Barrie. That doesn't seem to be something that's isolated. It appears in newspaper reports that there are some issues with respect to the existing municipalities in the GO Transit system and their 10-year expansion plan. I think they're looking at \$1.7 billion, and their position at this point in time is not to pay for it with property taxes beyond 2007.

That's a bit of a dissertation, but the thing is that GO Transit—I really believe in public transit, and I think you do too. There are some hurdles here that have to be dealt with. Have you got any comments in terms of how we're going to be able to deal with what would appear to be funding issues, but also service issues, that are going to be important in the next 10 years?

Dr. Marsden: It's a very important question. We certainly have a deep interest in the Bradford line. I would look for an early briefing on those questions from the folks at GO if that happens. We have a GO railway station at York, and the big obstacle is the CN freight line

just north of it. There is a need for grade separation, which as you know is a very expensive undertaking. One of the issues I would certainly ask about if I were on the GO board is getting rid of that obstacle, because until you do that, you can't run trains except early in the morning and late at night, which are already being run.

Obviously, it is a really important issue in regional transit. I have no idea what GO plans to do, but I do agree with you that it's a very important issue.

Mr. Tascona: It seems to be the funding in terms of my area, and it's probably common in other areas that do have the service—that being the alternative to using your vehicle. Now, with the price of gas going up, it may not be such a major decision, but it's important because that's one of the reasons why there was difficulty with the service in our area. We have a lot of GO buses. I think we have at least 10 to 20 GO buses a day going out of Barrie, and they all go onto the highway. That service has obviously proven to be acceptable.

But in terms of the existing system, there are concerns, because they're also looking for—in our area, there's no rail north of Barrie. That was taken out as part of the decision of, I think, the federal Liberal government in 1996. They passed a law allowing CN and CP to divest themselves of the lines if they felt they weren't economically viable. The Orillia line, which is a great bike road now for about 30 miles, was taken out about three weeks after the decision gave them that right.

We're faced with the situation where Highway 400 is just becoming unmanageable because of the growth, and it's not going to stop, yet we don't have any solution with these negotiations. One of the problems is that Barrie owns that rail line, and they're discussing whether the line should be owned by Barrie and the service provided by GO, or Barrie should sell that line. I think maybe it's going to become an issue with respect to the overall line, because I believe the province owns the line for the rest of the municipalities that are involved in this service. You may know more than I do, but I understand that the line is something that GO purchased and they now own the line in those particular areas, and we're dealing with upgrades.

Looking at it from an expansion of the service, how are we going to make this service an alternative for people to want to use when there are different stations you have to stop at and you've got a funding issue in terms of making it a faster service—because people want that faster service. How do we overcome these types of obstacles? Because all of it seems to come down to funding and willingness to believe in public transit.

Dr. Marsden: Obviously, I can't answer the questions you're asking me explicitly, because I just don't know. I have to say, we're very encouraged by the government's investment in transit—the recent announcement about the subway extension. Yesterday morning, I went to hear Mr. Flaherty speak at the Markham Board of Trade. He spoke very positively about the need for the federal government to meet what he described as their obligations to their partners: Ontario, and regional transit and infrastructure.

Now, that's not explicit, but both of those things, I think, should give all citizens hope for improvements in infrastructure, and transit infrastructure as well.

Mr. Tascona: Yes. Do you see a plan out there in terms of how to do this, though? It's a lot of talk.

Dr. Marsden: I can't answer the question because I don't know. I'm sure there are many people who are working hard on that, but at the present time I haven't had access to that. Certainly, I'd be interested.

Mr. Tascona: Well, I certainly hope you're active with respect to what's going to be needed out there, because I think we're at a point where we have to have some kind of plan. Certainly, at the municipal level, the provincial level and the federal level, they have to get their act together to do that. I've really been impressed with GO Transit. I believe their management and the people who are running it really have the vision, but they can't do it all themselves.

Those are all the questions I have, unless my colleague does.

The Chair: Ms. Scott? You still have about four minutes.

Ms. Scott: Thank you very much for joining us here today. Lorna was very kind to receive me when I was critic for training, colleges and universities. I had a great tour of York University and met with you and some other colleagues. I compliment you on the job that you're doing at York and all the past jobs that you've done—a lot of women in politics, women in public life and promotion of women in those roles. I thank you for your contributions and your many jobs that you've had, and being with the Senate, even though it was the Liberal side of the Senate. You did a lot of great work there, and a lot of your former colleagues in the Senate speak highly of you. It's great.

I know that York University is near and dear to your heart, and thus GO Transit. You're right—you mentioned the number of students and people who go through York University all the time. I know it's a challenge. I know in my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock we'd like public transit. I don't expect GO to be that close. It comes to the Brock area of my riding, but I know Peterborough was certainly mentioned as part of the regional sites that GO should go to. I say to you, keep that in mind. You have a good background with the regions and combining them, and I'm hoping that we can work together with the federal government for increased public transit.

I know my colleague John O'Toole had brought up the tax credit. He'd brought in a private member's bill on the tax credit as an incentive for more people to use public transit, and the federal government had mentioned that also. Do you have a comment? Do you think a tax credit is a possible way to improve ridership—I mean, we have to put some infrastructure in place first—or is the one-fare system, which I believe exists now in the western part of the city? Do you have any comments on the one-fare system and the public tax credit for people?

Dr. Marsden: As you know, there's never any one simple answer to those kinds of issues. I'm sure that all

of these ideas for increasing use of public transit need to be looked at, but in a context that I can't really comment on at the present time, because you have to get into some of the depth of what the financing is. I know that GO recovers 87% of its costs, from charges they have now, which I think is pretty impressive in terms of public transit. As for the inside way that works out, it needs more study than I've given it at the present time. I would imagine that the board of GO is seized with all of those alternatives. I don't know whether a tax credit's a good idea or not. I don't know what the costs of it are. I'm pleading ignorance here, but interest.

1140

Ms. Scott: That's good. I certainly believe that you're going to be a very active and progressive member of the GO Transit board. Thank you for appearing here before us today in your busy schedule; you had to make it down here. I really appreciate the fact that you're interested, and you certainly have our support.

Dr. Marsden: Thank you. I must say if the subway came all the way to York, I'd have been here even earlier.

Ms. Scott: A nice point.

The Chair: Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Tabuns: Thank you, Dr. Marsden, for coming today. Could you give us a sense of a vision you have for GO within the GTA? Have you thought about GO in those terms?

Dr. Marsden: I certainly think about GO. Whether my vision bears any relationship to those of the people who have been studying it for a long time because they're directors or management, I don't know yet, but I hope I've been clear on the fact that I really believe we have to serve the people of this area and this province with public transit. We work with all of them closely—with TTC, with YRTC, with the new Viva, which is doing so well in York region. We work with them all.

Insofar as I have a vision, which, as I say, may not turn out to be concurrent with anybody else's, it's to make it easier, faster and more convenient, and that might have any number of parts to it. But I see the struggle of students, virtually all of whom hold part-time jobs. They have to go to classes, they have to go to work, then they come back for classes. So they're just in constant motion, which is why we can park 35,000 cars a day in 11,000 spaces, because our turnaround rate is higher than anywhere. So for students it's a particular pattern of transit.

But if you look at the United Way's study, for example, of access to social services and you look at the northwest quadrant of the city and you see how few people living in—not only Jane-Finch, but Jane-Finch has needs that don't exist in some other parts of the city—how difficult it is for them to get to the youth employment service or the immigrant service because the transit isn't there, you have to worry. I'm sure you've seen those United Way maps of the city—

Mr. Tabuns: I have.

Dr. Marsden: —and those two blocks that are underserved are northwest and northeast of the GTA. We just

have to do better. What form that takes in an efficient and sustainable way is something I look forward to finding out.

Mr. Tabuns: Just following on that, then, how would GO, which I think of as a regional carrier rather than a carrier within Toronto—I know it does have some stations in Toronto, but they're fairly limited. How do you see GO actually addressing those transportation issues within the city of Toronto, the ones you've just cited?

Dr. Marsden: A lot of people who live in the city work outside the city in the surrounding regions, and vice versa. Especially when you live on the boundary, as we do, the crossing is just endless. The GO buses now that take the Brampton northwest people through to the York Yonge Street line and then circle back and come through our campus and go back again are already providing terrific service. Whether that's the best solution in the long run I think is a real question, especially as the TTC expands its line.

But one of the, I think, most wonderful aspects of the government's recent announcement on the subway expansion is that it does cross that magic boundary into York region going up to the Vaughan Corporate Centre and linking into Viva on Highway 407. That's really going to help with congestion downtown and so on when it comes, but it's not going to come tomorrow. In the meantime, what's impressed me, and I hope other people, is the responsiveness of GO to demand. Buses are fairly flexible, but they have been really responsive, not only because the president of GO is a York graduate.

Mr. Tabuns: Let's pause for a commercial break.

I've seen sprawl as a significant enemy of viable transit. It increases costs; it makes it far less convenient. Will you, in your position at GO, speak out against sprawl and speak for an urban form that is able to support transit?

Dr. Marsden: May I respectfully ask, do you think that would make any difference? Surely the sprawl issue comes into other planning areas, and if that is what is planned, then isn't it the obligation of public transit to serve whatever higher levels of government have planned? I might accept your viewpoint about sprawl, but nonetheless, if you are a public service serving the public, you've got to serve the public, even if decisions have been made that you don't agree with.

Mr. Tabuns: No, I don't disagree that you have to serve the public, but I would think that the Minister of Transportation would listen to agencies that are funded by the Ontario government and that the minister would expect to hear from agencies who say, "If in fact another arm of the government or of a local government proceeds in this direction, you will drive up our costs significantly and make it difficult for us to serve all the customers we have to serve." I would expect that all the agencies of any government would comment on policy direction, even if they didn't hire lobbyists, but at least gave the benefit of their experience. I know that TTC has spoken from time to time on development in the city of Toronto and said,

"This development is a problem for us," or "This development is advantageous for us."

Would you be taking that position, then?

Dr. Marsden: It's an excellent point. Certainly, I would speak out at the board, as I speak out, I'm afraid, everywhere. Presumably, it is the duty of the chair of the board of directors to bring forward the views of the board, but I would certainly speak out as a member of the board. But as I've said before, I need to understand and study and learn a great deal more about how the whole thing works.

Mr. Tabuns: If I were sitting in your chair, I'd give a similar answer on having to learn.

Do you have thoughts on integrating GO service with bicycle networks in suburban areas? I'll just say, I've seen in western Europe some very successful regional rail lines that integrate with bicycle networks. Do you have thoughts on that?

Dr. Marsden: Yes. It's amazing what the bicycle networks now are in the GTA. We have staff members who ride their bikes from the Beach, as we now call it, to the university on a daily basis, without much travel on public roads. It's really quite amazing. I'm a big fan of bike paths.

Mr. Tabuns: Would you be a big fan of making sure that GO Transit accommodated bicycle commuters—

Dr. Marsden: On the buses.

Mr. Tabuns: Well, not just on the buses, but having safe storage areas for bicycles in suburban areas so that people could bike to their GO station and safely leave their bicycle there?

Dr. Marsden: Sounds terrific to me.

Mr. Tabuns: Do you have any other thoughts on where we need to go with transportation in the GTA?

Dr. Marsden: I have to say, given where we are, the single fare or the single pass or whatever form it takes would really improve the lives of people. I don't know where that comes from, but I read about it in the newspapers as being perhaps a feature of a broader integrated transit authority. I can see how convenient that would be for students who are travelling across boundaries. So from my point of view, that would be very, very important. As one of the other members, from Barrie, said, we have a huge number of people who live in Barrie and work on our campus, and they do come down on the Bradford line. They commute part of the way. But of course if they cross that and get on the TTC, then they have another fare etc. So how the economics of that works out must be extremely interesting.

Mr. Tabuns: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Marsden.

The Chair: Government members?

Mr. Parsons: No questions, thank you.

The Chair: Everybody's happy? Great.

Dr. Marsden, a pleasure to see you again. Thank you very much for joining us and for your presentation and response to our members' questions.

Dr. Marsden: Thank you very much.

The Chair: You're welcome to stay for the drama of the concurrence votes about to transpire. Stick around.

Dr. Marsden: Thank you, but we're working very raptly on our graduate student plan, so I'm afraid I'll have to go back. Thank you very much.

The Chair: You bet. Good to see you again.

Folks, we will now proceed to the concurrence votes in the order in which they appeared.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Gloria Connolly, the intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Judicial Council.

Mr. Parsons: I would move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Parsons moves concurrence. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed? It is carried.

Ms. Connolly, congratulations. Best wishes at the Judicial Council, and thank you for sticking around.

We will now move to the intended appointment of Dr. Kenneth Loucks, the intended appointee as member of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

Mr. Parsons: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Any discussion? All those in favour? Any opposed? It is carried.

Dr. Loucks, best wishes with the NFBC.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Janice Thomson, the intended appointee as member of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

Mr. Parsons: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Any discussion? Seeing none, I'll pose the question: All those in favour? Opposed, if any?

Ms. Thomson, congratulations. We wish you continued success in Niagara and with the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Dr. Lorna Marsden, the intended appointee as member, GO Transit board of directors.

Mr. Parsons: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Any debate or discussion?

Mr. Tascona: I just wanted to comment on Ms. Marsden's responses. I was very impressed by the fact

that she looks like she wants to get on it hands-on, and the fact that she said that one area she'd look at when she got in there was the extension to Barrie with respect to GO Transit. I think it's what we need on that GO Transit board: some initiative from the board of directors with respect to working with the provincial government to put them on the right line. I think she's a good addition to the board. Thank you.

The Chair: Any further discussion or debate? Seeing none, I'll put the question: All those in favour? Opposed, if any?

Congratulations to Dr. Marsden, and best wishes on the GO Transit board of directors.

We have already completed the other parts of the agenda. I will tell members that our next scheduled meeting will be May 3, 2006, for intended appointments. So make sure you mark that on your schedules.

One thing to note as well, which you will see on your official yellow paper notice in the House, is that we are vacating room 151 this time in favour of room 228. So it will be at a different place, the reason being that Bill 14 is before the justice committee and they've asked to use the Amethyst Room for the public hearings on Bill 14, to which the Chair has said fine. That is on May 3. So next week we are not meeting unless you're notified otherwise. There are no plans to meet next week. The next meeting of the agencies committee will be May 3 in room 228.

Mr. Tascona: Does that mean we're not going to be on television?

The Chair: That will mean that for one week, those people watching at home will have to go without the standing committee on government agencies and will have to settle for Bill 14 instead. Any other comments?

Mr. Parsons: The meeting actually may be shorter.

The Chair: The meeting may be shorter as a result.

Thank you very much, folks. We are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1153.

CONTENTS

Wednesday 19 April 2006

Subcommittee reports	A-127
Intended appointments	
Ms Gloria Connolly	A-127
Dr. Kenneth Loucks	A-130
Ms. Janice Thomson	A-134
Dr. Lorna Marsden	A-140
Committee business	A-138

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Chair / Président

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James ND)

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James ND)

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

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln PC)

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre L)

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings L)

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock PC)

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing L)

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford PC)

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex L)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est L)

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth ND)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James ND)

Clerk / Greffière

Ms. Tonia Grannum

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Carrie Hull, research officer,
Research and Information Services