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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

A-18

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

A-18

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Tuesday 28 May 2019

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Mardi 28 mai 2019

Chair: John Vanthof
Clerk: Jocelyn McCauley

Président : John Vanthof
Greffière : Jocelyn McCauley

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 28 May 2019

Mardi 28 mai 2019

The committee met at 0901 in committee room 1.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): I'd like to call this meeting to order.

The first item of business this morning is the subcommittee report dated May 16, 2019. We have all seen the report in advance, so could I please have a motion? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning. I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, May 16, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated May 10, 2019.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Any further discussion? I'd like to call a vote. All those in favour of accepting the subcommittee report, as presented? Opposed? That's carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MRS. NOBINA ROBINSON

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Nobina Robinson, intended appointee as member, Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We have Nobina Robinson, nominated as member of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Could you please come forward? Good morning.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Good morning.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): 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.

Welcome, and the floor is yours.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Thank you. Should I change the mike? Is that better?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): No, there you go.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Okay. Thank you for inviting me to speak with you this morning. My name is Nobina Robinson.

I am humbled and gratified to have been given the opportunity to serve the higher education sector in Ontario through the intended appointment as chair of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, henceforth HEQCO—humbled because, although having chosen to retire from active work a year ago, this appointment permits me to further my contribution to post-secondary education policy in Canada and Ontario; and gratified because I see the nomination as a recognition of my 15 years or more of hard work and relentless devotion to an inclusive vision of higher education. By “inclusive” here, I mean an abiding conviction that our province should have a high-functioning post-secondary education system to meet the needs of the wide diversity in our learners, a system made up of three distinct, differentiated and diverse learning options: university, college and apprenticeship.

I pondered long and hard about the role that HEQCO has played over the past 15 years and how it can improve pressing policy issues like sustainability, equity, access and, above all, quality in higher education. As we confront skills mismatches, skills shortages, the impact of automation and technology on careers, the changing nature of credentials and competencies, and employer/education disconnect, I believe that HEQCO is well positioned to offer the government actionable policy advice in these areas.

I support the mandate, mission and vision of HEQCO and note that it is the only organization of its kind in Canada: an action-oriented think tank for higher education. The mandate—to improve all aspects of post-secondary education; the mission—to provide solutions for government to consider; and the vision—to influence post-secondary education policy—all align with my own sense of where things need to go. I am committed to evidence-based policy-making. My analysis is based on rigour of thought. I have always valued HEQCO for adhering to these same values.

Let me share a few insights into myself that might be relevant for your considerations. I thank the Clerk for accepting my bio—which you all have—since there might have been some errors in the briefing.

My vocation and passion is Canadian public policy, be it foreign or domestic policy. As you may note, in an earlier phase of my career I was devoted to Canadian foreign policy for the Americas. Yet I now believe that domestic policy issues—slow-moving issues like skills,

education and labour market—are way, way tougher than foreign policy. Public policy solutions require patient engagement with stakeholders outside government. Good policy ideas do not come solely from the civil service or from elected officials but from the persistent interplay of ideas with the wider community of experts, in any field. I believe that third-party independent organizations such as HEQCO have all manner of policy advice and recommendations to offer to advance the work of the elected officials and the civil service.

The last 15 years of my career were concentrated on skills and innovation policies. Through my experience representing institutions that deliver advanced technological and employer-aligned education and training—the polytechnics of the country—I have observed first-hand the promise and the failures of Canada’s various education and training systems. Post-secondary system design, outcomes, apprenticeship and trades training systems remain key policy interests for me even in retirement.

As a person, I am curious, focused, passionate and dedicated. I am articulate and persuasive and enjoy actively fostering collaboration with others. An avid reader, I synthesize and process information quickly. I am bilingual in both official languages, but I also speak a number of other languages fluently. My professional networks are wide-ranging in Canada and internationally and include business and private sector organizations, along with policy think tanks around the world.

As an immigrant to Canada, I am devoted to improving opportunities for others—opportunities that I myself have been fortunate enough to have benefited from since becoming a citizen in 1980. I have called Ottawa home since 1990 and have built my own family here in Ontario.

My years of not-for-profit leadership and management experience have shown me the vital importance of a committed board of directors that is wise and focused on the strategic goals of an organization. I fully appreciate the difference in roles between the strategic guidance and oversight of a board and the management and operational leadership by an executive head of an agency.

Having participated in numerous federal stakeholder consultations and contributed over a year’s worth of volunteer time to a significant federal expert panel on R&D and business innovation, I appreciate the challenges in forging common positions from diverse perspectives.

Let me briefly cite three significant achievements of the later part of my career that are related to this appointment:

(1) I advocated successfully for the creation and recognition of federal funding streams for college applied research. As a result, today the whole Canadian college sector can count on dedicated applied R&D funding to support the vital innovation solutions that they offer for industry.

(2) I have successfully argued for changes to the Statistics Canada 2021 census, specifically the question around education. No longer will census data reinforce a false hierarchy by asking, “What is your highest level of education?” From the next census onwards, Canadians will be asked, “What is your most recent education level

completed?” How many of you know a university grad who had to go back to college to get a job?

My effort to change one question on the census stems from my adherence to the philosophy of parity of esteem, whereby college training is equally valued as university education.

(3) I was a key proponent for the creation of the federal Canada Apprentice Loan in 2015, a policy change that was prompted by my belief that apprentices are just as much learners as post-secondary students, who can already rely on the Canada Student Loans Program, but there was no such help for apprentices.

The changing nature of work is one of my current policy areas of interest. Working with other thought leaders, I have written media commentary about how educators, employers and learners need to ready themselves for disruption through a commitment to lifelong learning. I have prepared policy papers on youth employment, helping Canadians make informed higher education choices, arguing that skills will drive 21st-century success for Canadians.

0910

In closing, let me suggest that Ontario needs a differentiated and demand-driven post-secondary education system of the highest quality. My concept of differentiation is one where the mandates of the learning institutions are clearly defined and valued for their unique contributions. A system that values the knowledge mission of universities equally supports the employment-oriented community colleges, while placing great importance on providers of trades training. The outcome from all of these learning options should be highly qualified and skilled professionals for our province and our economy. Ontario’s learners should be able to access any part of this complex post-secondary system. There should be no wrong door.

I know that we need to do more to create a balanced post-secondary ecosystem in Ontario and Canada. Our economy faces major challenges in connecting the needs of employers with the skills of working-age Canadians, as successive governments in Ontario have clearly understood for a long time. HEQCO has the ability to offer practical solutions for these long-standing and long-term challenges. I look forward to applying my experience and my passion in my work with my colleagues at HEQCO and with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Good morning and thank you, Mrs. Robinson, for being here. Thanks for your submission as well. I really appreciated hearing from you, and congratulations on your imminent appointment to HEQCO.

Just a couple of formality-type questions here from us: Mrs. Robinson, how did you find out about this position and find out that it was available, that there was a vacancy?

Were you approached to apply for the position, and by whom, if so?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: I was retired and looking for ways in which to apply my expertise. Various people had suggested either looking at federal or provincial orders-in-council processes. I discovered this opportunity on the website. I made inquiries about it, how to do it, because I'd never done one of these before.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: So I applied, and subsequent to applying, I sought advice from officials about the process.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The officials that you mentioned—were any of them currently part of the government of Ontario?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: They were officials at MTCU.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: MTCU, okay. So, just MTCU bureaucrats?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Did you have personal connections with them, or you just picked up the phone?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: No. I would have run into them at conferences, but the kinds of officials who run these appointment processes aren't the policy people I would have worked with.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Great; thank you.

In your remarks, one key sentence sort of stuck out to me, and I think it is true. You hit the nail on the head with it. You referenced patient engagement with stakeholders. That's really critical, I think: of course, the engagement part, but the patient engagement part, to wait, to dialogue, to consult broadly and to take your time to get it right. In such a component of our economy and the fabric of our society, that is so integral to our success. I think the key word there is really "patient." Unfortunately, as members of the opposition, we haven't really seen that much patience when it comes to policy.

Specifically, I want to ask you about the government's decision to tie 60% of funding for colleges and universities to some performance metrics, including graduate earnings, number and proportion of graduates in programs with experiential learning, skills and competency, proportion of graduates employed full-time in related and partially-related fields, proportion of students in identified areas of strength, and graduation rates. Do you have any thoughts on that new metric that the government will be applying directly to funding for post-secondary institutions?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Thank you very much for your question. There's a lot there, and with your indulgence I'll try my best to skim through some of my thoughts.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: For sure.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: As you might have heard from my opening statement and if you look at my bio, I am committed—absolutely committed—to an outcomes-driven education model, to demand either by employers or by students. And yet, we really have a supply-side system. We keep doing input and hoping we're going to get the outcome at the other end. Some may actually say, "Well,

how can you, with your liberal arts background—Amherst College, Oxford University, Yale University—be focused on that?" but I really do think, having studied Canada's innovation system, which is all about talent, that we've got to get the right talent to the right employer at the right time. We have a problem with that.

Therefore, it is really important to start measuring what matters. We've got to get to a point where we're beyond anecdote and don't make anecdote into data. For example, we tell our high school students that university is four years. But when we know that the average completion time for a bachelor's degree is six and a half years, shouldn't people know that? Shouldn't we start saying, "What's going on? Is it poor navigation? Is it not enough credit transfer? Is it not enough prior-learning recognition? What are the solutions here?"

When you get to those kinds of outcomes, we're going to need to have metrics.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm sorry, we're time-sensitive here so I have to cut you off, unfortunately. I apologize for that.

A follow-up question: Do you believe that there was enough patient engagement before that policy was rolled out? Because there's been a lot of criticism subsequent to that new policy directive in terms of it being a complete change of direction.

And, whatever your answer is on that, you said "supply side/demand side"—if we're putting a lot of input in, shouldn't the onus then be on the demand side to acknowledge the quality and calibre and quantity of educated folks and skilled trades folks that we're putting out and investing in heavily already to incentivize them or require them to hire and connect with those?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: There are many parts to your question. I'm going to go to the point that I am committed to around patient engagement. You've picked up on that a couple of times. What do I mean by this?

When I said that social policy issues are some of the hardest—domestic policy, labour market policy; think about our trade barriers in this country—these are intractable problems, yet we must chip away at making change because the status quo cannot help the next generation of learners. The pace of acceleration is too much. One way to do that is to start quantifying metrics. What is the outcome we want? Define what that is. Bring agreement to what that is and then track it over time.

Unfortunately, those policy issues don't necessarily work with the political life cycle. I understand that every government wishes to leave its imprint of change. The system is ridden with inertia. Post-secondary institutions, particularly universities, are some of the most risk-averse institutions, and resistant to change. Yet our learners—be they the 18-year-old or the 26-year-old who now has to get upscaled—are demanding faster solutions.

Asking to quantify metrics is not necessarily a wrong thing. We have to pick the right indicators and give it time.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Fair enough. I thank you very much, and I am going to pass my time to my colleague Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: How much more time do we have left?

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): You've got about eight minutes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Ms. Robinson. First of all, congratulations on your retirement. I gather that, like many, you're going to stay very, very busy. Again, congratulations on your impending appointment.

I just want to talk a little bit about some of the other roles that HECQO—is that how we say it?—is going to be undertaking and get your impression on that. The government announced that, starting in September, HECQO will be responsible for evaluating speech on campus. Were you aware of that?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: One of the things they will be doing is approving so-called free speech policies at colleges and universities. Around that, there's a threat. There's a threat, I think it's fair to say, that funding would be further cut if campuses don't allow speech that is sanctioned by the government.

This policy, as I'm sure you're aware, has raised a lot of concern about what kind of speech is sanctioned and about the right of students and faculty to exercise their own freedom of speech and assembly on campus. I wonder if you could share your views on that topic but also if you think that HECQO is equipped to monitor and police what are, I'm sure, thousands of speaking events, for example, on campuses across Ontario.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Thank you very much. I'll take your question in two different parts, because you will appreciate that I am not yet the chair of HECQO so I am not privy to the commitments it has actually made, beyond what we know in the public reports, that it has been mandated to monitor the rollout of free speech policies. I would not want to talk about something that I'm not aware of.

0920

I am able to talk to you about my own view on freedom of speech. Again, you would see my education background is (1) in liberal arts, and (2) in some of the institutions of the highest order on the globe.

Critical thinking requires being able to hear from all points of view. I happened to go to university at a time when we didn't have social media but we did still have hate speech laws. What's happening now is that this particular kind of control of thought has harmed that very mission of universities and colleges to be places of free thinking.

What I have read about is something called the University of Chicago freedom of speech principle, and I would commend it very much to you. Here's what it does say: "Provided that their talks do not constitute hate speech or harassment, are conducted respectfully and include free-flowing Q and A sessions, a marketplace of ideas benefiting both speakers and listeners should be facilitated."

That's the University of Chicago's policy, which I understand all of the 24 community colleges in Ontario have adopted. I don't think that there is a whole lot wrong with that intent, to create a place where, under the control that there is no hate speech, you have diverse perspectives being able to be discussed in an open and collaborative way.

As to the role that HECQO will play, I think that is an interesting question that I would put to a higher order. That organization, in my study of its legislation, its MOU, its regulations, was created 15 years ago to research, evaluate and assess various aspects of post-secondary policy. We might be moving to one where we have to consider: Can HECQO be of more help to the government as it tries to grapple with new issues? Does HECQO have a role to monitor, to do skills measurement, to report back to the government? These are things I'm looking forward to working with my other board colleagues and the senior leadership of HECQO to define, because, clearly, we have more things that small agencies or arm's-length agencies can do, and there will be a need to prioritize. And there will be a need to make sure that it is aligned with the needs of Ontario's learners and its institutions.

So there are two parts to my answer.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. I may come back to that, but I appreciate your very thoughtful response.

The other question I had was, of the metrics that are used or put in place potentially here around how successful Ontario colleges and universities are serving our students, what about fair labour practices? We've seen this proliferation of contract faculty positions.

I have to say, in my own riding, there are, first of all, a ton of post-secondary students, but also a lot of contract faculty who are having trouble making ends meet. Maybe to your point: What is it that we're producing and what opportunities? But what about colleges' and universities' responsibility and our government's responsibility to make sure that those positions are stable and secure as well, and that people can build their lives around those opportunities?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: This is not an area that I have direct first-hand experience in, nor am I aware that it falls entirely in HECQO's mandate, though the questions that relate to sustainability of institutions and their finances or questions that relate to the need for faculty renewal and bringing in either early career researchers for universities or bringing in younger, professional faculty in the college system are going to be important. We are all facing a demographic change, so I will look at those policy issues.

My view, particularly, is as a parent of a grade 12 student. He's being sold on going to U of T; he'd better be told honestly, "And this much of your teaching will be by teaching assistants, and this much will be by professors." But we never have the fair data on that stuff, right?

Ms. Marit Stiles: That's true. I also am the parent of a grade 12 student. I feel your pain.

The last question I have—and my colleague may have other questions. When we talk about those successful outcomes—and I appreciate that we have students and

children who are entering university next year, or post-secondary institutions, potentially. When we talk about opportunities, I am also seeing the next group of students that are coming into our secondary schools, and I'm fearful, as are many other parents right now, of reduced opportunities with the cuts to courses that we're seeing, which are turning out to be quite significant. I think we're still waiting to see what the final results will look like, but what we're hearing is about cuts to technology courses, cuts to courses that—sure, arts and music. This, I find devastating, because I think a lot of students stay in school for those reasons. But I do think, in terms of shop classes and technology classes, doors are closing, potentially, and opportunities for secondary students to understand what options exist for them. Is this something that you think HEQCO should be looking at or that the government should be concerned about as well? Clearly, as you mentioned in your earlier comments, this is something we have to be thinking about. We need to be honest, but we also need to be thinking about what options we offer them at that level.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Unfortunately, a door has closed. The 15 minutes is up.

Ms. Marit Stiles: That's okay. I'd be interested in hearing from you at some other time.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): My apologies.

The questioning will now turn to the government. You have six minutes. Mr. Ke.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Good morning. Thank you for coming to our committee.

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario has identified the need to modernize and improve learning outcomes within post-secondary institutions in order to better equip students with the skills and tools needed to enter the workforce as one of their three key priorities. The question is: Can you please provide us your opinion on what this priority means to you, and how do you envision achieving these outcomes as a board member of this council?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Thank you for your question. If I understood it, you would like me to talk about what the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario is suggesting are important skills gaps that have to be filled. They have been doing a number of reports and multi-year studies to measure the skills that students had when they came and the skills that they have when they graduate and whether that is in fact what employers want, and, if there's a gap, what can be done to gap-fill. That's, I think, actually a very dry topic, not a quick-fix topic, but one that HEQCO is ideally placed to work on patiently over time.

We don't have enough signalling mechanisms from employers to say, "This is what we really need." Just simply saying, "We don't have the people," is not good enough, because we could have flawed policies by—I don't know—changing immigration when we have the talent right here. The ability that HEQCO has in a sound and apolitical way to give the government advice as to, "Here's the shortfall; here's how you fill it; here are some international comparisons and solutions, and here are

some actions the government could take"—that is, I think, the beauty of having a patient view on higher education.

I cannot repeat enough: This stuff does not change in a year, but it needs to start changing faster than it has, because employers are just saying, "Well, we don't have the people." Employers are also not investing in training. They're expecting the higher education system to produce the kind of quality that's ready to go on day one. Well, how will they know that if there aren't ways to hear what the demand side wants?

I think the measurement priorities and the skills capabilities that HEQCO has are much to be supported, and I'm looking forward to working with them. I must note that I'm speaking without really understanding their work plan. I will get to that as soon as this appointment process is complete.

0930

Mr. Vincent Ke: Okay. Amazing. Thank you.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you, Mrs. Robinson.

I come out of the Ford motor plant. I was working there for 31 years, and I've worked very closely with all the skilled-trade workers there. I know that we have a shortage of about 190,000 available jobs out there that we can't fill at this present time. What steps do you believe should be taken to help bridge this gap and increase enrolment in skilled trades?

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: I wish there was one answer. There are many answers. You all have very busy days; maybe I can leave you with one factoid: The average age of a starting apprentice in this country is 26. In other words, what were they doing from high school to 26? They were being poorly navigated. Maybe they went to university; maybe they went to do—I don't know—graphic design because it was the latest cool thing and then found, "No, it's not for me."

The first thing we need to do is better esteem of the work. It is the work of your applied math and applied science to be repairing Queen's Park the building or Parliament Hill. We need stonemasons, and there is geometry in stonemasonry, but we don't tell our students that. There has to be that level of changing hearts and minds, but that's going to take maybe a generation. In the meanwhile, we need to recognize people's prior education and prior skills and get more people to say, "Okay, you've been doing this. That means you have this skill. Did you know you could do that?" Again, I go back to career navigation.

We also have to get at the data point that you might be reciting. How many people do they really need? And, I would also say, are employers committed to trades training? Are they really sponsoring apprentices? What is that commitment from the employer community? It is much, much more difficult if you are a small or mid-sized firm than if you are Ford, but we often see from apprentices, "I can't go back and take my next level of training because my employer says if I quit then he's not bringing me back." That's not good enough.

We've got to deal with a number of things, and this is just myself speaking anecdotally. There is a very legitim-

ate research body, and that's called the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. They've got no end of resources and no end of advice, and I look forward to encouraging HEQCO, for example, to look at that. HEQCO's mandate is very limited on apprenticeship, because, in fact, when we say "post-secondary," we don't mean apprenticeship. I hope that, over time, HEQCO can have more inclusive thinking around higher education that includes apprenticeship.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you very much. That unfortunately concludes the time allotted for questions. You may step down. Thank you.

Mrs. Nobina Robinson: Thank you very much.

MR. DEREK MURRAY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Derek Murray, intended appointee as member, grant review team—Simcoe-York—Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We have Derek Murray, nominated as member for the grant review team—Simcoe-York—Ontario Trillium Foundation. Could you please come forward, sir? 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.

Good morning. The floor is yours.

Mr. Derek Murray: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here this morning. I'm going to give you a background of my career, and that will tell you where it led with my work with fundraising etc.

I've lived in the town of Aurora since 1992 with my wife, and we have two grown-up daughters. We've been married 49 years this November. Our eldest daughter graduated from Guelph and lives in Ottawa with her husband and two-year-old son. Our youngest daughter, Jillian, lives in Newmarket. She graduated from Queen's and she lives there with her husband, son and daughter.

I want to briefly go through my background and give you some idea of how I got where I am today. I was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1936, probably ahead of when a lot of you were born. I came to Canada in December 1948, with my mother and father and older brother. My father was a certified public accountant who came over here for a position. He had been a bank manager in Ireland for 18 years. However, he passed away three years later from cancer, at age 47. It kind of changed things for us. We were here. In those days, you didn't hop on a plane three times a day and go back to Ireland. Besides, my mother wasn't going back. She said, "Your father said we're staying here." And so we stayed here.

I had completed my grade 13 about three months after my father passed away. I thought I probably should be an

accountant; I thought that's why he came out here, that he wanted a good opportunity for us. The opportunities in the south of Ireland after the war were not that good for young people. I spent two years on my RIA studies—registered industrial accounting. I made a major decision then: I didn't want to be an accountant. That became very plain to me—and probably to the people I was working with.

After a few years of different sales positions, I was recruited by a manager of the Prudential Insurance Company of America to become an agent in his branch. In three years I was promoted to sales manager. In another five years I was promoted to the position of branch manager, all in the Toronto area. In 1978, I was transferred to the position of branch manager in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Interestingly enough, I replaced the manager who had recruited me into the business. I'm not sure whether that was a good relationship or not.

In 1984, we were transferred back to Ontario. I was promoted to the position of vice-president of regional marketing with responsibility for four branches in Ontario and all sales operations in the three Maritime provinces, so I was kind of busy for a number of years with that.

In 1994, I was moved into our head office as assistant to our senior vice-president of Canadian sales operations. In 1996, Prudential's Canadian operation were purchased by London Life. I chose not to move to London, and I retired after 28 years with Prudential.

I took a few years off. In 1998, I was approached by the Independent Order of Foresters. They wanted to open a new insurance company. We spent four years building a company in a different manner than most insurance companies. We started by hiring bank managers as branch managers, which I questioned from when we started. We hired agents on salary. If you knew the insurance business, agents on salary do not survive in the insurance industry, because the motivation to sell is not there.

At that time, after four years, our new president was hired, and the president who had set the model that I was working on was let go. He chose the easier way to create a new branch of business for the Foresters: They bought Metropolitan Life's Canadian operations. So once again I was unemployed for a little while—not very long. I spent time at several financial organizations on short-term contracts: trained people, licensed agents, ran mutual fund courses etc.

I was elected as president of the Retired Prudential Employees' Association because there were still 600 to 700 former Prudential employees floating around Canada, and they were feeling that they had been let down. What I did was I convinced Newark, our head office, to provide us with \$25,000 a year towards this association. That association is still going, and I'm still the president of it. I think we have \$100,000 in the bank at the present time.

I was on the board of directors for the Aurora Seniors Centre for four years. I was 74 at the time. After four years, I decided I wasn't old enough for that yet. The four-and-a-half-hour Monday afternoon meetings were just not what I wanted to do.

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I've spent many years fundraising for different causes in Aurora. I've sponsored hockey teams and bowling teams. I'm actually heading up a fundraiser in our church in Aurora. Our goal was to raise \$5 million for renovations. We've been at it seven months and we've already got \$3.8 million. So we know how to fundraise.

In 2012, I was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for service to my peers, to my community and to my country, Canada. I'm a proud Canadian. I think it's the best country in the world. I'm glad I'm here. Most of the reason I got that medal was because of my work with seniors. I made sure that seniors were—I saw how some of them were ending up in nursing homes. They were destitute in lots of cases and couldn't afford things. I did what I could with different organizations in Aurora to try and change that, and I think we made some progress.

That's my summary. I thank you for your time, and I'm willing to answer any questions that I can.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you very much, Mr. Murray. The first round of questioning will go to the government. Ms. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Mr. Murray, I want to thank you for being here this morning and for going through your extensive background that has led you here today. I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit more about some of the specific skills that you think you have that will be a great asset for this board.

Mr. Derek Murray: Well, I think, first of all, there's fundraising, and it probably goes with my people relationship because if you don't have a people relationship in the insurance business, you don't last very long, and not only with the people you're selling to, but with the people you're hiring—you have to keep that relationship. So I think those would be my two major strengths.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Wonderful. Thank you.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Good morning, Mr. Murray.

Mr. Derek Murray: Good morning.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It is clear you have a real understanding of York-Simcoe. Do you feel your experience and your understanding of York-Simcoe region influenced your decision in this appointment?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes. You may want to ask me why I got involved about there—

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Okay. Why did you get involved?
Laughter.

Mr. Derek Murray: I might as well tell you.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Talk about a leading question.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I know. Isn't that great?

Mr. Derek Murray: I'll save you asking me the question. I am a Conservative, right? I was Frank Klees's president for eight years. I was Costas Menegakis's president of his EDA for five years. I'm now on Costas's EDA in Richmond Hill, and I'm on Michael Parsa's riding association in Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. He has me on there because of my knowledge of Aurora.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: So you know the area very well, then?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Any further questions? Seeing—oh, Mr. Ke.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Good morning.

Mr. Derek Murray: Good morning.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Could you please explain to this committee what you would like to accomplish during your term as a member of the York-Simcoe Grant Review Team for the Ontario Trillium Foundation?

Mr. Derek Murray: Well, I would like to find and provide for people and organizations who need funding, regardless of their political status. I would not let my Conservative background enter into that. I think there are a lot of organizations who need help, not only the Aurora-Newmarket community but in lots of other communities.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Okay. Thank you.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: You do seem like quite the multi-tasker with all the different experience and boards that you're on, but I just wanted you to elaborate on the amount of time that is going to be needed for dedication to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and how you approach to manage all of those duties, as well as if you can touch on some of the things that you've dealt with when it comes to conflict resolution, how you're good with people management.

Mr. Derek Murray: Okay. I don't think that time is an issue because it doesn't look like it's a lot of time. In my mind, it doesn't. I'm a pretty active 83-year-old. I'm okay—how am I going to answer this?—on making decisions, and if there are any conflicts, I'm pretty good at calming that down, because I've hired a lot of people in my time and they were hired into a business that took a lot of dedication on people's parts if they wanted to be successful. I might have been regarded as a pretty strict manager, vice-president etc., but I knew we had a goal to get things done and I made sure we got it done.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Any further questions? Seeing none, I will switch over to the official opposition. Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Mr. Murray. Thanks for being here. Congratulations on your imminent appointment. Congratulations on 49 years of marriage. You'll have to invite us to your 50th.

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That's a wonderful milestone.

Mr. Derek Murray: If I don't spend too many hours on this, I'll get there.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: We're going to get you out of here as quickly as possible.

Thanks also for referencing your dad. He sounded like an intrepid, enterprising, adventurous young lad, and as he was taken too soon, I'm sure that—

Mr. Derek Murray: He was. He gave a lot up. He came from a large family. In those days, the oldest member—there were eight brothers. He was the oldest. He went in the bank; that was automatic. All of his brothers became doctors and lawyers.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My mom is from 11. She's also of Irish background, too, as well.

Mr. Derek Murray: Well, she's a good person then.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: She's the best. So thanks for doing that.

Just a couple of questions. You've already laid the cards out on the table. You are a card-carrying Conservative, I'm assuming.

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: We have some questions that we have to ask, unfortunately, of deputants here because we're seeing a pattern where the government is nominating a high number of card-carrying Conservatives. There are people who have been affiliated with the party. No offence to those lines of questions, but we have to get it on the record. So you are a card-carrying member of the party?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have you ever worked, in any capacity, in any campaigns for the party?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have you ever donated to the Ontario provincial Conservative Party?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have you donated to any of the leaders during the most recent leadership campaign for the party?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Do you currently sit as a member of the riding association in any capacity?

Mr. Derek Murray: I'm a first vice-president in Michael Parsa's riding.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: In your career, your employment with various organizations, you must have had a lot of trust put in you in terms of your fiduciary responsibilities to your clients, right?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And what would have been some of the certifications that you would have received, either through the industry or government certifications, that recognized you as someone who could be trusted with people's money?

Mr. Derek Murray: I wouldn't have had the role of assistant to the senior vice-president at Prudential America, which was the largest insurance company in the world at that time. It was the Canadian operation, but it was a pretty big responsibility. There were over 1,600 agents involved.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Was there a certification that you received, or some sort of—

Mr. Derek Murray: No. When I started, I became a chartered life underwriter, a CLU—and a certified planner.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: So through those certifications or accreditations, you would have had to have received some form of ethics training and recognition?

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And I'm sure you would never have worked in that industry as long as you did without having a high degree of ethics, right?

Mr. Derek Murray: I never had an ethics problem. I never had anyone—did I have agents who had ethics problems? Yes. How did I handle them? Depending how they were—if they were bad enough, you didn't get a second chance.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Sir, it seems like you've got the right demeanour to be able to deal with those types of conflicts and that type of stuff. As our colleague Ms. Khanjin alluded to, or asked you about conflict resolution, I wanted to prompt you or prime you on that. In your previous role as the riding association president for Newmarket–Aurora, there was a little bit of conflict there in terms of the nomination process in 2018, right?

Mr. Derek Murray: I got rid of that conflict.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Say it again?

Mr. Derek Murray: We got rid of that conflict. The lady who had won—she was disqualified one year later.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Were you at the helm of trying to—

Mr. Derek Murray: I led the charge.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And that had to do with voter irregularity or ballots that were cast or something?

Mr. Derek Murray: They were signing applications and paying money, and the candidates weren't even aware, and then on nomination day busloads of people were driven into the nomination meeting who had no idea why they were there or who the candidates were.

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Mr. Taras Natyshak: And you got down to the bottom of that.

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes, it took a lot. The leader previous to the leader we have today chose not to talk to me about it.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay.

Mr. Derek Murray: I chose to take it further.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You took it on because that was your responsibility.

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Well, it's the right thing to do. It's protecting the integrity of that riding association. Did you think that there were some systemic issues built into that riding association that would have even allowed that to happen in the first place?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Yes, Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'm just wondering if we can maybe return back to the topic of the Trillium board. I'm not sure how internal riding association politics relate to the matter that we're discussing at hand.

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

Mr. Natyshak, could you relate your questioning specifically to the Trillium board?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Chair. I take the counsel of the member from across the way. It follows the same line of questioning around conflict resolution. I think that's an important quality to have and I think you exemplify that, and it's just one that we know of because it made the news. It was a pseudo-public issue.

Mr. Derek Murray: My daughters were impressed. I got into the Globe and Mail several times.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes. So I guess I can tie it right back: Would you be taking the same approach, would you be so hands-on and would you be looking for areas in which potential conflicts of interest arose at the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and would you—I think I already know you would have the gumption to take that on head-on, but I just want to know how you would deal with that in relation to how you dealt with it in the past.

Mr. Derek Murray: Well, to start, I'll tell you, I always knew both sides of it at the start of a conflict. I made sure I knew that. If there was a client who felt he had been mistreated by our agent, (1) I'd have it in an affidavit from the client, and (2) I had an affidavit from the agent; then I made a decision.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm going to switch gears just for one more question and then I'm going to pass it to my colleague. Back to when you found this position: Did you find it? Did someone reach out to you? Who did you potentially talk to?

Mr. Derek Murray: Michael Parsa asked me if I would be interested in this, and I said yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And then you went online and did the application to—

Mr. Derek Murray: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. Well, sir, I thank you very much. It's a pleasure to meet you, and congratulations on your imminent appointment. Hopefully you can get out of here and beat the traffic back home to your bride.

Mr. Derek Murray: It won't be any worse than it was coming down here; I'll tell you that.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): No further questions? That concludes the questioning. You may step down, sir.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Mrs. Nobina Robinson, member for the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Ms. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Nobina Robinson, nominated as member for the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Concurrence in the appointment has been made by Ms. Fee. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I'd like to call a vote. All those in favour? Opposed? Concurrence is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Mr. Derek Murray, member for the Grant Review Team for Simcoe-York on the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Ms. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Derek Murray, nominated as member for

the Grant Review Team, Simcoe-York, Ontario Trillium Foundation

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Ms. Fee. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I'd like to call a vote. All those in favour? Opposed? That is carried. Congratulations.

The deadline to review the intended appointment of Stephen Staley, selected from the May 3, 2019, certificate, is June 3, 2019.

Interjection: June 2.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): June 2. My apologies. I should have brought my glasses.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Stephen Staley to July 2, 2019? I heard a no, so that fails.

The deadline to review the intended appointment of Jim Armour, selected from the May 3, 2019, certificate, is June 2, 2019. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Jim Armour to July 2, 2019? I heard a no, so we do not have unanimous consent.

The deadline to review the intended appointment of A. Scott Carson, selected from the May 3, 2019, certificate, is June 2, 2019. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of A. Scott Carson to July 2, 2019? I heard a no, so that's no unanimous consent.

The deadline to review the intended appointment of Andrew House, selected from the May 3, 2019, certificate, is June 2, 2019. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Andrew House to July 2, 2019? Once again I heard a no, so that's no unanimous consent.

Any further business?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, point of order.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: At the last meeting—I had requested a meeting of the subcommittee. We set a date and a time. The Chair and I were here. Unfortunately, nobody from the government side joined us.

I just wanted to review that for a moment. I'm happy to call another subcommittee meeting, but I wanted to explain, as I mentioned at our last committee meeting, why we were trying to hold that subcommittee meeting. We have had an extreme backlog in the number of potential appointments that we want to review here at this committee, I think in good faith. We want to have a conversation with the government members about how we are going to do our due diligence as a committee in reviewing these appointments.

I've requested a report. I believe we were provided with a report from the Clerk on the number of instances in the past where committees have not provided unanimous consent for the extension of those appointment opportunities. Unfortunately, it seems like this is a relatively new occurrence—a trend, I'll call it.

There are a very large number of political appointments coming through here, understandably. A new government wants to put some people in new positions. We get it. But it is our role as a committee, and it is actually what we are

supposed to do. The reason the public elects us to office is to ensure that we have an opportunity like this, just simply to hear from the people who are going to be carrying out these important roles.

I also just want to take a moment to refer to something that happened. It's why I want to raise this again here today. Last week, I believe, an appointee by this province to the Thunder Bay Police Service Board, John Cyr—who was appointed and whom we had asked to appear before this committee and there was not unanimous consent to allow him to appear here. I believe that was back in April. He said he was not available in April to come to the committee and we were presented with the opportunity to extend that deadline. Now some information has come to light that has resulted in his resignation being almost immediately called for.

These are the reasons why we need to be able to review these appointments. Also, frankly, we have some excellent appointments, people who deserve to be given the respect of also appearing before this committee. I feel like it's a disrespectful thing that we are not bringing them before this committee.

I want to urge the members opposite to reconsider this trend of not providing unanimous consent to allow us to just simply extend for a week or two so that we can actually see these appointees, pay them that respect to be able to appear before this committee.

I think that it's really important that we hear also from the Clerk, potentially, about the history here of what other, previous governments have allowed when this committee sat, because I feel like we're seeing a really unfortunate trend here. I really believe that we, as members of the opposition, are here in good faith, but we are not being allowed to do our due diligence as members of this committee if we can't see—I've got to tell you, Jim Armour

and I went to high school together. I would love to see Jim Armour here, and I'm sure Jim Armour would be happy to be here. But now, we may not have a chance to talk to Jim Armour about what role he hopes to play on whatever board he's being appointed to.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): So, are you asking the committee to put—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, I'm requesting another subcommittee meeting. I'm hoping this time that the government will actually attend that subcommittee meeting so we can address this issue and see if there is some way we can come to some agreement about how we're going to move forward, because we have a whole summer ahead of us. I'm certainly willing to come here. That's one thing we should consider, I think.

But I want to understand from the government side why we can't have these opportunities. I want to have that conversation. I'd love to be in a position where, at the next committee meeting next week, we don't have government members not offering unanimous consent to extend these deadlines.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Any further discussion?

Can we try to arrange a subcommittee meeting? Okay.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you. And may I ask, is it possible, if somebody from the subcommittee can't attend—can they not send a sub, or no?

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay, great. So there are a lot of government members who should be able to attend, then. That's excellent; thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will attempt to arrange another subcommittee meeting.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1001.

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. Roman Baber (York Centre / York-Centre PC)
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto (Mississauga–Lakeshore PC)
Mrs. Amy Fee (Kitchener South–Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud–Hespeler PC)
Mr. Vincent Ke (Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord PC)
Ms. Andrea Khanjin (Barrie–Innisfil PC)
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans L)
Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)
Mr. Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent–Leamington PC)
Mr. Jeremy Roberts (Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean PC)
Ms. Marit Stiles (Davenport ND)
Mr. John Vanthof (Timiskaming–Cochrane ND)

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Research Services