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Wednesday 27 September 2006

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 27 septembre 2006

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Tim Hudak
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 27 September 2006

Mercredi 27 septembre 2006

The committee met at 1003 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good morning. The standing committee on government agencies is now in session for our regular meeting of Wednesday, September 27, 2006. Welcome back, everybody.

We're going to start with the first order of business: the report of the subcommittee on report writing.

Ms. Smith, would you mind reading in the motion?

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I'd be pleased to this morning.

Your subcommittee met on Thursday, September 14, 2006, to consider the method of report writing, and agreed to the following:

(1) That the research officers prepare preliminary draft reports on the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. (OLG) and Hydro One, each focusing on three major issues along with suggested recommendations for the committee to consider.

(2) That the research officers provide the subcommittee members with the preliminary draft reports on the LCBO and the OLG by noon on Monday, September 18, 2006, and a preliminary draft report on Hydro One by noon on Tuesday, September 19, 2006.

(3) That the subcommittee members may provide the clerk with additional topics they wish to be covered in the preliminary draft reports by noon on Friday, September 22, 2006.

(4) That the committee meet on October 4, 2006, for the purpose of report writing.

(5) That the committee aim to have a finalized version of each report approved and ready for translation and printing by November 30, 2006.

(6) That the committee aim to present the final reports on the LCBO, OLG and Hydro One before the House rises in early December 2006.

The Chair: Outstanding. Ms. Smith has moved that motion for adoption. Is there any discussion on that motion? Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed, if any? It is carried.

Ms. Smith, thank you very much.

Ms. Smith: You're welcome.

The Chair: Members will note that at our next regular meeting, then, of October 4, we will moving on to report writing. Your subcommittee members have already been

involved in discussions with the clerk, research and me, as Chair, in terms of helping to determine those three particular topics in each of the agencies that were reviewed through the early weeks of September.

Our next order of business is a report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Tuesday, September 5, 2006. We've need movement of adoption.

Ms. Smith: I move the adoption.

The Chair: Ms. Smith moves adoption. Is there any debate or discussion? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? It is carried.

Our next order of business is a report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, September 14, 2006.

Ms. Smith: I move the adoption.

The Chair: Ms. Smith moves its adoption. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed, if any? It is carried.

You're on a roll. We'll keep that Parsons out of here and—sticking to the quick reports.

All right. We will move other business until after our appointments review to try to keep our time with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Wiggan as brief as is possible.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MARK LEWIS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Mark Lewis, intended appointee as vice-chair, Ontario Labour Relations Board.

The Chair: I'll call our first intended appointee, Mr. Lewis. Please come forward and grab a seat there at the front. Make yourself comfortable.

Mr. Lewis is the intended appointee as vice-chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Mr. Lewis, I don't know if you've had a chance to see this committee operate in the past. You're welcome to make some opening comments about your background and your interest in the position with the OLRB, and then we'll begin our rotation. Questioning will begin with the government members today. Mr. Lewis, the floor is yours, sir.

Mr. Mark Lewis: Thank you, and good morning. Firstly, I wish to say I welcome the opportunity to tell you a little bit more about myself than the bare-bones information which was contained in my application, though some of you know me from other areas.

To start with the most obvious, I've been a practising labour lawyer for the last 15 years. During that period of time—and in fact, even before I was called to the bar—I've appeared in front of the labour board on a continual basis.

In preparing for this morning, I was trying to estimate, and I think it's fairly accurate to say that I have appeared at the labour board on at least two days of every working week of my professional career. I'm therefore quite familiar, I believe, with the general statutes that the labour board has jurisdiction over and its general jurisprudence, rules, practices and procedures.

In addition to my working experience with respect to typical labour law, I have throughout my career specialized in construction labour relations and therefore, I believe, have a thorough working knowledge of those particular and unique statutory provisions, rules and jurisprudence which apply to construction industry matters and which, as I understand it, form an ever-increasing portion of the day-to-day work of the board.

More generally, in recent years I've been asked to speak on at least an annual basis at professional development conferences which have been put on by the construction industry labour relations bar in this province.

I wrote the initial drafts of the last update of a book—Sack and Mitchell's guide to practices and procedures of the Ontario Labour Relations Board—which I believe is still the standard text for those practising before the board.

As you can see from my application, I spent the last eight years of my career working as general counsel for Local 183 of the Labourers' International Union of North America. In that position, in addition to doing the standard legal work which I think most labour lawyers would be familiar with, I was also able to be involved with the construction industry as a whole, as an industry. I had the opportunity to work with employers and employer associations in matters of interest to the entire industry in a co-operative, collective way, which I think is quite different from the typical experience of most labour lawyers, who generally only get involved, at least on the union side, in the adversarial context.

1010

I realize that I have to be brief here, so I'd just like to say to you as a committee what a tremendous honour I feel it is to even be considered for the position of vice-chair. I've spent my entire professional life appearing in front of the labour board. Although, like most lawyers, I can't say I've agreed with every decision they've ever rendered, I've had the utmost respect for the board as an institution and the important role that it plays in our system of labour relations.

I also know, and it's because it's obvious, that I have spent my professional life up to now on the union side of the labour relations equation. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity before you as a committee—and, I suppose more importantly from my personal perspective, before the whole labour relations community—to go on the record and state that if I was appointed to be a vice-

chair, I am completely committed to acting in a manner which is neutral and professional, and thereby to uphold what I regard as the best traditions of our labour board in its ability to dispense justice in a manner which is expert, fair and always impartial.

That's it for now.

The Chair: Terrific. Mr. Lewis, thank you very much for your opening comments and some brief words about your background and interest in the position.

Can we get the government side? About seven minutes, if necessary. Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): I'm just curious how you got to this point. What process did you follow to get here?

Mr. Lewis: In some ways, the decision was made for me. My job at Local 183 ended quite abruptly. I think you know from the—

Mr. Parsons: That's a motivator.

Mr. Lewis: I'm not independently wealthy, so I needed a new job. That occurred in mid-June. Approximately one week later, I was phoned by an individual who had just ceased being a vice-chair at the board and was now an arbitrator, and he asked me if I was interested in becoming a vice-chair, so I said I was. He said that he would contact the chair of the board for me, Mr. Whitaker. Mr. Whitaker subsequently phoned me.

I'd been asked on previous occasions by this chair and previous chairs if I was interested and if I'd consider, so that's how it started.

Mr. Parsons: Thank you.

The Chair: All set? Thank you very much. To the official opposition side. Mr. Tascona.

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I want to welcome you here this morning. It's good to see you again, Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you.

Mr. Tascona: I want to ask you a few questions. The government put in place a policy September 1, 2006, with respect to a change in the appointment process in terms of changing the compensation plus putting in term limits. What's your understanding, if you do have any, with respect to your appointment, what it's subject to? Is it subject to the new policy? Do you understand what you're being appointed for, the term etc.?

Mr. Lewis: I can't pretend I have a complete and thorough understanding, but it is my understanding that I am being appointed under the new policy and it is for two years.

Mr. Tascona: And that's going to be a full-time vice-chair?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Mr. Tascona: With respect to the background information, I think you were pretty candid in indicating that you were general counsel for the Universal Workers Union, Labourers' International Union of North America, Local 183, from 1997 to 2006. Is that correct?

Mr. Lewis: That's correct.

Mr. Tascona: And you practised labour relations law for 15 years?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Mr. Tascona: With respect to the Local 183 situation, there was a decision rendered by the board, as I understand it. What is the status of that decision? Is it still in front of the labour board? Are there any more proceedings in front of the labour board involving this particular local and its parent?

Mr. Lewis: I ceased to work for Local 183 in mid-June 2006, so I don't have actual first-hand knowledge. As I understand it, the original decision that was issued by the board was a bottom-line decision without reasons. As I understand it, those reasons have not yet been provided. The board did remain seized of various outstanding matters and there have been ongoing proceedings before the board, and I think there are still proceedings scheduled before the board. But I couldn't tell you what those proceedings are going to deal with.

Mr. Tascona: And Mr. Whitaker—is it Mr. Whitaker, the chairman of the Labour Relations Board? He's with us here today.

You're comfortable, because I know of your integrity, that being a vice-chair at the Labour Relations Board, you're not going to be put in a situation that would involve Local 183 in terms of your functioning.

Mr. Lewis: I am completely comfortable with being a vice-chair. As I understand it, according to the board policies and guidelines, I would not be sitting on cases which involved 183 for probably a significant period of time, because they were my principal client.

Mr. Tascona: Yes. So there's the board policy in terms of that. What is the period of time? Do you know?

Mr. Lewis: I don't know precisely. I believe that for lawyers who become vice-chairs, the period of time may fluctuate depending on the importance of clients. Some clients, as you know, are long-term with long-term relationships, and others are brief, with shorter-term relationships. I believe the period therefore varies depending on the client and runs from six months to two years. I assume that in my case with Local 183, it would run for the entire two years, which is the period of the appointment.

Mr. Tascona: Yes. I understand.

You have a lot of experience and I think you're very well respected in the field. What perspectives do you want to bring, if you want to comment on that, to the Labour Relations Board as you see it? Because their mandate seems to be expanding in terms of what they're doing. The chairman has been appointed by the minister to be doing some extra work, as I understand it, with some interesting boards. I think it's important work—the Ontario Municipal Board etc.—and that's good in terms of reviewing that. But in terms of your view on that—I think you practise in a number of areas—how do you see yourself handling this position, you know, from an advocate, and now you're going to be on the other side?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, it's a change, but I want to make it clear that I think it's very important for all vice-chairs to distinguish any of their personal views that they may come with from their experience and what is required of

the vice-chair's position. I don't think it's the role of any vice-chair to rewrite the statute. I mean, that's obviously what the Legislature does. But in terms of the approach that I would bring to being a vice-chair, I think the labour board faces the same general problem which, quite frankly, most of our justice system faces; that is, trying to move cases forward in an efficient, timely manner so that justice can be dispensed and people aren't having to either withdraw their cases or mortgage their lives to pay for their legal representation. So I think my unique ability, given my skill sets, would be to identify the core, underlying issues involved in a dispute and getting to the bottom of those issues and having them dealt with quickly, either by encouraging the parties to settle or to come up with some sort of alternative dispute resolution mechanism, or, if one has to have the hearing, making sure that the hearing focuses on what is really in dispute and what really has to be determined, as opposed to going off on various tangential lines.

Mr. Tascona: That's interesting. The board has a different approach for industrial versus construction types of cases, because in the construction there is a fee to be paid in terms of disputing agreements and there is also a fee to be paid for the hearing—

Mr. Lewis: Only for the grievances.

Mr. Tascona: Yes, only for the grievances. What are your thoughts on whether that should be expanded or just confined as it is, in terms of moving justice along?

Mr. Lewis: Well, I'm perfectly comfortable with the board charging a fee for the work that it does under section 133 of the act when it sits as a board of arbitration, because in that sense it is administering private collective agreements, and why should construction unions get a freebie that every other union, and employer for that matter, has to pay for?

I would have a problem, I think, on a personal level—it's not my job to speak to it—if one had to pay a hearing fee to the board to have one's rights under the various statutes—like the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act—adjudicated.

1020

Mr. Tascona: What kind of training would you be getting in terms of this position? Is there a program for you?

Mr. Lewis: I understand that they pair you with an experienced vice-chair for a period of time at the beginning who trains you in the role. I'm not sure if there is any other, more formal, training.

Mr. Tascona: Do you have an idea whether you're going to be specializing in a particular area at the board?

Mr. Lewis: I assume that I will specialize in construction because that's my area of expertise and, as I understand it, that's where the majority of cases are, although I also understand you eat what you're given. If it's on your plate, you finish it. That's what my mother always told me.

Mr. Tascona: I'm pleased that you came here today. I think you're going to do a good job there and I wish you the best.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you very much.

The Chair: To the third party.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I can't honestly, after what you've just responded, think of a single thing I can ask, so thank you for attending.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you.

Ms. Smith: Nice, Michael. You can come every week.

The Chair: Is there a motion, then, to replace—

Mr. Parsons: This is a trap.

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): —to replace Michael.

The Chair: There you go.

Mr. Lewis, thank you very much for your presentation to the committee and your response to the members' inquiries. You're welcome to stick around. We have one more intended appointee and then we'll move to the concurrence votes. I'm not going to make any predictions on how that vote went, but it seemed to go pretty smoothly during the questions. Thank you for your time.

ALBERT WIGGAN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Albert Wiggan, intended appointee as full-time member, Ontario Human Rights Commission.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Mr. Albert Wiggan. Mr. Wiggan, welcome to the standing committee. Please make yourself comfortable. You've been kind enough to be here early, so you've seen how the committee works. You're welcome to make some opening comments. Mr. Wiggan is an intended appointee as a member of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. If you'd like to describe your background and interest in the position, any questions will begin with the official opposition. Mr. Wiggan, the floor is yours.

Mr. Albert Wiggan: First of all, I want to thank the board—I'm a little nervous, so please forgive me.

The Chair: They only look mean. They're actually not that bad. They behave themselves until about 1:30.

Mr. Wiggan: I am about people. I'm from a family of 15 children. I'm the baby of 15. My father died when I was two years and six months old, so my mother taught me how to live and how to survive. I came to Toronto 28 years ago. When I came here it wasn't easy. It was a little tough, because, going to school in Jamaica, I didn't discover I had a learning disability until I came here. I came here, started to go to school and, for some unknown reason, I couldn't learn the everyday life that we had to deal with here, doing everything normally like everybody does. I went to school for about eight years. My teacher said to me once, "Albert, I think you may have a problem." So she sent me somewhere in Etobicoke and had me tested. I was told I'm dyslexic. It was kind of a shock because I thought, being dyslexic, I was stupid. Anyway, I moved on from there. My teacher actually made an appointment for me up at York University to see

a gentleman by the name of Scott Pope. Mr. Pope was a man who actually had a disability himself. When I went to see him, he said to me, "Albert, I understand where you're coming from, but what are your plans for the future?" I said, "Sir, I would like to start my own business." He said to me, "Go ahead and do it."

I had a little bit of money saved up. I went out and started looking for a location to open a restaurant, knowing nothing about the restaurant business, but that's where my passion is. So I went out and found a location, opened a restaurant, which I've been operating now for the last 21 years.

During operating my restaurant, I realized that there are a lot of people out there like me who need a little push. All I needed was just a little push to make me know that I can be somebody, if I really want to. Realizing that being dyslexic is not a crime, I started, over the last 10 years, to open up to people, letting them know that having a disability is not the end of the world. You can go on to bigger and better things.

I got a call from the schools way back—I'm not so active doing it now as I used to be, but I used to go into the schools and speak to the kids, tell them about myself and that they can grow if they really want to grow. Having a disability doesn't mean that's the end of the world.

I have a quick little story here. I want to tell you about a child. A little while ago, about six months ago, I got a call from a school. They told me they had a bunch of kids coming down to see me, between 12 and 13. They showed up all excited, asking me how I started my business, so I had to tell them from scratch. However, in the group there was one child who wouldn't say anything. I stopped the other children and said, "Let me speak to that young man over there." I said, "How come you're not saying anything?" He said, "I have a learning disability." Right there and then I saw myself in that child because I remember, as a child, that that's the exact same way I used to be. I wouldn't say anything, only look and stare. However, I said to him, "Well, having a disability doesn't mean you can't start your own business and do like I do," and his eyes just popped right open. It sort of got me very teary at the moment because I saw myself in that child.

Anyway, I told him what he can do with himself, what he can grow up to be, and I was happy that I leave myself open now for the public, as in talking to people I can now help the ones who need help. Please stop me here if I'm over my time.

There's a gentleman I would like to talk about. I remember about three years ago I was going to work one morning at about 5:30 and I saw this gentleman sitting in the doughnut shop. Every morning he sat there. I took it upon myself one morning to go and speak to him: "Every day I come here, you're sitting in the same chair." He said to me, "Albert, my English is not good. I was trained in Europe and I can't get a job here." So I said to him, "I have a small formula for you. Your best bet is to go back

to school and learn the educational skills of Canada, and that might help you.”

Panel, the gentleman went back to university. I didn’t see him for about three months. He went back to university and for about three or four months I didn’t see him. He came back to me and said, “I have to report to you, Albert. I actually got enrolled in university.” About six months, or a year later, to be exact, he came back to me and said, “You know, in my class my professor said to me that I am one of the smartest students; thanks to you, Albert.” I said, “Don’t thank me, thank yourself, because I told you what to do, but you made the move. I didn’t do it. You made the move.”

Today, my friend, my associate, just came back from the Middle East—actually, no; he came back and told me about six months ago. He always makes little reports to me of what he is doing with his life. He came back and said to me, “Albert, you would not believe it.” I said, “What is it?” He said, “One hundred people applied for this job. I got it. I’m going to be working for the UN, thanks to you.”

1030

So I am about helping people. I am about justice and equality. I’m about helping people who need help. I try my very best to help people who cross my path.

I was saying to myself not too long ago—like I said, stop me when you guys think I’ve said enough—there are a lot of people out there who are like a battery. Some of them have a little bit of current in them, and they just need to be pushed to start.

I like to help people who are weak, because I think of myself, I think of where I am coming from. Without the push from my teacher Colleen Cecee, a little Irish lady, and Mr. Scott Pope of York University, who encouraged me to go on with my life—if it wasn’t for those people and of course my wife, behind me there, and we’ve been married for the last 28 years, who supported me through thick and thin, today I wouldn’t be standing here telling you my story.

I’m very strong in morals. I give my word to the public and to the standing committee here that I am about people, I’m about helping the ones who need help.

I’m making myself a door to the people who need help and people with disabilities. I want to tell them out there that just because you have a disability, it doesn’t mean you can’t make it. Thank you very much. God bless you.

The Chair: Mr. Wiggan, thank you very much. Those are very moving stories. We will begin with the official opposition.

Mr. Tascona: Thanks for coming here, Albert. I just want to clarify one thing. I understand that in the maiden speech by the Attorney General—at the time, he was a backbencher—Michael Bryant, to the Legislature in October 1999, he stated, “This riding houses a who’s who of Ontario’s political, religious, social and community leaders. I can’t name them all because I’ll offend some, but I’ll just name a few: Albert Wiggan, the proprietor of Albert’s Real Jamaican, the best takeout

maybe in Ontario and the winner of the Harry Jerome award for excellence.” Is that you, Albert?

Mr. Wiggan: Yes.

Mr. Tascona: Is your restaurant chain still Albert’s Real Jamaican?

Mr. Wiggan: Yes.

Mr. Tascona: I understand that you have a website for that restaurant.

Mr. Wiggan: Yes.

Mr. Tascona: It says that you also have a catering service and plan some day to franchise your restaurant. Where is that restaurant?

Mr. Wiggan: I’m at 542 St. Clair Avenue West.

Mr. Tascona: Get that on the record. I’m getting hungry already.

Is your restaurant accessible to persons with disabilities?

Mr. Wiggan: Yes.

Mr. Tascona: You’re from Mississauga. Who’s your MPP?

Mr. Wiggan: I know he’s Italian. I can’t remember his name. I’m more focused in Toronto.

Mr. Tascona: How did you become aware of this appointment? You applied back in 2005. Did someone approach you?

Mr. Wiggan: What happened was, I wanted to see Mr. Bryant because I had some concerns about my community that were really on my mind, so I actually brought him a few concerns.

Mr. Tascona: But who did you talk to from the government?

Mr. Wiggan: I spoke to Mr. Bryant regarding my concerns about the community, and the discussion vaguely turned to human rights. We didn’t prolong talking about it. It wasn’t the issue that I really went there for. So I put an application in. Actually, I hadn’t heard anything about it, so I totally forgot about it. I think about six months ago, I spoke to Ms. Hall. She gave me an interview, and it started from there. But other than that, I actually thought it had been so long that—

Mr. Tascona: That’s Barbara Hall, the chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Wiggan: Yes. So she interviewed me, and we went from there.

Mr. Tascona: That’s fine. What do you understand about the term of your appointment? How many years is it, do you know?

Mr. Wiggan: I think it’s two years or three years. I don’t quite remember.

Mr. Tascona: They haven’t told you that. Okay. Do you understand what you’re going to be doing? I understand from the commission that they meet approximately three days of every six weeks for a total of 27 days in a year. Do you understand what you’re supposed to be doing?

Mr. Wiggan: Yes, I understand that, and I will have the time, because I now have a very competent manager who manages my place, who’s sitting right next to my

wife there. I have excellent staff that now can do whatever has to be done at work.

Mr. Tascona: Are you a card-carrying member or have you ever donated to the Liberal Party?

Mr. Wiggan: No.

Mr. Tascona: No?

Mr. Wiggan: No.

Mr. Tascona: Okay. Are you familiar with the restaurant owner and operator's policy with respect to what they are expected to do for the Human Rights Commission? Are you familiar with that?

Mr. Wiggan: I'm really not briefed on everything yet, sir. I'm hoping that, if given the opportunity to be on the board, I will be informed of everything that has to be done.

Mr. Tascona: In December 2003, the Human Rights Commission released a report called *Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling*, and in that report, they made 19 recommendations, including:

"1. The government should establish a racial diversity secretariat....

"2. All organizations and institutions entrusted with responsibility for public safety, security and protection should take steps to monitor for and prevent the social phenomenon of racial profiling....

"5. Organizations or institutions that have, or are alleged to have, a problem with racial profiling should accept and acknowledge the existence of racial profiling, as well as the need to address the concerns of the communities they serve....

"11. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services should undertake a public consultation to determine the best way to ensure that the police complaints mechanism is, and is seen as, independent and effective. Necessary changes to the current system should be made accordingly."

A year after the release of the report, Keith Norton, who was the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, wrote an opinion piece for the *Toronto Star* in which he claimed that "not enough is being done to combat racial stereotyping." However, Mr. Norton acknowledged that the Liberal government had undertaken a review of the police complaints mechanism. As we know, that hasn't been brought forward for legislation and, quite frankly, I don't even know where that is right now in terms of the government's agenda.

In your opinion, does racial profiling occur?

Mr. Wiggan: I really don't know a lot about that stuff. I've heard it. I am looking forward to learning more about it before I can actually make a strong statement on it. I've heard stuff on the radio and TV about racial profiling. I really don't know a hell of a lot about it, to be very honest with you. What I'm hoping to do, if permitted, on the board is to learn more about all these things and also to learn from the people from the board how to apply myself to this. I don't really know a lot about it. This is really a learning stage for me. I'm willing to learn the rules and the dos and don'ts. So I'm waiting for the opportunity to understand all this.

Mr. Tascona: Thanks very much. My colleague has some questions.

The Chair: Ms. Scott, you have about three minutes.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): Thank you very much for appearing here before us today and for your willingness to go on the commission.

Following up on some of your background, one of the roles of the Ontario Human Rights Commission is to develop policy and promote public awareness of the Human Rights Code. Do you want to elaborate a little bit more on some initiatives you'd like to bring forward or some things you've seen in your community?

1040

Mr. Wiggan: What I would like to bring to the board is life experience. I'm hoping to work with everybody on the board. Of course, everybody will have different ideas. I intend to work with the people and bring my life experience.

Ms. Scott: What do you think would be some of the areas that are filed—areas such as age discrimination, ancestry? Do you hear a lot in the community about discrimination in those areas? I mean, there are certain percentages.

Mr. Wiggan: Well, there are many types of discrimination. Sometimes there's discrimination in the workplace. There's discrimination at different levels. I like to investigate things before I point the finger, saying, "Well, it's wrong." Instead of jumping to a conclusion, saying, "That's discrimination," I find out.

Ms. Scott: I just wondered if you'd heard of specific areas where there's been discrimination taking place in your community, for example.

Mr. Wiggan: Like I said, I've heard of stories, but I have no facts on them. This is stuff I heard about, stuff that happened. In order to comment on that—I have no facts on what started the discrimination, so to tell you that something happened, that this is what happened, it's very hard to make an answer on that. But I know stuff like that does happen.

Ms. Scott: That's fine. Since 2003, the average length to process a human rights complaint has increased each year, to the point where it's now an average of over a year. How do you feel about that year timeline? What changes would you like to see to speed that up, if you think it should be sped up?

Mr. Wiggan: Like I said, what I am bringing to the human rights board, if I'm appointed to be there, is my life experience. There are a lot of things that I am going to have to learn, and this is new for me. I am hoping, when I get there—if I do get there—to understand, if I can use the word, the way the human rights board runs. To make a comment on that right now, not having been on the board before, I don't think is fair to myself when I don't know how the board runs. I don't know if the time factor of a complaint should take six months, if it should take three months. It's very hard to say that.

Ms. Scott: Okay. Thank you for appearing here before us today and for your input. That's fine.

The Chair: Thank you very much. The third party?

Mr. Prue: I only have one fairly brief question. It deals with the amount of work involved in preparing for board hearings. I'm given to understand it's about three days of intense reading and stuff. You did talk about a learning disability and your amazing process to overcome that. Will you have any difficulty absorbing the huge amounts of material—three days' worth of reading—in order to be prepared? I just need to be confident in my own mind that you will.

Mr. Wiggan: To be very honest with you, I will go back to Mr. Pope. When I went to his office, he communicated with tapes. I quite positively think that I'll be able to do that with all the electronic devices that are available today.

Mr. Prue: So the Human Rights Commission has said that they will have assistive devices—

Mr. Wiggan: Well, they didn't say that, but I am saying that there are devices that are available today for people like myself and many others which I should be able to use to help me.

Mr. Prue: And you won't be the least bit shy in asking for these?

Mr. Wiggan: No, I won't.

Mr. Prue: I just want to make sure. That would be my question.

The Chair: Mr. Prue, thank you very much.

To the government side: about one minute left on your clock.

Mr. Parsons: I appreciate your coming. This can appear challenging, and you've handled it well. Your family and community should be very proud of you.

Mr. Wiggan: Thank you very much.

Mr. Parsons: You met with Barbara Hall and had a chat. Tell us about it.

Mr. Wiggan: I had a chat, as you say, with Barbara. It was quite a lengthy meeting. She asked me quite a few things. I don't know her in depth, but our meeting was very intense. She asked quite a few questions. I'm hoping to learn more about her as we go along. Our meeting was based on this whole human rights thing that we're talking about today. I am hoping to learn more about her as we go along, if given the position.

Mr. Parsons: Thank you.

The Chair: That does conclude the time. Mr. Wiggan, thank you very much for your presentation and your response to members' questions. You're welcome to stick around, because now we're going to proceed with the votes on approval of the committee. Thank you for your time, sir.

Mr. Wiggan: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Folks, we'll now go into concurrences in the order in which they appeared before the committee.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Mark Lewis, the intended appointee as vice-chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Mr. Parsons: I would move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Parsons moves concurrence. Is there any discussion of the intended appointment. Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed, if any? Mr. Lewis, congratulations and all the best as vice-chair of the OLRB.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Albert Wiggan, intended appointee as member of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Parsons: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Parsons moves concurrence. Any discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed, if any? There you go, Mr. Wiggan. Congratulations to you, sir, and all the best on the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Folks, we now have an opportunity for other business, if members have any other business for the committee today.

Ms. Smith: I'd just like to say that we'd like to welcome Mr. Prue back any time to our committee.

The Chair: We are a record 70 minutes ahead of schedule. We'll call that the Bisson factor, eh?

Is there any other business? I'll then remind members that our next meeting will be Wednesday, October 4, at 10 o'clock. We will be moving with our discussion on the report stemming from our agency interviews of early September on that date, so please come prepared for report writing. Seeing no further instruction for researchers, if you have any other advice, please do so through your subcommittee members as soon as possible.

Folks, thank you very much. We are now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1047.

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