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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 30 April 2008

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 30 avril 2008

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Julia Munro
Clerk: Douglas Arnott

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 30 April 2008

Mercredi 30 avril 2008

The committee met at 1003 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Good morning, and welcome to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. We have a number of things on our agenda this morning. We'll begin with the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated April 17.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move approval of the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, April 17, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion?

All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The second report of the subcommittee on committee business, dated Thursday, April 24.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move approval of the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, April 24, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion?

Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

GERRY MCNEILLY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Gerry McNeilly, intended appointee as director, Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): We will now move to appointments reviews. Our first interview this morning is with Gerry McNeilly, intended appointee as director, Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

Good morning, Mr. McNeilly, and welcome to the committee.

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Good morning, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): As you may be aware, you have the opportunity to make an initial statement, and subsequent to that we will have questions from members of the committee. We will begin our questioning this morning with government party members. Please feel free to go ahead.

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Thank you, Madam Chair. I very much appreciate the opportunity to be here this morning to discuss my qualifications for intended appoint-

ment to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

I believe you have been provided with a copy of my curriculum vitae and my background information. I would now like to tell you a little bit about myself, including my work background, and I would like to start with what I call a real Canadian story.

I was born in Trinidad, grew up in Toronto, attended Jarvis Collegiate and then commenced working with the Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario as a civil servant. I worked in a number of different capacities in that ministry. I then went to university and obtained my bachelor's degree and also a certificate in business management. I then worked for a number of years, still within the Ministry of the Attorney General as a civil servant. I became a justice of the peace. I then decided to go to law school, and graduated with my law degree. Subsequent to that, I was appointed as an adjudicator and the chair of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

This story, in my opinion, not only tells about how I got here, but illustrates that at different times I took up challenges and successfully conquered those challenges. This, in my opinion, makes me ultimately capable of doing the job of the Independent Police Review Director.

To give you a little more information about my background, I have recently been the executive director/CEO of Legal Aid Manitoba, an arm's-length agency of government established to provide legal advice and representation to poor people regarding family, child protection, criminal and young offender matters. In this role, I have participated in and directed the establishment of clear procedures and goals, a strategic and business plan, a computer system run on Linux open software, as well as innovative processes and procedures using a mix of staff lawyers and private bar lawyers. In addition, this position obviously calls for ongoing liaison with government, judges, prosecutors, police, lawyers and numerous stakeholders in the justice system.

Prior to Legal Aid Manitoba, as I've already indicated, I was chair of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, as it was then called, and an adjudicator regarding human rights complaints in accordance with the Human Rights Code of Ontario. In 1994, I was given the responsibility of establishing that tribunal as a full standing schedule 3 statutory tribunal from the ad hoc process that was in place at that time. In this regard it was necessary, as the job with the Independent Police Review Director will

require, to create rules, procedures, policies and an infrastructure for operating an effective and efficient organization. I was also involved in the hiring of staff, both administrative and adjudicative. I directed the introduction of mediation into human rights adjudication, and provided the training, as I'm a mediator who has been trained to provide training and facilitation.

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Prior to these two experiences, I worked with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General for over 20 years in different capacities. To highlight a couple of those, I was involved in the establishment of the Unified Family Court of Ontario—the very first in Canada—and the mediation component of it. I also assisted in the expansion of the Unified Family Court throughout Ontario and throughout Canada.

I was appointed as a sitting justice of the peace and acted in that capacity for over 15 years, conducting hearings of all types, issuing process and authorizing search warrants, all the while interacting on a daily basis with crown attorneys and police officers.

After law school and prior to being chair of the human rights tribunal, I was appointed deputy judge of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Small Claims Court division. In addition, during this extended period as a civil servant, I participated on many working committees involving criminal and family justice issues and other policy and strategic matters. Many of these committees, including committees dealing with domestic violence and young offender matters, involved members from different communities, as well as the police community.

During my entire career, I have been exposed to issues of concern for both the public and the police. I believe that my strong public service background and my interest in serving the public by making things fairer, more transparent, more efficient and more effective bode well and make me a strong and excellent, well-rounded candidate for the position of Independent Police Review Director.

In a nutshell, I want to emphasize that the Independent Police Review Director is new and will be created from scratch. In this regard, I have extensive experience in creating and operating new organizations—I have already given you an example of that—including my employment with Legal Aid Manitoba, where I was hired specifically to revamp a 25-year-old organization that had become somewhat stagnant. I have done that. While in Winnipeg, I also established A Woman's Place, which is a clinic devoted to providing social and legal services to women experiencing domestic abuse.

This position, in my opinion, calls for someone to have qualities that emphasize fairness, objectivity and independence. I possess all of these qualities. I'm independent, and that is shown from the journey I have taken in my life and in the positions of importance I have held. I'm objective, in that many of the roles I've had include providing adjudication in a very transparent, fair and compassionate manner. My open-mindedness allows me to be fair and to ensure that every matter is treated, dealt with and assessed on its own merits.

As Justice LeSage indicated in his report recommending creation of the IPRD, the agency needs to be independent and transparent, while at the same time being fair in carrying out a police review system that has the confidence and respect of both the public and the police. My experience, skills and knowledge situate me in a good position to meet these crucial and important principles in the report and in the legislation that followed.

I can advise you that in preparation for today I reviewed Mr. Justice LeSage's report, and I reviewed Bill 103 and the background documents. I fully support and endorse the recommendations to create an independent police review system led by an independent individual with abilities to employ investigative, meditative and adjudicative powers in dealing with and resolving public complaints with the police.

I wish to emphasize that this role and this organization are extremely important to Ontario, because when you have an institution with public trust, like the police, there needs to be accountability and transparency, and Bill 103 gives us that. Nothing is more important in a civil society than maintaining public confidence in the police. We have that in abundance. A Canadian survey conducted in 2000 indicated that more than 80% of the public has confidence in the police. I believe that, and this is something I share with the Canadian public.

Many different parts of the community, police services and organizations have gone on record supporting the recommendations of Mr. Justice LeSage. I support those recommendations and I intend to use Mr. Justice LeSage's report and recommendations as the guiding light in the establishment of this office. I intend to ensure that the important principles espoused in the report and in the act are implemented and carried out specifically to create a police review system in Ontario that is independent, transparent and fair, and that has the confidence and respect of the public and the police. I will do this while ensuring that there is no interference with the good work done by Ontario's police services in keeping our communities safe. I intend to carry out my duties by employing a consultative approach with members of different communities, rural and urban, and police services, rural and urban.

Finally, I will be proceeding to establish very clear objectives, policies and procedures in a review system that is accessible, that communicates simply and effectively, and also one that acts in a timely manner while ensuring that there is room for consensus building and that results are indeed measurable.

Bill 103 contemplates, and I intend to entrench, an independent and transparent police review system that is equitable, that is effective, and that has the confidence, as I've already indicated, of both the public and the police.

I look forward, if appointed, to serving the people of Ontario in the capacity of independent police review director.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. I would ask for just a quick comment, from the government, because we did expend the time.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: That's fine, Chair. I just want to say thank you very much, Mr. McNeilly. I did have a question, but you answered it in your very thorough presentation, so thank you.

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mrs. Savoline.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I enjoyed reading your resumé, Mr. McNeilly; it is very impressive. I'm wondering, how did you come to hear about this appointment? Did anybody approach you?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: No. I saw it in the *Globe and Mail* and also in the Ontario Weekly Reports, the lawyers' report that we get weekly.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Okay. You explained to a degree why you're interested in this position. Could you expand on that for me, please?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Yes. All my life, I have taken up challenges. I was brought up in a family of 12 kids from mixed parentage, and they made it very clear to us that you had to make your own way in this world, that you had to work hard and never hide from challenges. This is a challenge, and I want to be able to make this challenge work. Ontario needs this, and I want to be part of that.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'll focus on Ontario now, because I notice that your home address, your business address and your position are all in Manitoba, in Winnipeg. How do you propose to handle this position and that one too?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: That position will be given up. I am moving back home. My two daughters here are ecstatic. One of my daughters said to me when I was leaving to take up this challenge in Manitoba, "Dad, kids leave home, not the parent." So I'm back.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Well, welcome back. What do you see that your responsibilities would be as the director of this newly formed agency?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: As I've indicated, I will follow the tenor of Mr. Justice LeSage's report. That is a very thorough, well-written report. I will follow it by being consultative. I will probably duplicate some of the work he has done in that I intend to meet with the communities he met and consulted with, and I intend to meet with the police services that he met and consulted with. So, firstly, I will do a great amount of consultation to get views, to get feedback, and to have input into the creation of this office.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I notice that you've referenced him in your comments and also he is one of your references. Could you tell me what your relationship is with the justice, please?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Justice LeSage worked as a judge in the Unified Family Court of Ontario, and I encountered him in many different areas in that capacity. He was always a judge, and I was always a civil servant trying to carry out the wishes of the judges.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My last question to you right now would be, what would you see as the most obvious need as you take on this position?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: The most obvious need, to me, will be making sure there is total acceptance by the police services, so I need them to be onside, and making sure that there's acceptance by the general public, so I need them to be onside. If I could conquer those two needs, then I think that this office will be an excellent, efficient, effective office.

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Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Madam Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Welcome to Queen's Park, Mr. McNeilly. My name is France Gélinas, and I'm the MPP from Nickel Belt in northern Ontario. I would be interested in having you share with us your knowledge of northern Ontario and the dealings you've had with the residents of northern Ontario.

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: I don't have any specific dealings with northern Ontario. I can tell you that I'm familiar with the issues facing the people in northern Ontario. They are similar to the issues I've been dealing with in Manitoba, outside of Winnipeg. The issues are the same. I meet with a group of legal aid people across the country, and when we talk about rural issues, northern issues and issues affecting aboriginal peoples, they are all the same.

I also know from working with the Ministry of the Attorney General for all those many years that we've always had difficulties in providing equal services to the north; hence my comments when I said I want to ensure that the rural areas get the same treatment as the urban areas. I mean that. I mean to get out to the rural areas. I mean to get feedback from the rural areas, because the issues are no different.

M^{me} France Gélinas: There is a large constituency in my riding whose mother tongue is French. I was just wondering if you have any ability in French to make your consultation with those communities.

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Regrettably, no. Je parle un peu le français. Je comprends beaucoup.

I should know more, because my first spouse was from Rimouski, Quebec. We only spoke French. Then we had children, and one of us spoke French and one of us spoke English. I was the unlucky one to speak English. I've lost my French to a great extent, but that doesn't mean I do not try to communicate in French. Both of my daughters, I must say, are bilingual, thankfully.

M^{me} France Gélinas: In northern Ontario, franco-phone and aboriginal people are racialized and minoritized and overrepresented throughout the justice system, being the number of convictions, number of aboriginal kids in jail etc. Would you share with us your views about those two particular racialized and minoritized groups?

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: The issues that those minority groups and racialized groups face are issues that I think one can say repeat themselves in different parts of the province. It's probably more acute up there, and it's sad. That's why I said in my comments that we have to reach

out more to the rural areas, to the aboriginal population, to try to bring better services. I think if we look at remedial issues, as opposed to punitive issues, we may be moving further ahead, but that's something that we'll have to wrestle with for, I believe, still a long time, regrettably.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you for your answers.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much for being here with us this morning. That concludes this part of the presentation.

Mr. Gerry McNeilly: Thank you.

JORDAN BITOVE

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Jordan Bitove, intended appointee as member, University of Western Ontario board of governors.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Our second interview today is with Jordan Bitove as the intended appointee as member of the University of Western Ontario board of governors. Mr. Bitove, please come forward.

Good morning and welcome to the committee. As you would know from your observation, you have an opportunity to make some comments, and then we'll have questions from the members. Please begin.

Mr. Jordan Bitove: Thank you. Good morning. It is my privilege to be here before all of you. It would be my honour to be considered for the board of governors of the University of Western Ontario.

Just to give you a little bit of background, my family has a very strong connection to the university. Eight of us have attended and graduated from the University of Western Ontario. In the early 1990s, my siblings and I made a significant contribution to the university to honour our parents. We're very proud that that contribution exists to this day in the form of the law library, which is titled the John and Dotsa Bitove Family Law Library at the University of Western Ontario.

I graduated from the University of Western Ontario in 1997. I'd like to think that I have contributed in a very significant way to the university in a number of aspects. In second year, while I attended, I was one of the founding fathers of a fraternity at the University of Western Ontario. The following year, I was elected to the board of the university students' council, where I served as the vice-president of operations. I also served an interim role as the senate appointee from the students' council.

My involvement has continued to this very day. I presently sit on the president's council committee that the president, Dr. Paul Davenport, heads up. We meet annually and go through a number of issues, predominantly on a fundraising aspect.

I'd like to believe that I can make a significant contribution to the university. I sit on a number of private and charitable boards and I'd like to believe that I have served them all well; any that I've been involved with, I have contributed to in a major way. I think I also have a

fairly significant understanding of governance. That certainly is a benefit. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll begin, then, with the official opposition.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Not too many questions. I just want to wish you the best of luck and would like to find out, briefly, why you think this appointment is for you, other than what you've described. I was also wondering how you came to hear about the appointment. I noticed that one of our former cabinet ministers in this place is a reference for you. I'm just wondering if that was how that came to be. After that, I have no more questions. Perhaps my colleague from Burlington does.

Mr. Jordan Bitove: Sure. Thank you. Again, being very involved with the school over the years, I've had the privilege of being able to get involved in a number of initiatives. I think one of the things I've definitely demonstrated to the president, Dr. Davenport, and to the board is that I've been able to have some impact. We meet routinely when they come into Toronto and we discuss a number of ways to engage alumni and other things.

Back in November, Dr. Davenport, Ted Garrard and Michelle Noble, who was the acting chair of the university, approached me and asked me if I would be interested in taking on a role as a board governor. That's really how the whole thing began. I was surprised to learn that it was the Lieutenant Governor's appointment. Again, I'm honoured that it is that role. That's how.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Excellent. Congratulations. I wish you the best of luck.

Mr. Jordan Bitove: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mrs. Savoline, do you have any questions?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Yes, just one, as education critic. At present there's a really high enrolment for post-secondary. I know that universities have a huge concern about funding for their schools. Could you comment on funding for post-secondary education, please—the lack of?

Mr. Jordan Bitove: There certainly is a lack of. Western, as you may or may not know, has a 27- to-1 student-to-faculty ratio, which is the worst in the country. My intention would be to learn as much as I can in a short period of time. I understand the inner workings of it. I think that's another area where I've contributed in a significant way. Western has been looking for private funding to assist the school in looking for alternative ways to do that and engage. But it certainly is an issue that's near and dear to my heart and one that I intend to get very involved in.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Thank you. I wish you good luck.

Mr. Jordan Bitove: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Madam Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you. Welcome. It certainly is very impressive to see candidates like yourself, who are so involved with the university. I wish every university had the chance to have citizens like you who

basically put their efforts into making the university a better place. Do you realize that, as a member of the board, you will oversee the management of Western university investments? How do you feel towards that?

Mr. Jordan Bitove: It's an area that I feel very comfortable with. As I mentioned before, I've sat on a number of boards, business and charitable, and I've always been able to work—whether I've chaired the board, been the president or just been a board member—within the committee to look at the best opportunities to leverage those investments and bring a greater return to them. Of course, it's a university and, like any charitable organization etc., you have to be very conservative and fiscally responsible in being able to manage it. It would be having a conservative approach to the whole thing—no pun intended.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That was my question.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Thank you very much, Mr. Bitove, for coming. I have no real questions. I can certainly see by your resumé that the University of Western Ontario will benefit greatly from your involvement in the board of governors.

Mr. Jordan Bitove: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): That concludes the questions. Thank you very much for coming here this morning.

Mr. Jordan Bitove: Thank you all very much.

1030

CHARLES COFFEY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Charles Coffey, intended appointee as member, Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Our next intended appointee is Mr. Charles Coffey, as member, the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Good morning and welcome to the committee.

Mr. Charles Coffey: Good morning, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): As you know, you may take the time at this point to offer some comments, and then we will hear questions from the members. If you're ready, please begin.

Mr. Charles Coffey: Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning, members. My name is Charlie Coffey. I'm here because I have applied to become a director of the Ontario Trillium Foundation. I wanted to share with you very briefly why I applied for that particular role.

I do want to put into context a couple of issues as they relate to my previous career with the Royal Bank of Canada. In January last year, I retired from RBC after 44 years. My last job there was the executive vice-president of government affairs and community development. In that context, I had the responsibility for reaching out to communities across the country. But just as importantly, for me personally as a political junkie, I managed the relationship with the federal government and had a lot of contact with Queen's Park and other provincial capitals

across the country on matters of interest to the Royal Bank.

I returned to Toronto from Winnipeg in 1992 to head the metropolitan Toronto region of RBC, and subsequent to that, I then managed the Royal Bank's operations in the province of Ontario, one of those operations outside the metropolitan Toronto region. I've travelled not only this country from coast to coast, but I have, I believe, an intimate knowledge of this great province of Ontario.

I want to share with you very quickly, and I will tell you, Madam Chair, and others that I'm rather reluctant to talk about what I have done personally; I find it quite embarrassing. It's not about what I have done; it's about those who have perhaps benefited from my personal time. But my four primary interests—I was able to take these personal interests that I had into the bank, and they are, in no particular order: aboriginal issues; the children's agenda, broadly defined with a particular focus on early childhood development; women's issues, specifically the advancement of women entrepreneurs—in the last number of years, I've been very active with Equal Voice, which is an organization, as you know, designed to encourage and clear the way for more women to run for political office, and I've been quite active at the federal level in that regard. And lastly, I have a particular focus on diversity, and in that regard, I chair the Canadian Centre for Diversity, which is an organization focused on encouraging multi-faith dialogue amongst high school students. We bring together 12,000 to 15,000 youth—Christians, Muslims and Jews—to have a dialogue about what they have in common, as opposed to what their differences might be.

That embarrassment that I have about speaking about myself—I will just mention three or four things that perhaps might be relevant to you. I was interested to hear the honourable member for Nickel Belt raise the issue of aboriginal peoples. I headed the Royal Bank's operations in Manitoba for three years, and visiting northern communities there, I found a situation that I found quite distasteful, and I said to myself, "This is not the Canada that I know," and I decided to do something about it. So over the last 18 years or so, I've been very outspoken and a vocal advocate of aboriginal peoples and their issues of self-determination. I often say that it's time they took their rightful place in Canadian society.

So all that to say that in 1997, Grand Chief Phil Fontaine and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs appointed me an honorary chief for my work in that regard.

With respect to advancing the cause of women, I can tell you—although my male friends find this rather laughable, I thought it was quite serious—that in 2001, Women Entrepreneurs of Canada named me an honorary woman for my work in supporting their cause, for economic development in particular. Just this past December, I led a trade mission for women to the Middle East.

In the area of the children's agenda, I have criss-crossed this country from coast to coast to coast speaking on what I call the business case or the economics of early

childhood development. I'm a disciple of Dr. Fraser Mustard and have worked with him and Margaret McCain on the children's agenda for 12 years. In fact, at the request of then-city councillor Olivia Chow, Margaret McCain and I co-chaired the city of Toronto commission looking at child care, daycare and the early years from stem to stern. We had recommendations for this government as well as the feds and the city.

I mentioned briefly the issue of diversity with my work for the Canadian Centre for Diversity. I was one of the driving forces at RBC in driving the diversity agenda within that organization.

I think all of that rather long-winded history of my journey relates to the work of the Trillium Foundation. When I retired a year or so ago, I worried about not having enough to do. I find that I'm now inundated with requests from coast to coast. As I said, I do accept any and all invitations to cross this country to speak about the children's agenda and aboriginal issues.

I'll leave my last comment. It reminds me of what a Cree elder from northern Manitoba said to me in the early 1990s. She said, "Mr. Coffey, listen, or your tongue will cause you to become deaf." I'm going to take her advice and stop talking and respond as best I can to the questions of the committee members.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll begin with Madam Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Welcome to Queen's Park. I was amazed to hear the social agenda that you have been able to move forward while working in a bank—kind of a rare breed of individual. Certainly, as a New Democrat, you talk our language, so I can assure you you'll have our support. Those are my comments.

Mr. Charles Coffey: That's a statement, but I will tell you that I was born and raised in Woodstock, New Brunswick, a very small town. My mother taught me at a very early age the importance of social justice issues, and I was often asked how it was that I survived at Canada's bluest of blue banks by focusing on social justice issues. But I made the point that what was good for Canada was good for our bank, so I could draw the connection between working with communities and enhancing shareholder value. In fact, it's a no-brainer.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Mrs. Van Bommel.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: This is a real first for me. I've never met an honorary woman. I certainly do appreciate this opportunity. Thank you very much for coming, Mr. Coffey.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Coffey, for coming. I didn't know you were from Woodstock, New Brunswick, originally.

Mr. Charles Coffey: Do you know the area?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm originally from New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Charles Coffey: There you go.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes, R.B. Cameron country.

Mr. Charles Coffey: R.B. Cameron and Dr. John Hamm.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes, both of them I know quite well.

In any event, I was impressed with your children's agenda. I'm not sure if you're familiar with a lot of the work that we do here—

Mr. Charles Coffey: Intimately.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I was previously the children and youth services critic for our party, also working on moving forward on a children's bill of rights, which, having now met your acquaintance—I would like to, at some point, pick your brain on that issue because of your extensive experience.

Mr. Charles Coffey: Absolutely.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Having said that, the official opposition has no problem moving forward on your nomination and endorsing it, because, quite honestly, you have done an awful lot for this province and this country. I just wanted to acknowledge that and wish you much success.

Mr. Charles Coffey: Thank you. I will, Madam Chair, leave my card, and if you or any of your colleagues want to talk about the children's agenda, the children's bill of rights or whatever, I'm only a phone call away.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Perfect. Thank you, sir.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. That concludes the questions. We do appreciate your coming here this morning.

Mr. Charles Coffey: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you all.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Committee members, we are somewhat ahead of schedule right now. The clerk has checked for me, and our appointment for 11:30 is not here at this time. So what I propose to do, then, is have a recess. I would like you to be back by 11:25 so that we may begin.

The committee recessed from 1040 to 1127.

SHAKIL AKHTER

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Shakil Akhter, intended appointee as member, council of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd like to call the committee back together. We are here for our fourth and final appointment interview. I'd ask Shakil Akhter to come forward, please, the intended appointee as member of the council of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario. Good morning, and welcome to the committee. As you may know, you have time allocated should you wish to make some statements. Then we will have questions from the members of the committee. So please go ahead, if you're ready.

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Good morning, Madam Chair and respectable members of the committee. I am hon-

oured to be considered for the intended appointment. I'm very excited and privileged to be with you today.

I was born and raised in Pakistan. I completed my master's degree in commerce from the University of Karachi in Pakistan. I also obtained banking diploma I from the Institute of Bankers Pakistan.

I started my professional career with Habib Bank Ltd., the largest bank in Pakistan. I worked with the bank as the officer in charge of employment and promotions in HR. I also served as directing officer, a teaching position in the staff college of the bank.

I then moved to Saudi Arabia and worked for 19 years with the Arabian American Oil Company. Most of my assignments were in administration, planning and programs.

For approximately the last 10 years, I have been in Toronto. I worked during this period with Canada Post as a salesperson, and had my own successful business for a period of three and a half years. I have also served on the board of directors of the York Condominium Corp.

For the last eight years, I have been working with an NGO and a charity organization, namely Islamic Foundation of Toronto, as administrator. In this capacity, I'm responsible for overseeing the organization and manage it in accordance with the decisions of the board of trustees and the board of directors. I am also responsible for its accounting department. Working with these organizations, I have acquired a vast amount of experience and skills while working directly with the various boards and committees and communities of various ethnic backgrounds.

I have also led and strategically coordinated international relief efforts for natural disasters such as the tsunami disaster in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and the earthquake disaster in Pakistan. Most recently, I visited Bangladesh after the recent floods to distribute cash in kind directly to the victims of the devastation.

On the local front, after working with the city of Toronto, I launched Doors Open Toronto for our organization, which has become an annual outreach program at the Islamic Foundation of Toronto. In addition, I also oversee a weekly restaurant-style hot soup kitchen that serves over 600 less fortunate. This is a unique service to the community at large, well applauded by our mayor, Mr. David Miller.

All of these experiences have given me an insight about community life, issues, problems, concerns, and their solutions, which enables me to perform more efficiently in the best interests of the community.

I have presented a brief summary of my education, knowledge and experience. I am confident I can greatly contribute and carry out the responsibilities and obligations as a public member of the Council of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.

I am now open for any questions or concerns. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the government.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Thank you, Mr. Akhter, for coming. I noticed in your application that you're par-

ticularly interested in health care areas. Is there a reason why you picked those types of panels to apply for?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Yes. I have a family of six people: myself, my wife, three children and my 86-year-old father. In family life, health is the most important thing. I see that almost 40% of the budget of Ontario goes to health. It is that important. I think everyone is concerned, and I thought that if I wanted to work at something good, if I wanted to contribute something positive for the community, I should go for health.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Thank you very much. That's fine.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. We'll move to the opposition.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Welcome, Mr. Akhter. How are you?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Fine, thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I noticed that you have applied not only for the College of Chiropractors, but also for the College of Psychologists of Ontario and the Council of the College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario. I'm wondering why you believe this particular appointment is for you.

Mr. Shakil Akhter: As I mentioned, all these three belong to the health department. I just mentioned that health is one of the most important things. Health is wealth. I came across, through the website, that these positions were available, so I applied for all three of these positions, but I was called for this position.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I notice that you're employed full-time. I'm wondering if you can meet the time commitments outlined by the college. I know that you work full-time, but the college does meet four times a year and you will be required to meet at least three of those times. The time commitment is okay with you and your large family?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Yes, Madam. I am aware of the commitment. It was mentioned to me when I was interviewed. I think that I can make this commitment. It's good for me.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much. My colleague may have a question for you.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: You may be aware that the current government's decision is to delist chiropractic care from those services that the government would pay for. Do you believe that is a good decision?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: I think the decision was made by the government in 2004 that it was going to be delisted, I think perhaps in the month of May. Now we have gone through almost four years, and I see that the shift of the patients from chiropractors, if someone is not able to pay, is a minimum amount of people. Most people have insurance, most people have plans, and they are easily able to pay. So only a few people have shifted to the family practitioners or to the hospitals. I think they're getting better services in respect to their needs. Most likely, I am satisfied with what is going on at this time because I see there are advantages. Of course, you might find some pros and cons in each decision, but I think I go for that.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Mr. Akhter, I find those interesting statistics, and I'm wondering whether you could point me to where I could see this pattern documented somewhere, that there's a shift.

Mr. Shakil Akhter: I went through the Internet and I read a lot of reports. I specifically read a report about this which details the pros and cons of this decision at that time. I went to the website of the chiropractors of Ontario as well. There are issues that some would like to debate, but at this point, it will be very difficult for me to pass a comment or a view while all the details are not in front of me. I also have to see the details that the council has on the table at this time.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: But you can't point me to a specific report or website where I can go and see these statistics that you're talking about?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: I am not able at this time, however, I will pass it on to you at some time later, because—

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I would be interested, Madam Chair, because it's not consistent with the information that I'm aware of. So for my own purposes, I would like to compare that.

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Certainly, I'll pass on the information to you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Madam Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Welcome to Queen's Park. I'm also interested in your view as to the future of medicare. We'll start with what your personal views are towards medicare.

Mr. Shakil Akhter: I think that medicare is one of the most important needs of the community. The most important thing, I feel, is accessibility and quality. I think that these two points are most important. I'm going to have my focus on these two items: that the right services are available at the right time to people who need them.

M^{me} France Gélinas: How do you see, then, the privatization—that is, in medicare, services are publicly funded. We go see a physician and it doesn't cost us any money. It doesn't matter if you're sick or healthy, you can go see a physician. But it doesn't matter if you're sick or healthy, you have to pay to go see a chiropractor. How do you reconcile your priority of access with the fact that you support—you said that you're satisfied with what is going on, that Ontarians now have to pay to go see a chiropractor. How do you reconcile this access and the payment?

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Mr. Shakil Akhter: I believe that the decision was made based on the amount saved. That was going to save almost \$200 million. The people who are not able to afford that still have access to health services. If not chiropractors, if they decline to go or if they're discouraged to go to the chiropractor, they still have access to better substitutes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Such as?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Such as family doctors, such as medical emergency services.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Do you believe that a family doctor can provide chiropractic services?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: A family doctor can address this issue. I cannot really comment on behalf of a family doctor. But so far, in the last 10 years, in my experience in Canada, for everything I have gone to family doctors or the emergency services in the hospital, and I found that I was treated well and I got the services that I really needed.

M^{me} France Gélinas: This is why we're so proud of medicare.

Coming back to my question of chiropractors, have you ever used the services of a chiropractor?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: I did once.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And did you have to pay for that service?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: Yes, \$30.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And why didn't you go see your family doctor for that service?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: That's a good question.

I did go to the family doctor as well, and the family doctor gave me medicine. She was treating me, and at the same time, she said, "If you can afford and you can go to the chiropractor and have some therapy, it might get you relief a little bit faster." It was not necessary; however, it was optional, and I did go there.

At the same time, I would like to say that it is an important service that is available to the community, and I will repeat again that only a small percentage of people who cannot afford it are discouraged from going to the chiropractor.

However, if this is made available to everyone, it is going to be wonderful, but it all depends upon the limitations of the government, upon the other details that at present I do not have about what triggers the decisions. Once I'm sitting on the council and I have all the details, I'll be able to make better decisions. I'll be able to make better views because I'll have all the details in front of me.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You said that you were offered to go to a chiropractor. You were referred by your family physician to a chiropractor—

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: On a point of order, Madam Chair: I believe that Mr. Akhter should be entitled to the same privacy laws, and his personal information around his medical history should be regulated under those privacy laws. I object to the line of the questioning at this stage.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I can take it more general.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Please.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): All right. Thank you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: What if a person is referred by their family physician to a chiropractor but can't afford to pay? There are lots of people here in Toronto who work for minimum wage; they make \$8.75 an hour. There is no way that any of them can afford to pay the \$30 for an initial 15-minute visit. I still have a hard time understanding how you can put access as one of the two. Access and quality are what motivate you, and these are your

primary goals. But at the same time, you say that you're satisfied that people have to pay. People who don't have the money don't have access. I don't understand.

Mr. Shakil Akhter: I will repeat again that the people who do not have access—first of all, it would be good if they have access. Secondly, if they are unable to have access to this type of service, health care is to provide alternatives through the family doctor. As I know, there are certain chiropractor and therapy services available in the government hospitals, which are listed free. They're not paying.

I have seen a person who was unable to pay and she was given a paper from the doctor. She was going to a chiropractor clinic which is stationed in one of the government hospitals. She was treated free.

So I understand that there are alternatives. I take your point that it is good to have everything free, but at the same time I take the other point: whether it is possible. If it is possible, why not?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Is this example, where there are chiropractors working in Ontario hospitals—where in Ontario is that?

Mr. Shakil Akhter: The Scarborough general hospital. The person was in surgery for her wrist. It required therapy and some help in this regard. She was given a paper. She told the doctor that she would not be able to afford it and she was given a paper—and she went. It's a building at the back of the Scarborough general hospital, beside the parking. It's a one-storey building. She was treated there. I know that approximately five or six times, she went there and she was treated.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Just for your information, the building you're referring to is the out-patient physiotherapy clinic of the Scarborough general. They do not offer chiropractic services. End of my questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much, and thank you for appearing here today. I appreciate you being able to be here.

This concludes the time that we have for interviews. I would ask committee members that we now deal with concurrences. We will go in the order in which these intended appointees were before us this morning.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Mr. Gerry McNeilly, intended appointee as director, Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: A recorded vote.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Recorded vote.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move concurrence in the appointment of Gerry McNeilly.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mrs. Van Bommel. Any comments? Seeing none, all in favour?

Ayes

Brown, Delaney, Gélinas, Jeffrey, Ramsay, Savoline, Van Bommel.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): All right, the motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended—I'm sorry. I forgot. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Jordan Bitove, intended appointee as member, University of Western Ontario board of governors.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move concurrence in the appointment of Jordan Bitove.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: A recorded vote.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Recorded vote. Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mrs. Van Bommel. Any discussion? Seeing none, all in favour?

Ayes

Brown, Delaney, Gélinas, Jeffrey, MacLeod, Ramsay, Savoline, Van Bommel.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Charles Coffey, intended appointee as member, Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Chair, I move concurrence in the appointment of Charles Coffey.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mrs. Van Bommel. Any discussion? Seeing none—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: A recorded vote.

Ayes

Brown, Delaney, Gélinas, Jeffrey, MacLeod, Ramsay, Savoline, Van Bommel.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Shakil Akhter, intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move concurrence in the appointment of Shakil Akhter.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: A recorded vote.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Madam Chair, may I request a deferral? My colleague from the third party had several questions and I believe my colleague from Burlington also had several questions on which she was waiting for information from the intended appointee. If we could wait a week in order to obtain that information prior to the vote, I would appreciate that.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): We will have a deferral.

That concludes our business on intended appointments, but I just want to indicate to the members of the committee that the committee will reconvene at the call of the Chair. This committee stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1150.

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