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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

A-30

**Journal
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(Hansard)**

A-30

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 29 September 2020

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

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42^e législature

Mardi 29 septembre 2020

Chair: John Vanthof
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : John Vanthof
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 29 September 2020

Mardi 29 septembre 2020

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2 and by videoconference.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order. We are meeting to conduct a review of intended appointments. We have the following members in the room: MPP Stiles and MPP Bouma. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Coe, MPP Natyshak, MPP Martin, MPP Miller, MPP Pang and MPP Tangri. That is the list—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): And MPP Anand.

We are also joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard and broadcast and recording.

To make sure that everyone can understand what is going on, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. Since it could take a little time for your audio and video to come up after I recognize you, please take a brief pause before beginning. As always, all comments by members or witnesses should go through the Chair.

Continuing from our meeting last week, Ms. Stiles had two minutes remaining in her questioning of the intended appointment of Paul Stopciati, nominated as a member of the Fire Safety Commission of Ontario. Mr. Stopciati was not able to return today, so we will deal with the concurrences from the previous meeting.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. JOSEPH TASCONA

Review of intended appointment, selected by government party: Joseph Tascona, intended appointee as member, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now consider the intended appointment of Joseph Tascona, nominated as member, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

Mr. Natyshak—wait a second; you're not on yet.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: There we go.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Sorry. Apologies.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Before we do this, Chair, we have some concerns about the nomination of Mr. Stopciati. Before we take a vote on his nomination and his appointment, I have some questions. Can we address some of those questions?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): If it's okay with you, could we deal with Mr. Tascona first? Then I will return to you for your question, if that works?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Okay. Mr. Bouma, did you raise your hand?

Mr. Will Bouma: Yes. There we go. Mr. Chair, I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Joseph Tascona, nominated as member of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Mr. Bouma. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I'd like to call a vote. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion carries.

MR. PAUL STOPCIATI

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Paul Stopciati, intended appointee as member, Fire Safety Commission.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now consider the intended appointment of Paul Stopciati, nominated as a member of the Fire Safety Commission of Ontario. Could Mr. Natyshak raise his concerns now?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Okay. Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you so much, Chair, and to my colleagues, for your indulgence.

Unfortunately, we didn't have Mr. Stopciati for the last two minutes. There were some important questions that arose from his deputation. I don't know if any of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had any questions, given his testimony, but there were some red flags that were raised. There were some inconsistencies throughout his testimony, and we are concerned that there is a clear conflict of interest in Mr. Stopciati's nomination. We wondered if some of the information that is relevant to his employment was actually given to the folks who vet those appointments at the beginning.

This is an opportunity for us to really put a pause on something that is quite detrimental to the public safety of Ontarians. The Fire Safety Commission of Ontario—I can't think of many other more important committees and agencies that the government supports.

Just to dive a little bit deeper, one of the things is Mr. Stopciati's ownership of a fire services business. I point to that because, clearly, if you are in the business of providing fire safety services and equipment, that's someone who could potentially benefit from or prejudice the regulations around fire safety in Ontario. I mean no malicious intent, and I definitely don't think Mr. Stopciati is a person

who would endeavour to do that, but the possibility is there. It is incumbent upon us as members to identify that that possibility exists and to stop it in its tracks.

Secondly, Mr. Stopciati had indicated that he would immediately recuse himself from his business dealings and ownership after his appointment. So he, in his testimony, acknowledged that there is a rationale for him to not be involved in his business. Now, as legislators, we can't compel him to do that, but we can do the reverse: We can ensure that he doesn't have to recuse himself from his business, because he very clearly shouldn't be involved on this side of the policy aisle. So there was that.

There were also some inconsistencies around his contact with fire officials, fire marshals. At one point, he mentioned he hadn't spoken to a firefighter or a fire marshal in many years, and then in the same paragraph or shortly thereafter, he indicated that he had been in contact with the fire marshal, specifically about this appointment.

I'm really concerned. There are some clear red flags, and this is an opportunity for us as a committee to do the right thing in a non-partisan way. I don't know if any of my colleagues on the other side sensed some of those inconsistencies or picked up on them, but we certainly did. We would ask the committee to use whatever tools we have, potentially asking the Integrity Commissioner, through a motion of this committee—I'm not sure if it will be in order or not; I would ask the Clerk to tell me if a motion from the committee to ask that the Integrity Commissioner review the potential conflict of interest in the appointment of Mr. Stopciati to the agency would be. If not, New Democrats will endeavour to do that ourselves. Either way, we need to ensure that Mr. Stopciati isn't in a potential conflict of interest.

So that's my concern, before we take a vote. Also, we would like a recorded vote on this appointment. If it is going to go through right now, then we'd like a recorded vote. If there is a mechanism for us to put a pause on this and kick the can down the lane a little bit, we would be supportive of that as well.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. There are a couple of questions in there. First, would it be the will of the committee to approach the Integrity Commissioner? Or is it possible for the committee—

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Unfortunately, it's not possible. The mandate of this committee is to review the intended appointees and vote on concurrence. In that sense, that's where you voice your opinion and vote accordingly. The mandate of the committee would not allow us to move a motion to ask the Integrity Commissioner to review. You could do that as a member, individually.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Okay. Then I guess we move concurrence. You have asked for a recorded vote. Ms. Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: We appreciate now—thank you very much to the Clerk for clarifying what we can do as a committee in terms of moving a motion for the Integrity Commissioner to investigate. As my colleague Mr. Natyshak has mentioned, we will certainly pursue that in the official opposition NDP, notwithstanding.

But I'm just wondering if any of the other government members perhaps are interested in entertaining the notion of either—or if they have any comments on that? I know we all heard the same issues arise, and whether or not there is any interest in pausing this or—because, otherwise, we're going to go to a vote. I assume the government members are probably going to support it, and I personally think there are some serious and legitimate concerns that we should all have addressed before we continue with this vote.

I just want to throw it over to the government members to see if they'd like to comment, if that's possible, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. There would be time to comment right now. Otherwise, after the concurrence, I also ask for further discussion, if anyone would like.

0910

But first, we have another member who has joined. I'd like to confirm that. Ms. Simard, could you please identify yourself and confirm that you are in Ontario?

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Yes. MPP Amanda Simard, and I am in my Queen's Park office in Toronto.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you.

Now we will move the intended appointment of Paul Stopciati, nominated as member of the Fire Safety Commission of Ontario. Mr. Bouma?

Mr. Will Bouma: Mr. Chair, I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Paul Stopciati, nominated as member of the Fire Safety Commission.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, a recorded vote has been requested.

Ayes

Anand, Bouma, Coe, Martin, Norm Miller, Pang, Tangri.

Nays

Natyshak, Simard, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): The motion carries.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): The next item of business is the subcommittee report dated September 24, 2020. We have all seen the report in advance, so could I please have a motion? Mr. Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: I will move the subcommittee report.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. Is there any further discussion? All those in favour, please raise your hand. Opposed? It carries.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now move to our review of intended appointments. First, we have—oh, Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Point of order: Actually, I'm not sure if it's a point of order, but I wondered, since we just passed another subcommittee report, if I could ask the Clerk whether it would be okay to consider pulling together a subcommittee meeting. We've made this attempt numerous times, but we have yet to have any luck in pulling the government side together for a subcommittee meeting.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): I will just go over the fact that this committee, in practice, they don't actually need to have the subcommittee meeting. We get the certificate, and you make your selections. But if it's for a different reason, sure, we can get the Chair to call a subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes. We're certainly aware of that. We've been trying for many months—actually, since this committee started to meet, we've had maybe one subcommittee meeting, maybe two, to talk about processes, how things are moving forward, some concerns that the official opposition have, and so I'm hoping that perhaps the Chair would be able to try to, again, convene a subcommittee meeting. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Ms. Stiles.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MS. CAROLINE FLETCHER-DAGENAIS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais, intended appointee as member, Ontario Parole Board.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now move to our review of intended appointments. First, we have Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais, nominated as a member of the Ontario Parole Board.

Welcome. As you may be aware, you have the opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With that questioning, we will start with the government, followed by the official opposition, with 15 minutes allocated to each recognized party. Any time you take in your statement will be deducted from the time allotted to the government.

Welcome, and the floor is yours.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Thank you, members. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is an honour to appear before the members of the standing committee by video and present my background and qualifications for the Ontario Parole Board.

I was born, educated, raised a family and have worked for decades in Ontario. My academic achievements include an honours sociology degree with a legal studies minor from the University of Waterloo and a master's of applied criminology from the University of Ottawa. These studies have provided a strong knowledge base for my professional roles in the justice system.

While I've adjudicated in other provinces, the mainstay of my career has been in Ontario, specifically the eastern

region. During my tenure with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, I travelled across the province and met with those who have been victimized by crime. During this time, and then later with the Parole Board of Canada, I conducted many hearings where victims were present and continuing to grieve for the loss of a loved one.

Victims have an important voice in our justice system. They convey the impact of the offence, a relevant part of the information that assists the board's decision-making and ensures the justice system is more responsive to victims.

I have also worked at all of the federal penitentiaries in Ontario, male and female, and am well acquainted with many of the provincial facilities, correctional and community resources. I bring extensive experience to the parole board table. I have worked both inside and outside of the jails and prisons with the offenders, victims, justice stakeholders and the public. In fact, I have direct experience with a broad cross-section of the offender population, from mischief or maybe minor frauds to first-degree murder. I have assessed and addressed the risk of those who commit domestic and sexual violence. I have imposed release conditions for, among others, long-term offenders, outlaw bikers, gang members and organized crime figures.

I have both revoked parole and pardons and granted them. I have testified in court and authorized arrest warrants for those who have breached conditions. I have both supervised and rendered decisions on people who have mental health issues, cognitive deficits, addiction problems and differing levels of education. The ability to listen effectively and communicate clearly to all the members of the public, including those with special needs, have been essential skills in my career.

Inherent in the role of the board member is the application of one's professional judgment and the ability to render fair, unbiased and well-written decisions within a timely manner. All of these decisions must ably withstand the scrutiny of the courts. Fairness is a cornerstone of parole hearings and decisions, and I have applied these principles throughout my career.

My work has helped me gain a better understanding of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I have applied the Gladue principles in authoring court reports and parole decisions. I have also participated in, and facilitated with elders, Aboriginal circle hearings within corrections settings.

I have rendered precedent-setting pardon decisions based on significant changes to the pardon law that occurred during my mandate with the Parole Board of Canada, and I was chosen among my peers to enact the first decisions of this new law, subsequently providing training to the members who followed. I was able to pivot between the different functions of a board member at the federal level.

As my experience has grown, I have had the opportunity to speak to justice stakeholders on conditional release, including Ontario justices in our very active Judges and Jail program; the OPP ROPE Squad, who are responsible for apprehending those who have breached their release

conditions; victim witness coordinators; students; and others. I have supervised and mentored younger probation and parole officers, a role I have greatly enjoyed in recent years.

In summary, I have a long-standing interest and commitment to public safety. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my remarks to your committee this morning.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you very much for your presentation. The first round of questioning will go to the government. Mr. Coe, go ahead.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Good morning and welcome to the committee. Thank you, Chair. Through you to Madame Dagenais: You've previously served on the parole board. Could you please share with the committee members your insights in terms of being an effective member of the board? Thank you.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Thank you very much. I've had the benefit, you heard in my opening remarks, of serving on both the provincial and federal boards. It gives you an opportunity, like I said before, to appreciate the trouble people get into, applying risk assessments to what they've done and having a regular visit with probation clients.

But on the parole board side, since I've done the job, I feel quite comfortable within the correctional facilities. I enjoy the role. I like reading. There's a number of court reports that you have to read, synthesize, analyze and assess when you play the role. You have to do it in the form of a hearing. Then sometimes you're collaborating with a partner, if the quorum is more than one, and you make sure that you have everything you have to make the decision based on the criteria in front of you.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you for that answer. Through you, Chair, to MPP Tangri.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Ms. Tangri.
0920

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you and good morning. Through you, Chair, to Ms. Dagenais: Thank you for joining us this morning. You know the safety of our communities is key. The parole board has to try and balance two imperatives that can come into conflict: on one hand, the reintegration of offenders back into the community and, on the other, ensuring that safety of our communities. Can you just elaborate and tell us what factors you would take into consideration when you're doing this?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: It is the two statutory criteria that we rely on to make the decision. Usually, both provincially and federally, you would want a thorough background of the person in front of you. You want social background details, education, family background. You certainly want criminal record information, and we usually get that in a fulsome manner. There's a lot of information contained on that record. We are allowed to pursue that in the form of a hearing or, before, if we're missing information, to order it. There's also psychological information, court reports.

After you have reviewed all the information and you interview the offender, perhaps even listen to the victims

in the hearing or have received information, you would go through your risk assessment at that time and either collaborate or yourself work out what the outcome will be. I will base always—first and foremost is the protection of the people in the community. I've always held that role in 14 years of adjudicating, 11 with both boards. Protection of the society as the law reads is key, and that's the mandate that I've used effectively all these years to go forward in the role.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Miller?

Mr. Norman Miller: Good morning and thank you. You have a tremendous amount of education and experience that's certainly relevant to the parole board, but I'm interested in your engagement in the community, your volunteer work and what you've learned from that and how that would inform your work on the parole board.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: I've always, even in my youth, volunteered. I've kept it up. I was raising two children; they were often on the hockey rinks. I come from eastern Ontario, so I spent a lot of time—my family was really very involved at the time with the local minor hockey association here in Clarence-Rockland. And throughout my career, on an aside, I've always tried to help people within the criminal justice system where they're learning to be a part of it—probation and parole officers and so on.

For myself, I've also been civically involved. I have, as well, worked on political campaigns and I recently—relatively recently; not in the last year and a half, but before—assisted one of the people on this committee, and she became the first female MPP to represent our riding in the history of Canada. So I was very happy to participate with my community in that.

But I am very active. I have aging parents; I'm very active with them, and I enjoy that. They're in their own home. I also have a friend who, sadly, has MS and is in a wheelchair, and I do spend a lot of time with her. She's a now-retired PO and had to leave a little early from the role. So I have my own work that I do in that respect in my community.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Chair. Through you, to the witness: Ms. Fletcher-Dagenais, it's a pleasure to have you here. I am absolutely wowed with your level of commitment to serving our justice system.

If I could pick your brain a little bit: COVID presents significant challenges to everything, but I can only imagine what that would be like in the OPB, in particular with in-person hearings. If you could just comment on what your thoughts are on how it can adapt so that we can continue to provide these services to people in an age of COVID and non-in-person hearings. If you could just speak to that a little bit.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: During my time with the Parole Board of Canada, they went to an audio-visual system for parole hearings at the time. Of course, that's pre-COVID, but it is a way that parole boards can ensure that people are seen and heard and that their cases are presented. Every case presents a different challenge. I

haven't worked in the system, of course, since the pandemic began. I do have friends who work in the system, and they're trying to be very, very careful.

The parole hearing rooms in most of the facilities, I can tell you—if you've been in any of the jails, you'll see—they're very small, specifically in the provincial jails. So you are relatively close to the individuals within the room. Obviously, the board itself has taken precautions; I know that. If decisions can be made on paper or through video links, I would encourage that. But, just as in your job, you like to see the people. You like to see them in front of you so you can make a good assessment. It does make an ideal assessment when you can have the person totally in front of you, because there are things about body language that you read as an assessor as well.

Those will be the challenges that the board will have—and making sure that their members can travel around freely in the community to address the board decisions, because the board decisions don't wait. We can't put them off. There are statutory rules in place for having a hearing. People are entitled to have that hearing, and the government, I'm sure, is doing everything to try to make that happen.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you very much. I'd love to have a long chat with you about those things, but I will leave it to my colleagues.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Pang.

Mr. Billy Pang: How much time do I have?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Two minutes, 40 seconds.

Mr. Billy Pang: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you: Thank you, Caroline, for putting your name forward to serve Ontarians. I have read through your resumé, and I find that you have had a wide range of professional experiences in your career. Could you please share how these experiences prepared you for your work with the OPB?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Yes. Thank you very much. The members can't see, but I'm at a dining room table and I have papers strewn about that I can call on if anybody asks me any of those questions, and one of them—you can do a little audiovisual. I'll be quick. I know my time is limited.

Back in 1984, that was my first role with any criminal justice body, and it was the Halton Regional Police Service. I was in Oakville at the time. I grew up in Oakville, and I worked for them for two summers, but I would also, as a student, often do ride-alongs with the police officers, just to learn what their mandate was. I did an undergraduate thesis on police discretion, but peppered throughout my career, I've had an interest in criminal justice. Even when I wrote for my school newspapers, I would write justice articles. I have some of them with me.

When I worked for immigration, early on in my career, I had a great opportunity because they were changing the legislation at the time, and so all the legislative criteria around criminality and serious criminality had to be

structured. It was a terrific opportunity for me at the time to work in that.

Then what I did when I worked with the Ontario Parole Board on the first occasion, because I have worked for them and played the role full-time, I married my experience from immigration—knowing that there was a little bit of a loophole happening at the time where we were relying on self-reported information for people's backgrounds, where they were from and so on. So I drafted and we collaboratively worked and did a memorandum of understanding for the board.

So I've been able to go to different agencies but bring that experience forward and make it better, and I want to do that again.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you for sharing. I believe you can play a role if you are being appointed. Thank you very much.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Thank you, sir.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now switch to questions from the official opposition. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Welcome, Ms. Fletcher-Dagenais. Thank you very much for your presentation. I'm going to ask you some questions now that—some of them are kind of pro forma. We have seen a very large number of—well, I would say pretty much every appointment under this current government has had some political connections, and so we've been working very hard in the official opposition to provide as much transparency as we can around some of that. But also, as you know, these are important questions. There has to be some transparency and accountability in this system, so that's what we endeavour to bring to the process.

A couple of things: First of all, were you approached to apply for this position, and if so, by whom?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: No, it was all me. I made the decision after—well, some time after I left probation and parole, because I had gone back and done officer work after I left the parole board and my mandate was done. But I have elderly parents and they need my assistance, and I've done that, but then I was itching to get back and do conditional release again because I've done it for 11 years.

Ms. Marit Stiles: So you just through the regular process online and—

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: It's been a long process. I went through the portal well over a year ago. But do you know what? I'm happy to do that. I'm happy to compete and I'm happy to have this time in front of the committee.

0930

Ms. Marit Stiles: Absolutely. I think we know a little bit about—you've already addressed some of the questions around what motivated you specifically to seek out an appointment on this particular board.

These are some more uncomfortable questions, but I do feel that they really are important, given the record we've seen thus far. Can you confirm that you have donated to both the federal and the provincial Conservative parties?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: I can confirm the provincial Conservative party. It would have been many years ago that I would have contributed to the federal party. It would certainly not have been in the last eight years. But I did contribute specifically to the campaign to elect Amanda Simard, who of course is with us at the table. So yes, I did contribute.

Ms. Marit Stiles: And are you currently a member of either the federal or the provincial Conservative parties?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Not at the present time.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. Can you confirm that you formerly had a vote on the national Conservative council, the federal Conservative council?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: The federal Conservative council? I don't believe I had a vote on the federal—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back in the 1990s, perhaps?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: I don't even think back in the 1990s. If it was back in the 1990s, it might have been early 1990s. I was not on the national executive.

Ms. Marit Stiles: No, I think it was the council, but thank you.

I had another couple of questions. I just want to clarify—because we had another appointee here last week and there were some questions potentially around them having a business that would profit from the appointment that they were potentially being appointed to. I just want to confirm that you're not working currently as an adjudicator, you're not currently employed by—you've taken some time off, as you mentioned, to take care of your family.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. So you wouldn't be working in any capacity that would in any way interfere with your role on the Parole Board?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: No.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you. I actually wanted to veer off a little, and then I'm going to hand it over to my colleague. But what are your thoughts—you do have quite an extraordinary experience in this area. I'm just curious about your thoughts around what we see in study after study of the overrepresentation of BIPOC people in incarceration, in the judicial system. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: I'm sorry; I didn't hear the word you said.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Black, Indigenous, people of colour.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Oh, I see. Sorry, I've never heard the term the way you used it before.

Yes, of course. That was more apparent to me when I travelled out west. For example, in Stony Mountain, I remember spending a week out there, and I think the preponderance of people who came in front of me were Indigenous. In Ottawa, I've had a lot of experience dealing with the Inuit population, who do come down south to Ottawa for services.

I believe that it's a goal of all agencies, boards, commissions and ministries to make sure that people are

equally represented. I'll tell you as well, when I used to work at the Parole Board, I'd go into the old offices and they'd have the pictures of the old Parole Board up back in the 1900s. It was all older men with moustaches. So I've always found that breaking ground is very important, and I think that should be an opportunity that everybody has to compete and to be a part of a board. That's in terms of being a board member.

In terms of being at the board and presenting or being an offender or a victim or a parent, a brother, a sister, it shouldn't matter what colour you are. It shouldn't matter what language you speak. Services will be provided for you, and everyone should get a fair shake when they make an application, regardless of anything.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate that. Do you consider in some of the systemic discrimination and racism that exists—and I don't think just in the judicial system or just in policing, but I see it throughout our education system in what we call the school-to-prison pipeline.

You mentioned earlier some experience working with parolees, I assume, who have special needs. Often we see these needs are not identified, particularly in certain populations, particularly among young Black men. We see that happening through the school system and then carrying through.

Do you have any further comments on that? I think that these issues are being discussed very much and are of very great concern to many Ontarians right now, so I would invite further comment.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Right. Thank you very much. To touch on part of your question then, I'm sure you probably know that the parole board provincially, from what I've been reading of their materials, has made great efforts to conduct the circle hearings for Aboriginal people who do find themselves incarcerated and appreciates the challenges that the culture has when they come in front of the board. That's why Gladue is applied at all levels of what you discussed there.

If you're talking about an overrepresentation of Black youth in our jails, of course, that's a huge social issue. I didn't necessarily find it here in the eastern region, but that being the case, it certainly may be the case in the Toronto area.

I think it must start, as you mentioned yourself, with education. What people have when they are young, how they grow, and how they're taught and socialized: It does start there.

How does the criminal justice system, specifically the parole board, deal with that issue? I hope, overall, that you're giving the individual in front of you a fair hearing and allowing them time to speak, and maybe understanding some of the slang or colloquialisms, or taking the time to learn it. Of course, I'm not the community. I've worked on the street. I say that as a probation and parole officer.

I think the more you know your communities and you know your people and you're able to communicate, the better the decision will be and the fairer the decision will be.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: How much time left?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Six minutes, sir.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay, thank you very much.

Thanks, Ms. Fletcher-Dagenais. Thank you for being here. I appreciate you expanding on all of your various experiences throughout your career. No doubt, you have a real formative knowledge of the appointment that we're asking you to fill.

Can you clarify for me that you were previously on the federal parole board?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Correct, sir.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: How long?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Six years, I did that; and provincial parole board, five years; and criminal injuries, three. So, altogether, it was 14 years. A part-time designation on some of those years, but we were still working fully, and I've had a full-time designation on some of those areas as well.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much. Can you tell me what your interpretation is or what your thoughts are on section 81 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and possibly any experience that you have in applying section 81 to any of the parole hearings that you've had?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: It's been a while, so if I'm going to quote legislation, I better make sure I have the right piece. Is section 81 an alternative way to parole somebody back to a community? Is that what you're talking about?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You're getting there; that's correct.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Yes, it's a specific section. I did actually do one. They're very rare to happen. And back in my day, they were very rare, probably—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: They're very specific and prescriptive.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Yes, they are. I would have to say it takes the right offender and the right community because, as you know, with a section 81, the [inaudible] has to agree. We've used it, actually, for the Indigenous people. The band councils are very organized that way and the communication can be there. I'll give you that as an example. A band council supports a section 81, the correctional services recommend a section 81, and then we have our risk assessment in place. It allows a more structured release and it allows people in the person's close, immediate community to have some sort of a buy-in for their success rehabilitating them.

0940

Mr. Taras Natyshak: So I think it's an important component of the corrections system, and more so in its impact in reconciliation.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Yes. That's where I've seen it work, from the example I gave you. Unfortunately, as a board member, once you've done your decision and you set your conditions, you may not see that

case again. You don't necessarily get reports on the individual. You read the paper every day and you're hoping that none of the names you ever decided are in the paper. But I believe on that one, there was success.

It can go on for years, federally, because those kinds of parole decisions can be renewed and go on for a long time. It's harder, I would suggest, in the provincial system. We have very short and defined parole terms. But it's a good use of a tool, transitionally, to get people back to the community and have the community support them.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

In your earlier statements, you invoked an image of the parole boards of yesteryear, where it was all men and no representation of women. Do you think that was a component of systemic and cultural sexism at that time?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Fair enough. Then, to juxtapose that sort of image with the reality of racialized people and their overrepresentation in our judicial system, do you think that components of systemic racism continue to exist in our judicial system, in our policing in Ontario and in Canada?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: The key word you use, of course, is "systemic." There are a lot of systems there. I think that the common belief—I don't want to step in anything here—is that, sadly, we've had those issues throughout our country, and it's something that, lately, I think we're—not just lately, but I think there has been more attention paid to it. People are paying much more attention. But, yes, I think it has probably been a factor in the justice system. I've certainly seen it play out, as I mentioned to you before, when I've gone into certain institutions and it has been all Indigenous individuals.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: How would you endeavour to correct what you see as indications of systemic racism built into the system? What would you do, personally?

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Education is a major component of the parole boards as well, provincially and federally. I think if you get out there and talk to the people about what parole means—but it starts very early in someone's life. I mentioned that before. When it's systemic, it starts early in life and ends up pervading all of the other ministries and agencies of government—because it does in the private sector, as well.

What I think everybody has an opportunity to take a look at is how, on a personal level, they conduct themselves. Everyone likes to think that they're a fair person—but, really, on the day to day is where it's important.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have you—

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Natyshak, excuse me. That concludes the time allotted.

I would like to thank you, Ms. Fletcher-Dagenais, for your presentation and some very in-depth answers. Thank you for coming today.

Ms. Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais: Thank you very much.

MR. SIMON DANN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Simon Dann, intended appointee as member, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Next we have Simon Dann, nominated as a member of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. Welcome, Mr. Dann.

As you may be aware, you have the opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With that questioning, we will start with the official opposition, followed by the government, with 15 minutes allocated to each recognized party. Any time you take in your statement will be deducted from the time allotted to the government. The floor is yours.

Mr. Simon Dann: Good morning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide a brief opening statement to introduce myself. Since I believe you have copies of documents relating to my application for the role of part-time adjudicator with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, you can see that I spent many years as an adjudicator with the Licence Appeal Tribunal, or LAT, previously named the Commercial Relations Appeal Tribunal, also known as CRAT.

My experience through the many CRAT and LAT hearings, as well as pre-hearings, has given me an in-depth knowledge of dealing with a very diverse range of people, backgrounds, occupations and disputes. I consider myself to be someone able to make balanced, informed and principled decisions based on facts.

As you may also know, in pre-hearings, it is most important to try and see the essence of a complaint and determine where or how a resolution to a dispute can be found. In many cases, I had self-represented individuals facing experienced counsel. In such instances, I attempted as much as possible to assist self-represented litigants, who generally were somewhat handicapped by their unfamiliarity with evidence submissions and hearing processes. Of course, I would first make certain that I had opposing party agreement to ensure my involvement was viewed as fair and equitable, never to be mistaken.

I believe I am qualified to serve as a member of the HRTO based on my lengthy experience with the LAT, where principal considerations were about public interest and conduct of commercial and personal activities, acting with honesty, integrity and in accordance with the law. What that means is that others must at all times be treated with equality, fairness and without discrimination, whether they are any members of the public or employees. Naturally, the HRTO is different in its approach, as the LAT is mainly concerned with commercial conduct, while the HRTO is concerned with freedom from discrimination. But what I'm pointing out is my experience to fairly and carefully weigh evidence of conduct.

I confidently believe I developed a reputation for being fair and uncompromising in getting to the facts of a case, by listening well and asking straightforward, unbiased questions. In fact, I was also given to understand that I was

recognized as being a preferred adjudicator for the manner in which I conducted hearings.

I should add that my interest in this adjudicative role is because here we have the opportunity to make a real difference in someone's life, as well as be in service to the public of which we are all a part. Personally, I also appreciate the challenge of weighing out a case to understand the facts, to sort through the variety of details and to arrive at a right decision, as much as possible.

In conclusion, I bring close to 17 years of experience to the adjudicative role, and it would be an honour to be appointed as a part-time member of the HRTO. Thank you for your attention, and I'm prepared to answer any questions you may have—at least I hope I'm prepared.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you for your presentation. Our first round of questioning will go to the official opposition. Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Simon Dann: Good morning.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Good morning, Mr. Dann. Thank you very much for appearing before us—virtually, as it were. It's great to meet you and nice to hear why you want to do this and your motivation.

We have just a couple of pro forma questions that we are compelled to ask of every intended appointee.

Mr. Simon Dann: Please go ahead.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I hope that you take no umbrage with them. Mr. Dann, have you ever been a member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario or of Canada, their federal counterpart?

Mr. Simon Dann: It would be provincial, and you've got to go back over 20 years.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And have you, over those last 20 years, at any point donated to either the federal or provincial Conservative parties?

Mr. Simon Dann: A couple of years ago, a one-time donation to a campaign—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Are you currently a—

Mr. Simon Dann: —on the Progressive Conservative side. I'm sorry; your question?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Sorry. You're currently not a member of any political party?

Mr. Simon Dann: That's correct.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Then I would imagine that you're not involved in any activities at the riding association or local level?

Mr. Simon Dann: Not for over 20 years.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Were you approached by anyone in the current government, either members, MPPs, elected officials or employees of the current government?

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Mr. Simon Dann: No. I was made aware of the opening or the post through the website, in an email saying, "These are positions that might be of interest to you." I applied in that fashion. I have never spoken to—I have not spoken at any time to—anyone involved with the government, other than through this process.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. Great. You're making the jump from the landlord appeal tribunal—

Mr. Simon Dann: Licence appeal.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Oh, licence appeal; pardon me. The Licence Appeal Tribunal—

Mr. Simon Dann: Just to insert, if I may, I hit term limits in 2015, so I've been out of it for five years.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Had you served on any committee or agency prior to that one?

Mr. Simon Dann: I'm not sure what you mean by "committee or agency."

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Was the Licence Appeal Tribunal your first endeavour into the public realm, or had you worked for the government or volunteered for the government in any other capacity prior to the LAT?

Mr. Simon Dann: The only committee, if you would, was a voluntary policy advisory council—not even a committee—in social housing. That goes back about 25 years, and I don't recall the exact name of the council.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That's okay. Admittedly, you're making the jump from a commercial-based perspective to a human-rights-based perspective. Do you have, other than—okay, let me put this question to you: One of the reasons we have to, as members of the opposition, ask those uncomfortable questions at the top of our time—

Mr. Simon Dann: Nothing is uncomfortable.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Fair enough. One of the reasons we have to is because, in our experience in this committee, the government has named or appointed a vast majority of people who are connected to their party in one way or another, either financially, being donors, or having been candidates, failed candidates or prospective candidates. This is a pattern that we have established. Ultimately, those folks end up on important boards, agencies and committees serving the people of Ontario.

Your position now will be one to hopefully find balance in your application of the regulations through the Human Rights Code. Do you believe that a government that stacks the deck on these important agencies and committees is a government that is serving Ontarians well if there is a bias inherent in the committee structure, where many of them are ideologically linked or financially linked to the government? Do you think that that poses some risk to the legitimacy of those committees and agencies?

Mr. Simon Dann: Not to my personal knowledge. Having served as an adjudicator with a tribunal, at all times working with people, colleagues, of various political affiliations, the decisions were always independent, focused specifically on the evidence that was presented. I did not, in my own experience, witness any decisions coloured by political affiliation.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm happy to hear that. That was in the past, but we're in a new era here where, again, the decks are being stacked. I would suggest and argue to you, Mr. Dann, that if I had all of my friends as referees during my hockey career, I probably would have gotten less penalties and scored more goals just by virtue of them being my friends, and that's unfortunate.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Ms. Martin was first.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Maybe it's human nature, but—

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Natyshak?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): I've got to go to Ms. Martin. Ms. Martin?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you, Chair—just trying to unmute there. On a point of order: I just think that kind of question is not really appropriate to what Mr. Dann is here to answer questions about, which is his appointment, not Mr. Natyshak's hockey career.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): I would ask that the member direct more as a question, as opposed to commentary.

Mr. Simon Dann: I think I understand your question, and if I may volunteer—I cannot speak for other people. As far as I'm concerned, there's only one approach: What is the evidence?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I appreciate that that's the mindset on how you're approaching your intended appointment.

I believe anecdotes are still in order during this committee to make a point. Unfortunately, some people might not understand that anecdote, but I think you did understand it, Mr. Dann.

I appreciate you answering my questions earnestly, and I wish you good luck.

Mr. Simon Dann: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's good to meet you, Mr. Dann. Thank you for joining us today. I have a couple of follow-up questions.

I have read through, of course, all of the materials. I just wondered if you would mind explaining a little bit more about how you believe your experience speaks specifically to expertise in human rights decisions, arbitrating on issues of human rights—racism, sexism, homophobia. I think we know that the Human Rights Tribunal—discrimination in employment was, according to the information we have, the most commonly alleged violation of the code in 2018-19. I wonder if you could comment a bit on your experience arbitrating on issues that are related to human rights and racism discrimination.

Mr. Simon Dann: I did go into CanLII and read some decisions, just to get a little bit of background on the kinds of cases: What was the complaint? What was the evidence? What was the decision and the reasons for? The conclusion I came to was that, essentially, if I can use the expression, it's people feeling they've been done wrong.

In many instances, in matters that I had appear before me as a LAT adjudicator, it was the same kind of thing, where people felt that a registrar's decision to suspend, revoke, refuse was—they felt they had been done wrong. Evidence presented oftentimes got into personal and emotional issues. Based on my reading of cases and evidence given by applicants in HRTO matters, which I read on CanLII, it came to the same kind of thing. Essentially, what you're dealing with is—first of all, you have to hear the evidence and understand the nature of the complaint. There's always so much emotion attached, particularly with self-represented litigants.

So I really see a parallel, because it's understanding what is the essence of the complaint and do you have the evidence to support it. As an adjudicator or a trier of fact, as much as I might empathize with you, the applicant, I can only make a decision based on evidence. So, really, they're sort of on the same platform.

Ms. Marit Stiles: That's interesting. I appreciate that. I appreciate the position you would be in as a member of the tribunal. I wonder, though, if some of the knowledge we have, the data we have, the research and studies out there that exist now—whether they inform. People who are the most vulnerable or marginalized may not come with the expertise, the legal counsel, all of that that others come with, and so are at a bit of a disadvantage in sometimes proving a case like that. How do you see the tribunal as addressing those inequities?

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Mr. Simon Dann: I'm glad you asked that question, because that is one of the things that I feel I became quite good at—which was to, essentially, wade into the fray, which one is not supposed to do. But oftentimes, as I said, self-represented litigants do not have the ability to see through the formalities that they've got to understand in order to present a proper case. Sometimes they have evidence that they fail to notice or present. That, I think, is a skill of the adjudicator: to perceive these moments and step into the moment, again, if I may say. I've often done that with self-represented litigants. But first, as I mentioned in my opening statement, before I actually asked a question, I would make sure that counsel from the opposing side was okay with it, because I did not want to present any impression of bias, but at the same time, I wanted to make sure that the appellant was not overlooking important evidence.

So I never had any hesitation to step in and try to assist, whether it was in the opening—to make sure that the applicant understood the process going forward and to emphasize, “If you have questions at any point, ask the questions. No question is trivial or insignificant; every one is important.” I think the onus is on the adjudicator to perceive the moment and assist within reason, when possible.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate that. Thank you.

There have been some reports that throughout this pandemic—and we understand that the tribunal wasn't able to hold in-person hearings and that they've had a very slow and difficult shift into alternative hearing formats. Our understanding, as well, is that this is not really surprising, given the staffing shortages and the chronic underfunding, including under this recent government, of the tribunal.

I wonder if you could speak a little bit to what your understanding is around what the challenges are of meeting in different formats during this time.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): I would like to apologize, but the time is up.

Thank you very much, Mr. Dann, for your presentation and for giving us your opinions.

Mr. Simon Dann: Thank you.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Wait a second. I messed that up. I totally forgot about the government. Mr. Dann, you have every right to look confused, because the Chairman was very confused on that one.

Mr. Simon Dann: I was thinking, “Okay, do I go now?”

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): My sincerest apologies. I would like to say it's Monday, but it's not.

Who from the government would like to go first? Mrs. Martin.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you, Mr. Dann. I was very interested in your explanation of your working with and trying to help the unrepresented litigants. I'm a lawyer myself and certainly had experiences working with unrepresented litigants. It is always a challenge for the system, and I do think people in the system strive for impartiality and fairness as much as possible. You certainly articulated that kind of viewpoint—really, knowing that you're applying universal rules, but never losing sight of the particular individual in front of you whom you're trying to find a just solution for.

I wondered if you could elaborate a bit on the importance of fairness and impartiality generally in adjudication, which you've obviously had a great deal of experience with.

Mr. Simon Dann: I'm not sure how to answer that because fairness is a self-evident thing. Perhaps let me go sideways: The one thing that occurs to me is that going into a hearing and reading the materials—typically, we did not have much more time than arriving in advance of the hearing, reading the materials and coming to a conclusion based on the materials presented. Then, the case would unfold based on testimony. Fairness, I think, is a function of having the flexibility of mind to change one's views or conclusions or opinions as the hearing and evidence unfold, because I certainly found that in many instances, my views would go from one side of the street to the other side of the street based on what I was hearing.

At the end of the hearing, it is all weighed together, and a decision is totally different to what the view may have been on reading the materials at the outset, because they're always incomplete. Through the process, you get the human input, and that's again where, particularly with self-represented litigants, you get into it and try to help them reveal their story, which they're generally not experienced enough to do in a fulsome manner. Even many applicants who came with counsel came with counsel who had no expertise or knowledge of how the administrative tribunal worked. They came from real estate, criminal law or elsewhere and were not best suited to that type of hearing.

Fairness is a function of flexibility of mind and not being rigid in your views, but carefully listening and allowing input. It could be a longer conversation, but I don't want to take up all your time.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. Mr. Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: I won't ask a question of the applicant, but I just wanted to quickly say thank you so much

for being here today, Mr. Dann. If there's one thing that I've noticed since we've started these committee meetings, it is the calibre of the applicants who are seeking positions. You're another excellent candidate for your position, and thank you very much for appearing before committee. The government is done asking questions.

Mr. Simon Dann: Kind words. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): There is some time left over. Would the independent members like to ask a question?

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: No. I am okay, Chair. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Madame Simard.

Now, Mr. Dann, you may step down. I sincerely apologize for the confusion I caused.

Mr. Simon Dann: That's quite all right. I need instructions. In fact, this is the first Zoom call I've ever done. I have used other methods, but I didn't know what to do when.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Okay. Have a great day, sir.

Mr. Simon Dann: Thank you. Bye-bye.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now consider the intended appointment of Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais, nominated as a member of the Ontario Parole Board. Mr. Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: Mr. Chair, I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Caroline Fletcher-Dagenais, nominated as member of the Ontario Parole Board.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mr. Bouma. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I'd like to call for a vote. All those in—oh, Mr. Bouma?

Mr. Will Bouma: Could I ask for a recorded vote, Mr. Chair?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Bouma has asked for a recorded vote. I would ask, as you are expressing your vote, that you hold up your hand until the Clerk has called your name.

Ayes

Bouma, Coe, Martin, Norman Miller, Pang, Simard, Tangri.

Nays

Natyshak, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): The motion carries.

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We will now consider the intended appointment of Simon Dann, nominated as a member of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. Mr. Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Simon Dann, nominated as a member of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mr. Bouma. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I would like to call a vote.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Oh, she raised her hand. Ms. Martin?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Hello, Chair. I just saw Mademoiselle Fletcher-Dagenais on the screen, which would be inappropriate when we're voting. She's gone.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): No, but if we were in person, they'd still be able to be here, so she could still be on the Zoom.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Okay, and I'd like to call a vote on Mr. Dann's appointment. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion carries.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): You are welcome to stay until the meeting is adjourned. That's the way it would be if the meeting were being held in person. You're welcome in the room, and you're also welcome still, so congratulations.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): The extensions: We have a couple of minutes left.

The deadline to review the intended appointment of Marinus Lamers, selected from the September 4, 2020, certificate, is October 4, 2020. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Marinus Lamers to November 4, 2020? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: In the past, we've asked a few times for reasons why people weren't able to attend. I believe that was a practice we were trying to start, if I'm reaching back a little here; it's been a while.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Actually, these are more recent, so we just haven't had a chance to get them scheduled yet. We haven't even reached out to them, just because we've been plugging along right now. If they cannot make it, they are told to give us it in writing, and then we forward it to you. So all of these are just more recent certificates. We just haven't been able to get to—

Ms. Marit Stiles: So there's no good reason why we shouldn't continue on and extend these. Okay, thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Ms. Stiles.

Do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

The deadline to review the intended appointment of Walied Soliman—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Oh, sorry. Mr. Natyshak. I didn't see your hand; I see it clearly now. Go ahead.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks, Chair. Am I under the understanding that these extensions are in reference to people who we have not, in fact, yet even asked to appear before us? Like, we haven't even given them a date to say no yet, and we are voting to—just as the previous vote, where the Conservatives voted to not extend our ability to even schedule something with them. Is that what's

happening? I mean, this is a whole new era here. I can understand if we have attempted and connected with them and presented them with a date and a time to appear and they have, in one way or another, either accepted or declined, but now, we're not even giving them the ability to accept or decline before we just railroad them through. Is this what's happening?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Could the Clerk please clarify if these people have been contacted?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum): No, we haven't had a chance to contact these people yet.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. Chair, on this point, this is just unprecedented. Never ever have we seen this in committee, where we haven't even connected with these folks to afford them the opportunity to say yes or no, and the government is immediately shuffling them through. That's egregious. So I don't—

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): The time allotted to the committee is over. Thank you. You were cut off mid-point. We can continue this next meeting. We are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1015.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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Mr. John Vanthof (Timiskaming–Cochrane ND)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)

Mr. Will Bouma (Brantford–Brant PC)

Mr. Lorne Coe (Whitby PC)

Mrs. Robin Martin (Eglinton–Lawrence PC)

Mr. Norman Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka PC)

Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)

Mr. Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent–Leamington PC)

Mr. Billy Pang (Markham–Unionville PC)

M^{lle} Amanda Simard (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell L)

Ms. Marit Stiles (Davenport ND)

Mrs. Nina Tangri (Mississauga–Streetsville PC)

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