

Legislative
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législative
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

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**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Subcommittee reports

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Rapports du sous-comité

Nominations prévues

2nd Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 19 October 2021

2^e session
42^e législature

Mardi 19 octobre 2021

Chair: Gilles Bisson
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : Gilles Bisson
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 19 October 2021

Mardi 19 octobre 2021

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2 and by video conference.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): The meeting is called to order.

We were just going through a bit of the pre-meeting. Before we start, there are a couple of other things I've got to go through.

Voting, as we know, is by a show of hands. I'll start by asking, "Are members ready to vote?" I will then say, "All those in favour, please raise your hand." The Clerk will do the counting. I will then say, "Those opposed." She will do the counting. I will then declare the vote. Unless somebody specifically asks for a recorded vote after I've asked whether the members are ready to vote, the breakdown of the vote will not show up in Hansard.

There's nobody here by phone, so I'm not going to go through that. There's nobody new who has come in, Clerk, from what I can see. So we are ready to begin.

Good morning. We've called this meeting to order. We're meeting to conduct reviews of the intended appointments.

We have the following members in the room: Mr. Gates from the NDP, and myself as Chair, Gilles Bisson. Attending is Aris Babikian, our Vice-Chair; Will Bouma; Lorne Coe; Robin Martin; Norm Miller; Billy Pang; and Marit Stiles.

We have our staff from legislative broadcast, who's up there—we were having a wonderful chat earlier about his life—as well as our researcher.

Maybe you can introduce yourself, Lauren.

Ms. Lauren Warner: I'm Lauren from legislative research. I'm happy to be back in the committee room today; I've been the black box on Zoom for the past year and a half.

Interruption.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): I'm going to turn off my telephone, which I thought I did before I got here. Anyway, I'll struggle with that after.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): The first item of business: We've got a bunch of subcommittee reports that we've got to go through, as you know. We've got 10 of them. First, we have the subcommittee report dated June 10, 2021. We've all seen the report. Can I please have a motion for somebody to move it?

I see that Marit Stiles has a question. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: There was a conversation briefly in advance of the meeting beginning, and I would just like to make sure that this is on the record: This meeting of the standing committee is not taking place in public view by any measure. There is no broadcast. There is no way for anybody from the public to view this as it's happening. We all know that there will be Hansard available, but it often takes several days. So it's very unfortunate. I know we've talked about this previously.

Mr. Chair, I don't know if it would be in order for me to move a motion, but I know you did mention that we could move a motion to have this meeting broadcast online right now.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): You're allowed to do so.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would like to move a motion to broadcast this meeting online immediately.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Does anybody want to second that motion?

Mr. Gates, we have a motion on the floor in order to broadcast this particular meeting.

Any debate? Any discussion in regard to broadcasting this meeting so that the—go ahead, Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: If I may motivate my motion a little—I would just encourage the government members to support this motion. This committee is so important in that it is really the only opportunity that the public and the media have to actually meet some of these appointees the government is appointing to various boards and commissions and to listen to the questions that take place. I think we can all agree that it's very important from a public accountability and transparency perspective that this committee, of all committees, is actually able to be viewed. Because we're in the middle of a pandemic, for various reasons it means that nobody can just come into the building and sit there and watch it, as they might have previously. Beyond that, we are actually having some issues around the broadcast. I feel like this is a very important committee meeting to be broadcast so the public should be able to view it. I know I've had some emails and interest in today's appointees and people asking me, "How can I watch? How do I follow along?" I think it's very important. So I just wanted to encourage the government members to vote for accountability and transparency.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Does anybody else want to weigh in on the debate for the motion? Mr. Gates, please.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to say that, as Marit has stated on this issue, this isn't the first time this has been raised. Quite frankly, this has gone on for months. We haven't sat since June, so we've had five months. We can put billionaires up in space, but we can't do this meeting so there's accountability and transparency. Quite frankly, I would think that the PC Party would want to have some accountability and transparency in these meetings. I think they'd like to make sure that their constituents are seeing who is being appointed, what qualifications they have.

I really am surprised, I'll be honest, because we raised this—I think MPP Stiles raised this, it might have been in May, maybe even a little before May. We had discussion after discussion after discussion, as we sat in this committee room. And here we are, we've been gone for five months, and we're hearing again today that nothing has been set up. I don't know—I'm not blaming anybody—how the process works as far as Queen's Park, but I'm surprised that we've had five months to put this together, and here we are having to put a motion forward to start a process.

I'm in full support of my colleague. I'd be shocked, quite frankly, if the PC Party doesn't want to have accountability and be proud of their appointments. Quite frankly, they should be proud of it. They're the government. They're the ones who are putting them forward. I would think that everybody would support this motion. I think it's a very, very good motion, a very timely motion, for the fact that we've had five months to put it together and we decided not to.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else want to weigh in? Seeing no one else, we'll call the question on the motion.

All those in favour of the motion, please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed, please raise your hand. The motion is defeated.

We are now moving on to the first subcommittee report, dated June 10. As I said, we've all seen the report in advance. Could I please have a motion to move the subcommittee report from June 10, 2021?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, June 10, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated June 4, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Is there any further discussion on that particular motion? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to explain to anybody who would—of course, not watching, because the government won't let anybody watch this meeting. But for the purposes of the record, I think it's really important as well to note that what we're doing right now is we are basically green-lighting. We're just going through a process of confirming appointments which have already gone through. Because the government refused again to meet in subcommittee to even discuss the idea of actually holding meetings when the Legislature is not in session, which, frankly, I think if there's ever been a message that came out of this pandemic, it's that people want—I know we were all working in our constituencies, but people want

this kind of important work to continue. Again, it's really the only opportunity that the opposition, the public and the government members have to actually question and learn about candidates and people who are being appointed to very important roles. I want to know—

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): One moment, Ms. Stiles.

I see you, Mrs. Martin, but at this point she has the floor. When she's done, I'll pass it over to you.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Is it a point of order? I can't hear.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Oh, you have a point of order. Your audio was off. Go ahead.

Mrs. Robin Martin: The audio was off, so I couldn't hear anything.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Sorry about that.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I thought we were discussing the subcommittee report, Chair. We have already had that other debate, and we are now discussing the subcommittee report and voting on it. What are we doing now? What is MPP Stiles doing? Because we're talking about subcommittee reports and voting on them. We've already had the debate, and we've voted on it. That part was over, so I don't—

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): We actually haven't voted on the subcommittee report at this point. We're—

Mrs. Robin Martin: No, no, that's what we're supposed to be talking about. That's not what she is talking about. She's talking about what we already voted on.

0910

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): No, she's talking about the subcommittee report, and she's allowed.

Mrs. Stiles, you have the floor.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you. I want to point out for the record that in the subcommittee report, the following two intended appointees—who are now appointed—who we received on the certificate of June 4 were selected for review by the official opposition. They were Tony Francis, who was to be appointed to the Social Benefits Tribunal, and Dan Weber, who was being appointed to the University of Waterloo board of governors. The government party didn't have anybody they wanted to hear from. I guess it was just, "Go through. Just green-light that one right away." Anyway, I just wanted to note that, because that means those people were appointed without any process in play—no questioning, no opportunity for them to share the reasons why they thought they would be good candidates for those roles, and no opportunity for the official opposition to ask important questions of them. I wanted to put that on the record.

I will definitely be opposing this motion to approve the certificate, to receive the report.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): As the Clerk was reminding us, we're voting on the subcommittee report. You're perfectly in order to raise the points that you were, but we're not voting on the certificate.

Is there any other debate on this particular motion for the subcommittee report of June 10, 2021? Anybody else? Nobody else? Okay.

All those in favour of the subcommittee report dated June 10, 2021, please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed? Carried.

Now, we're moving to the next subcommittee report, of June 17, 2021. We're going to have somebody read that. Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, June 17, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated June 11, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): That's so moved. Any debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Reading the subcommittee report of June 17, 2021, I noted that there were two intended appointees from the certificate that was received on June 11. These were the two the official opposition selected for review: Eric Weniger, who is being appointed to the Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology board of governors, and Dominique O'Rourke, who is being appointed to the Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority.

Mr. Chair, I wonder if I could ask staff if they would clarify for us here: Did any of those folks appear before the committee? Have they now been, for all intents and purposes, appointed? Could they explain a little bit, again for the record, about what this point in the process involves and where Mr. Weniger and Ms. O'Rourke are in this process now?

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Well, I'm going to let the Clerk clarify, but they did not appear before the committee. And under the standing orders, if the committee doesn't sit and a certain amount of time elapses, the certificate is deemed to have been passed. But maybe the Clerk can give us more detail.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): The Chair gave a pretty good overview. As indicated, if the committee does not meet to review an intended appointee within 30 days of the tabling of the certificate, it's in the standing orders that the certificate then expires and the Public Appointments Secretariat can move forward with the appointment process.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Once again, what I want to be very clear on—again, for the record—is that these two people have been already appointed. This basically is simply just that we're accepting this report, if we vote in favour of it—that acknowledges that the official opposition called these people and that the government party called no people. But at the end of the day, these appointees have already gone through without any kind of public vetting, any opportunity for questions, no public accountability or transparency.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Does anybody else have anything they want to raise in regard to the subcommittee report of June 17? Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to talk about my colleague Ms. Stiles's comments.

Does it not bother the opposition that people are being appointed with absolutely no opportunity to question them and no opportunity to see why they wanted to be appointed to these particular positions? The public would like to know. I think everybody would like to know.

I wish one of my colleagues from the opposition would at least explain why they have no problem with having no accountability, and not having even the opportunity to question the people we're asking to come, as official opposition. You sit there week after week and you really don't say anything. When you get into the House, you guys talk all the time. This has got to be important to you.

Chair, I sat on this committee for four years. I did a couple of other things and I'm back on the committee, and, quite frankly, I've had this conversation with my colleague: I feel like it's just a waste of time and that it shouldn't be like that. I want to be productive when I come here. I want to have the opportunity to question. Whether I agree or disagree with who's being appointed, I should at least have the opportunity to question them, to find out a little more about them, to find out why they have an interest in being in the college or being in health and safety or whatever the appointment is. But it's not happening. All they do is read this out. Anybody can read this out. I could bring my grandson who's 16 years old; he can read this out. There's no debate. There's no discussion.

And then I look at my colleagues—I'm not saying anything bad about you guys, but I'm just saying, don't you guys care? Don't you care to have any questions? I'm asking you guys. You can respond to me. You're saying that these guys are good for the province of Ontario. You want them appointed. You should be proud of that, but you're not. You're sitting there saying nothing.

All we're saying is that we should have the opportunity and the public should have the opportunity to be able to ask questions, to be able to see why these people want these jobs. Hopefully, they don't want them just because they're getting paid—because a lot of them are paid; some are paid really well.

It just makes no sense to me.

So I'm in full support of my colleague. I think she's right on the money. I look at it maybe differently. My time is extremely valuable. I'm extremely busy. When I get on a committee, I want to feel like I'm being productive. I'm not saying that I'm being good at it, but at least I want to feel like I am contributing to society, I'm contributing to the position I was elected to.

When I come to this committee—and I said this to my colleague this week, the same thing—it's disappointing for me. When I saw how it ran for four years, and I thought how well it was run, quite frankly—I give lots of credit to the staff. But this, just reading this out, with no accountability, no public input and nobody being able to watch—I think it's a joke.

So I'm in full support of my colleague in her comments and support her in asking: What are we doing?

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Any further debate? Seeing no further debate, then I'll ask the question.

All those in favour of the subcommittee report dated June 17, 2021, please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed? Carried.

Next we have the subcommittee report dated June 30, 2021. That will be moved, I believe, by Mr. Gates again.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm getting my practice in with reading.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Yes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Wednesday, June 30, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated June 25, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): So moved. Is there any debate on that motion? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: There really wasn't anybody pulled for this one for some reason, but I just want to note again that, once again, we have a whole process in place, whereas Mr. Gates was pointing out that we select people, and they never get a chance to appear because the committee isn't meeting or we don't meet enough. Most of the time, we don't get half the people we request anyway, even when the House is sitting, even when the committee is meeting. And we continue to have this problem that nobody can watch these proceedings. So I just want to put that on the record again.

As Mr. Gates said, this is such an important process. It's why I wanted to sit on this committee. I think it's why most of us want to sit on this committee. These are really important people being appointed to important agencies, boards, commissions, and we have no way of actually hearing from them. So I just wanted to comment.

0920

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else want to comment? Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to again say that my colleague is right on the money again. I'm supporting her on this.

And I just want to say that I take pride in whatever I do—not to say I do it well, but I certainly take pride in it. There is no pride reading this out today, knowing that we didn't have a chance to do our job—any of us, all of us. None of us had a chance to do what we got on this committee to do. Quite frankly, I think that's a little disgraceful. I think we're letting down the province. I think we're letting down the public. We're letting down people. There are a lot of people who are really interested in this committee. They used to watch it for that reason. They were interested. I took great pride in being on the committee. Like I said, I was on the committee for four years. I got off it to do other committee work, but now I'm back on. I don't have that same pride because I don't feel that our time is being well spent and I don't feel like I'm contributing to this committee by just reading this out. Anybody can do this.

Again, I'm asking my colleagues: Say something. Tell me I'm wrong. Tell me you disagree with me. Tell me we can do this and you have no problem with it. But just to sit there and put your hand up after I read this out and my colleague Marit says something—I tell you that I'm not

feeling good about this, and you guys don't say anything. I'm really surprised at that, quite frankly, with my colleagues who are on this call, because I would think you have the same pride as I do at doing your job.

Thank you. I appreciate the time to say a few words.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else want to weigh in? Mrs. Martin.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I've listened to my colleagues, and frankly, I would just like to point out that the committee doesn't meet through the summer. During that time, members work in their ridings, and we wait to review the appointments selected for today.

The NDP has spent the entire time today filibustering. They say they want to talk to the people who are being put up for appointment, and we've wasted half of this committee listening to them pontificating about I don't know what.

I would like to hear from the witnesses, the people who are here today to be appointed, because that's our job. We'd all like to do that job, and I really have enough opportunities to listen to the pontification from the opposition.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): I'll just remind committee members, we're dealing with the subcommittee report of June 30, 2021. Any member of the committee could raise issues related to that particular subcommittee report, and that's all that's happening here.

Anybody else? Are we done? All right. All those in favour of the subcommittee report dated June 30, 2021, please indicate by raising your hand. All those opposed? Carried.

We now have the subcommittee report dated July 15, 2021. Mr. Gates is going to read that one, as well.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, July 15, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated July 9, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Very well done—read into the record like a pro.

Does anybody else want to raise an issue in regard to the subcommittee report dated July 15? Nobody? All right. All those in favour, please signify by putting up your hand. Those opposed, please signify by raising your hand. Carried. Pretend that I slapped my gavel on the—I didn't want to scare anybody.

Now we're moving on to the subcommittee report of July 22, 2021. Mr. Gates, again, will be reading that particular subcommittee report.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, July 22, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated July 16, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Ms. Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm going to raise issues again.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): You're allowed to.

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

I'm a little insulted by the member from the PC Party who referred to us as pontificating. I could just sit here and

talk about whatever, I guess, but I'm actually talking about the report of this subcommittee.

I want to make a note here for the record that the report of the subcommittee, which we are now debating, which is what we're supposed to do in this committee—there were a number of people selected for review by the official opposition we will not hear from. Why? Because the committee does not meet during the summer. Although the member from Eglinton–Lawrence said, as if it was just a matter of fact and a simple issue, that we don't meet during the summer or when there's a break—I would say that some committees do meet, committees are able to meet, we could have met. We have raised this repeatedly.

I don't know why nobody in the government party wants to give up one hour of their time a week so that we could actually review and meet some of the people, the many hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people they are appointing, including many failed Conservative candidates.

I want to read into the record who we had called from the certificate that was received on July 16, and that includes Bryan Delorenzi, to the Landlord and Tenant Board, a very important board right now; Anita Lovrich, also an appointee to the Landlord and Tenant Board; Inderdeep Padda, also an appointee to the Landlord and Tenant Board; Murna Dalton, an appointee to the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission; Christopher Voutsinas, to the Assessment Review Board; and Zoe Agnidis, to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal—very important bodies, very important roles. Nobody from the public, nobody from the official opposition—nobody will get a chance to hear from those people. They have been appointed, and this committee did not do its job and hear from those members.

I think it's appalling that the government members continue to refuse to allow these meetings to be broadcast or to continue to allow us to extend the opportunities that we have to actually meet and consider these appointees.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else on the July 22 report? Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd just like to comment to my colleague again, MPP Stiles. The Conservatives have said that we're not allowed to meet in the summer, and I'm not sure that's completely correct. So I'm asking, through the Chair or through the Clerk, maybe you can explain exactly what we can or we can't do on these committees when it comes to—we usually shut down in, I believe, the first week in June, maybe the second week in June, and we usually come back after Labour Day. That didn't happen this year. We didn't come back until October. We actually didn't come back for an extra month—so it's not really the summer, because really, we didn't come back till the fall. I just want to know, so when people are reading Hansard, they'd understand—because there was a statement made by the PCs that we can't meet. I just want to know, can we meet or can't we meet during the summer months, so that it's clarified for everybody.

It was raised by my colleague that one of the appointments was from the Niagara bridge commission. I would

have loved to have the opportunity to talk to somebody from Niagara. Obviously, the Niagara bridge commission is a very important appointment in Niagara—it's where it got its name, Niagara bridge commission.

Anyway, I would like that clarified, if you don't mind.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Under standing order 111.13—and I'll just read it so that members are clear: “During any adjournment of the House that exceeds one week”—that would have been like the summer—“the committee shall meet on such day or days as may be determined by the subcommittee, but in any event not more than three times per month.” As far as I know, that didn't happen, unfortunately. So that's why we didn't meet.

Interruption.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Jeez, I'm—is that your phone or my phone?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): That one was mine. I apologize for that.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Oh, it's your phone. All this time, I was feeling guilty. All right.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): Sorry; just as an additional clarification: That applies to adjournments and not to prorogation.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Yes. We weren't prorogued during the summer; we were prorogued only after.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): Yes. That is correct.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Okay. Any other discussion? Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: So we're clear: If anybody is going to listen to Hansard—or I guess you can't listen to Hansard; you read Hansard. That's an early-morning slip. We could have met and did our job over the course of the summer. That's clear. Correct? I'm correct in that?

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): You're allowed to approach a subcommittee and have the—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): —make that decision. Yes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that. Thank you. It was raised by my colleague. I just want to make sure that we all understand that.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): I've got Mrs. Martin and I've got Madam Stiles.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I really want to get to the witnesses that we have ready and waiting for us to review today, so I'm just hoping that we can get on with the work of the committee and end this filibuster.

0930

I would just point out that MPP Stiles went through a long list of appointees for the report of July 15, if I heard her correctly, which was the one we had passed before she started speaking.

So I think we've had enough of the delay and we should get on with the witnesses who are here, because that really is the work of this committee.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Thank you very much, Mrs. Martin, but as you know, any member is able to raise

debate during the movement of a motion, by the standing orders of this committee and the House, so as Chair I have to accept that they have something to say.

I've got Ms. Stiles and then Mr. Babikian.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would just clarify for the member from Eglinton–Lawrence: She may want to pull up the reports as we're discussing them, because I was actually reading from the report of the subcommittee of Thursday, July 22, 2021, which is the one we are in fact discussing. It's from the certificate that was received on July 16.

Anyway, I also wanted to note for Hansard, for the record, that we have made multiple requests for the government members to meet in the subcommittee—and we haven't had any. They have refused to meet, so there is literally no business being done, no attempt to do business, not even any conversation that's allowed to take place. That's very unfortunate.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Mr. Babikian.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Just a point of clarification: How many subcommittee reports do we have to go through for the rest of the day?

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): We have 10 to go through, and we are now on the fifth.

Mr. Aris Babikian: So we have five more subcommittee reports? Well, it looks like if we are continuing on this debate on each subcommittee report, we will end our meeting without listening to the first witness, who is waiting online. So I was wondering if we should consider requesting that the witness come back next week, because this is going to go on and we will not have an opportunity to question the witness. It is a waste of time for the witness to stay for an hour or an hour and 15 minutes and not participate in what he came to do.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Mr. Babikian, thank you for that. I would ask the witness to please stay, because this committee goes on for another 45 minutes. How members decide to interject in debate on motions is up to them. The standing orders do allow that, and as Chair I need to recognize them. So it's up to the committee to decide—each individual member—how long they want to debate. The witness will stay here until a quarter after.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I'm not questioning the right of any member of the committee to discuss and raise issues of concern. I'm just speaking about the issue of practicality and sensibility towards our witness. That's what I wanted to raise.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Fair enough, and that's the way that I took it. But also, as Chair—and as you know as Vice-Chair; you've chaired this committee many times—we need to be clear to members what they're able to do and not able to do, and that's what I was doing. I'm not imputing motive on anything that you've done, or any other committee member.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you so much.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else on the subcommittee report dated July 22? Mr. Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: Chair, I was just wondering if you might know how many times there was a request for the committee to meet over the summer months.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): There was not, as far as I know. I'll double-check with the Clerk.

There was no request for the subcommittee.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): That's correct? Okay. Ms. Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: If I may, Mr. Chair: There is a standing request. I have asked repeatedly over the last nearly three years, and as recently as earlier this year. It has been a standing request—"Let's have a meeting of the subcommittee"—and we've never been given an opportunity. Actually, I think we had one meeting at the very beginning, after the election in 2018, and then we haven't had any since, because the government members refused to meet.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Any other debate on this?

All those in favour of the subcommittee report dated July 22, please signify. All those opposed? Carried.

Our next one is the subcommittee report dated August 5, 2021. Mr. Gates, I see you there with your paper in hand.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, August 5, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated July 30, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I just want to read out the names of the intended appointees in this report of the subcommittee dated Thursday, August 5. It includes a list of the intended appointees from the certificate that was received on July 30, 2021, that the official opposition had selected. The government made no selections, again. The official opposition party selected William Dahms, to the Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning board of governors; Martha George, to the same board of governors; Rob Gilmour, to the George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology board of governors; Geoffrey Owen, to the Ontario Energy Board; Angelica Palantzas, to the council of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario; Sandra Larmour, to the council of the College of Nurses of Ontario; and Percy Laryea, to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Again, there are many, many appointments being made to the Landlord and Tenant Board. We know, of course, we've had some very serious issues; we're talking about, often, people potentially losing their homes.

This government is appointing a lot of people, and the opposition—in this case, the official opposition—selects a number of these people for good reason. We want to hear from them.

Anyway, I want it on the record again that those folks have just been green-lit without any appearance before the committee because the government refuses to meet.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Any other debate on the motion? Seeing no debate, I call the question. All those in favour, please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed? Carried.

Now we're moving on to the subcommittee report dated August 19, 2021. Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, August 19, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated August 13, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Is there any debate on that particular subcommittee report? Seeing none, I call the question. All those in favour, please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed, please signify by raising your hand. Carried.

Now we're moving on to the September 9 subcommittee report. Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, September 9, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated September 3, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Any debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We're reviewing, as you noted, the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, September 9. I remember this one well because we were looking at the certificate that we received on September 3, and the official opposition had a number of requests for appointees to appear before the committee. As we've noted for many reasons already in this meeting, which I won't repeat—government members will be happy to hear that—we are not going to ever hear from them. They've just been appointed with no accountability or transparency. I want to read their names, because there are a few people here—it will really mean something to people when they hear them: Chantal Desloges, to the Consent and Capacity Board; Philip Squire, to the Consent and Capacity Board; Amber Kouvalis, to the Ontario Trillium Foundation—and I want to note that there is a connection, as we understand it, to Nick Kouvalis, who, as we all know, is very important to the Premier and the PC Party, so that's quite an interesting political appointment that deserved to have some transparency and accountability, some light shed on it, perhaps—Colin McSweeney, to the Ontario Trillium Foundation; Hedy (Anna) Walsh, to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal; Ninder Thind, to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

None of those people will be heard from. They will all just simply be green-lit and appointed to those important bodies, and I think that's of concern to the people of this province.

0940

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else? Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I fully support my colleague MPP Stiles on her comments.

Also, something that we've been seeing, well, since I got back on this committee, quite frankly, is the connections to the PC Party on appointments. That's why it's important—whether the PCs like to hear this or not—to be able to question those individuals on why they're being appointed, what experience they have and all the things that go along with our opportunity to question. It

doesn't happen, and this is why politicians and politics—people get upset with us because of these types of situations. Again, it has got to be open, it has got to be transparent—and all that goes away, my friends. My colleagues just put their hands up and put their hands up and put their hands up. It's kind of disappointing.

Anyway, thank you. I appreciate it—and good job, to my colleague.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Anybody else on debate for the motion of September 9? Seeing none, all those in favour of the September 9 motion from the subcommittee report? All those opposed? Carried.

We're now moving on to the subcommittee report dated October 7. Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, October 7, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated October 1, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Any debate on the subcommittee report dated October 7? Seeing none, all those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed? Carried.

We now move on to the last subcommittee report, dated October 14, 2021. Mr. Gates, if you can take us there.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, October 14, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated October 8, 2021.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Any debate on that particular motion? Seeing no debate, all those in favour, please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed?

Interruption.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): I decided I'd do that at least once in this committee. Okay, so we've dealt with our—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Carried, yes. Anyway, I was just about to say we've carried all—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Yes. So we did the 10. They've all carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. QUINTUS THURASINGHAM

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

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Now we're moving on to our first appointment, and it's the nomination as member of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario: Quintus Thuraingham—I probably got it wrong, and I want to apologize wholeheartedly ahead of time.

As you may be aware, you have the opportunity, sir, should you choose to, to make an initial statement. Afterward, there will be time for some questions from the committee. For the questions, we'll start with the official opposition and then the government. Any time that you

take telling us who you are and why you wanted to run for this will be taken from the government side. Any time—it was written over there, and I was just way ahead of myself, Clerk.

You have the time to explain who you are and why you did this; that time will be taken from the government. You'll be timed from now.

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Respected Chair and distinguished members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, as a refugee from Sri Lanka, I have been very appreciative of the opportunities Canada and Ontario have offered to me and my family over the last quarter century. For the bulk of the time I have been in Canada, my 20-year experience with Thomson Reuters, mostly as senior product support, a largely IT-related position, enabled me to develop considerable skills in people, systems and situation management on behalf of this large, international legal publishing firm. Working for and with lawyers, law librarians, law students and even judges, our team offered the first line of support for customers on all points of recorded law.

As an IT professional with MCSE and MCSA certifications, I was proud to lead our teams with the first line of support through the myriad of software and online tools to help settle complex tax, wrongful dismissal and a wide variety of practical law cases. Learned critical decision-making, dispute resolution, research expertise and people management skills all enabled me to reach many, many successful research project conclusions. My division moved to the United States, but I wanted to remain in Canada.

I moved to nTel Connect after more than 20 great years with Thomson Reuters. This is my current position, dealing with new business relationships, new contracts, project assessment and performance reviews—basically, a people job.

Private community involvements have been important to me, too. SACEM, the Society for the Aid of Community Empowerment, a volunteer-based, non-profit organization, runs seminars for seniors and youth on mental health, stress and depression issues. I'm the current president of this organization.

Harmony Hall Centre for Seniors was a volunteer position for me—assisting with personal transportation, promoting personal activity, multicultural events, and running computer and cultural seminars for seniors.

The centre for performing arts in Scarborough: I was honorary secretary for a time, working with the community through culture and arts, and chief coordinator of major stage programs.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation—for CAMH, actually: I coordinated the annual walkathon as co-chair, raised funds and coordinated main annual fundraising events as well.

I have some recognitions as well. In 2019, I received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 25 years of service. That was from the Society for the Aid of Community Empowerment. In 2017, I received an Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 20 years—that is from the

Tamil centre for the performing arts. In June 2015, I received a community champion award from Thomson Reuters. And in 2014, I received a leadership award from Thomson Reuters.

I'm so proud to call this amazing province of Ontario home. Ontario is a province that celebrates multiculturalism and diversity. Human rights-related disputes are important issues that touch people's lives in fundamental ways. People who appear before the tribunals have a right to fair and accessible dispute resolution.

My past and present activities have provided some wonderful experiences that have helped me to appreciate and develop the skills to do many things well, including personal recruiting, training and management, customer contact and business development, working with the arts from a cultural point of view, professional IT and social media expertise, extensive legal research and involvement in many meaningful community health programs. These have been irreplaceable human experiences for me.

I think I can bring a lot to the table. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): With that, we will now go to questions from the official opposition. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: First of all, I'd like to thank you very much for appearing here today. As you probably picked up in our long process, we had a lot of reports to discuss this morning because we have been not meeting during the summer and then the Legislature prorogued. So we had a lot to go through. I think you may have picked up on the fact that we haven't seen a lot of the people we've requested to see, and so I really do appreciate the opportunity to meet you and to hear your report on why you think you're an appropriate candidate for this position.

As we noted earlier, you are being appointed as a part-time member, I believe, to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. That's a very important position. For the record, this is the tribunal that exercises jurisdiction under the Human Rights Code to resolve usually through mediation or hearing applications which allege a breach of that code—a very important body in this province.

Part-time members of the Human Rights Tribunal receive compensation in the amount of about \$472 per diem, almost \$500 per diem, which is also—I'm not really sure, and maybe that's something you could address eventually: how many days you think you'll be actually called upon every year.

I want to start with a couple of questions. You'll appreciate, sir, that as the official opposition, we've seen this government's track record in appointing, I will say, often, folks from the Conservative Party, members etc. So it's really important that we use this opportunity, frankly, to try to understand a little bit about why the government is appointing certain people. It's important, so I have a few questions related to that.

0950

Sir, are you currently a member of the Conservative Party of Canada or the PC Party of Ontario?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: I am a member of the federal Conservative Party, yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Can you confirm that you donated at least \$650 to the federal Conservative Party?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: I believe not. I might have donated \$200 or \$300, but I don't know that I have donated more than that.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, our search did indicate \$650 donated to the federal Conservatives in 2017. Does that surprise you?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: In 2017? It could have been, yes—I was thinking about very recently.

Ms. Marit Stiles: So you've given more in more recent years.

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Do you give regular donations, would you say, to the Conservative Party?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: No. Actually, at election time, different people approach us, and I haven't donated only to the Conservative Party members. I have donated to Gary Anandasangaree from the Liberal Party, Neethan Shan from the NDP, David Thomas—when he ran for the NDP, I donated money. It all depends on credible candidates. If I believe their values stand well for the community, I do donate. And I did donate to the Conservative Party, yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Could you confirm for me that you were a candidate for the federal Conservative Party in the 2019 general election?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Yes, I was.

Ms. Marit Stiles: So you were a candidate. I think I know the answer, but I will ask you: Were you successful in the election?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: No, I wasn't. I did not win.

Ms. Marit Stiles: And you ran in which ridings, sir?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: In Scarborough—Guildwood.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You mentioned you're not currently a member of the PC Party of Ontario. I just want to confirm that again.

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: I think I am still a member of the PC Party.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Of Canada or of Ontario?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Of Ontario as well.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. I wasn't clear on that from the earlier response. So you are a member of the PC Party of Ontario as well.

When I looked at your résumé—and I really appreciate you going through some of your experience. I was listening carefully. I definitely saw experience as a political analyst, I would say, and a Conservative candidate—I can see that in our conversation now—and in various positions: technical support, communications, as well as some of your community experience. I don't hear of any experience in arbitrating on human rights issues.

I was wondering if you could speak to your history in dealing specifically with the Human Rights Code of Ontario.

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Absolutely. As I said in the beginning, my experience in dispute resolution and

decision-making, as well as handling administrative tasks, I believe, will definitely help me in this process. Also, we need excellent listening skills and critical reasoning. They all contribute to this important and critical position with the Human Rights Tribunal.

More importantly, I have come from a country where human rights were callously violated. I was removed from the country—not only me; my family and many others have seen first-hand how human rights violations have happened. And this country was so generous to me. I'm so thankful to this country for all the opportunities this country has given to me, and I want to give back.

Actually, I have been working with many, many volunteer organizations, and the Ontario government has recognized me for 25 years of service—different governments, when they were in power. So I have been continuously volunteering, and I want to give back to the country.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, and I certainly appreciate the importance of lived—

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Just for committee members to know—there are eight minutes left in your time.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do appreciate and I want to acknowledge the importance of lived experience. I think that is a very important element as something that you can absolutely contribute to the Human Rights Tribunal.

Just to confirm: So you don't really have any experience per se—and I understand and I did appreciate your response—in dealing specifically with mediation or claims around the Human Rights Code of Ontario. What about mediating claims of discrimination or harassment? Could you speak to that, please?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Absolutely. I have been working with volunteer organizations, particularly SACEM, Society for the Aid of Community Empowerment. We have been dealing with families to mediate, find some solutions for them, or eventually to recommend what's the best solution for them. I have voluntarily worked with the Tamil Eelam Society, where counselling was the biggest part of the job. I have volunteered for them and I have talked to families. I have worked with other counsellors in mediating. And I have been doing a course now in addiction and mental health for families and children, which is completely—the purpose of counselling for the families.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm going to pass along the rest of the time to my colleague, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Mr. Gates, you have about six minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: This is why it's important for people to come and we have the opportunity, as opposition, to question.

Obviously, you have had ties with the Conservative Party. You ran for the Conservative Party. So I'll ask this question to start off, and I have a couple of others that I'd like to get out as well: Do you believe that your close connections to the Conservatives is the reason you have

received this appointment to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Mr. Gates, no, I did not receive any appointment from anybody, nor help from any party members. It is my research—I have gone through the struggling, finding this job, because I was doing my research, and I found this on the website. I have gone through the whole process of applications and interviews and [inaudible] process. At one point in time I thought I was dropped, but after a few months I received a call again. So I think I have gone through all the troubles in finding this job. Nobody appointed me. Nobody even asked me to apply.

Mr. Wayne Gates: So is that a no?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: It's a no.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks. I appreciate that.

I have reviewed your previous work and education experience. Can you discuss how you think that the experience will translate into your role with the Human Rights Tribunal?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Thomson Reuters—actually, we were the first line of research support on the legal tools. So I have experience with WestlawNext Canada, Practical Law, ProView, Case Notebook, Canada Law Book—any legal tool. I have been doing extensive research on each and every tool that was available. CanLII or Quicklaw—you can name any of them, all different, including human rights cases. We have been going through and finding the citations, annotations—so anything lawyers, law librarians, law students wanted. I have been doing that for more than 20 years. So I think that will definitely help me in my process, in helping out on mediation, or even to recommend whatever solution they need.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much for that response.

I'm sure you're aware that there has been an ongoing report of delays at the tribunal due to the COVID-19 pandemic and previous staffing shortages. Also, the government has made previous investments to reduce delays at the tribunal.

1000

What more could the government do to ensure hearings are done in a timely manner? Basically, the question talks about how long people have to wait to get to the tribunal, the delays. What do you think we could do to speed that up?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Thank you for that question.

In my opinion, the pandemic is a huge struggle for everybody, but that has also given some innovative solutions for us. One of them is these Zoom meetings and online support that we could offer. Being an IT person myself and helping my church with the Eventbrite Zoom meetings, arranging meetings and everything, I would be happy to mediate online—all of these opportunities to talk to them online and offer the mediation, other solutions—and fast-track all of the pending ones or the backlog cases.

Mr. Wayne Gates: What future issues do you see the tribunal encountering?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: I don't see any issues. HRTO is doing a wonderful job. They always fast-track the cases, and it is a very fair, very honest and accessible dispute resolution that is given by HRTO. All I see and have experienced too—HRTO immediately gives them the options or the decision, which is very good, which is crucial for them, because a lot of people don't know where to go and don't have the money to approach hiring lawyers. So this is a first-line opportunity for them to hear a fair decision or fair judgment from the HRTO, and then they can decide whether they want to further proceed or they have to mediate.

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question to you—

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): One minute left, Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've only got a minute left.

You mentioned the fact that you had experience in mediation. Obviously, mediation is certainly a way of trying to get resolved. We should do that with the eye doctors, quite frankly. How often have you done mediation, and what were the cases that you mediated?

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Generally, I have been helping out with the counsellors wherever they received families and family dispute couples. I have sat there and helped them out. Sometimes I had to take it on and I had to mediate for them. So I have experience with mediation as well.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've only got a couple of seconds left—

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Twenty seconds.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Twenty seconds.

Thanks for coming today. I appreciate it. And I wish you luck, because I know you'll get appointed.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): With that, now we're going to go to the government side. I think you used about four minutes of your original, so Mr. Bouma, please, 11 minutes left.

Mr. Will Bouma: Mr. Chair, through you: Mr. Thuraisingham, it's such a pleasure to have you here today. Listening to your story about coming to Canada just makes me so proud to be a Canadian. I've heard it said that if you want to get something done, you have to ask a busy person. I'm struck so often by—I think that's why I love this committee so much, because we so often see people who are so stellarly qualified for the positions that they're applying for. It seems that with your background and experience, this is a custom-made fit for you.

I was wondering, with everything else that you have going on—I sense that it was very personal, but I was wondering if you could fill out a little bit more why you applied for this position.

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Definitely. As a volunteer person in the community and coming from where I come from, human rights were huge for me. They have been very, very highly violated in my country where I came from. We lost family members. We lost so many people. I lost my university opportunity by just one

mark—one mark—because they have this standardization. The majority can get the university appointment when they're getting 70, whereas the minority people like us from the minority community cannot get the university appointment or opportunity even if you get 85 or 90. I lost my opportunity by just one mark.

However, when I came to Canada—Canada has given me so much opportunity, so much to help the people, but also to improve my education, my job opportunities. I came up the ladder, like many others, through two or three jobs to start with, but then came up the ladder to Thomson Reuters, and here I am. So I'm very happy to be part of this, and I will definitely contribute my 100% for the betterment of the community.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you very much for that answer.

Were there any other positions that you applied to?

Mr. Quintus Thuraingham: Not at the moment, but I'll be looking into that. At the moment, it's the Human Rights Tribunal.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'll turn it over to MPP Miller, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you, Mr. Thuraingham, for coming before the committee today. Sorry for the delay in getting you on.

You've talked a bit about this already, but can you talk about how your previous work experience will assist you in being a fair and impartial adjudicator of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario?

Mr. Quintus Thuraingham: Absolutely, yes. In my work at Thomson Reuters, my primary job was to do a lot of research, just to offer the first line of support for all the legal community, I would say—law students, primarily, because from the universities, from law schools, they would contact day in and day out, and we would be fielding all their questions and helping them out with legal tools that were given to the university students, the law students.

Also, law librarians and judges called us every day, and we were very friendly with them, helping them out. Sometimes they wanted the answers yesterday, and we were the first line. That kind of research in legal tools is definitely going to help us in this process.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you for volunteering for this position.

I'll pass it on to MPP Babikian.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you very much, Mr. Thuraingham, for being here today with us.

Actually, we have so many common issues. Our compassion and our defence of human rights is one common issue. The other common issue is that both of us came to Canada as refugees, and Canada provided us the opportunity to excel and be where we are today, serving the Canadian people.

Of course, the human rights experiences that you and I and some others faced in other places—these are very important elements to make us succeed.

My question is related to the Human Rights Tribunal. Because of the heavy caseloads that the tribunal has—how

would your experience help you manage the heavy caseloads in the tribunal?

Mr. Quintus Thuraingham: As I said, with my experience with Thomson Reuters, as well as with SACEM and other volunteer organizations, most of my time—it was a people job. That's what I was doing—always talking to people, always dealing with people's issues, families' issues. I have heard from many, many immigrant families how their human rights were violated, and most of the time I've felt so sorry that they didn't have the support they wanted from where they came from.

Luckily, Canada is offering this first line of HRTO support that they dearly need. They really, really need this. It is in the process not only on the legal side, but also in the mental healing process. They definitely need this kind of support, and HRTO is giving it free of charge, which is amazing.

I'm so thankful for this country, for this wonderful province, and I want to be part of this.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Four minutes left. Mr. Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: [*Inaudible*] appearing before the [*inaudible*].

You'll know that parties appearing before the Human Rights Tribunal often don't have legal representation, and this can raise some challenges. How will you work with them to ensure that they have a fair hearing?

Mr. Quintus Thuraingham: I think I missed part of your question, sir.

1010

Interruption.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Are we being called for a vote? I can't see.

Any other questions from the government side? Mrs. Martin.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I believe Mr. Coe didn't get his question answered, because the witness said he hadn't heard him. Perhaps he could repeat it.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Oh, I'm sorry. I was dealing with the Clerk on something.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I know you were distracted, Chair. I will go after MPP Coe. Oh, well, he's gone. Should I go next then? I don't know where he went.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Yes, please do.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Okay.

Thank you very much for being here and putting yourself forward for this important position. I really do appreciate you doing that.

I noticed that you talked a little bit in your comments about your volunteer and community work. I was wondering if you could share a little bit of what you learned from it and how you think that might inform your work on the HRTO.

Mr. Quintus Thuraingham: Absolutely. As a volunteer with major organizations—a lot of the immigrant community or newcomers to Canada approach these organizations for help. The help they need is mostly, of course, on the immigration side, but on the other side, it is the mental healing that they really need. As I said earlier, that process is important for them so that they can build

their lives and they can leave all the struggles that they have been going through behind and move forward to have a better family life and a better future in this country, and to help build this country—everyone together.

I was in the volunteer organization meeting all these people, and in any type of help they needed, primarily in human rights issues, I did advocate for their mental healing process. I also made sure that their family disputes are handled properly and they are not falling in the wrong hands and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars and years and years of legal process that don't help them at all. So I would really advise them of what's best for them, and HRTO was one of them.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Mrs. Martin, there is about one minute and a half left.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I just wanted to go back to the question that MPP Coe was asking. Oh, there he is.

MPP Coe, do you want to redo your question, which the witness didn't hear?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Yes. Thank you very much, MPP Martin. Excuse me; I just had to leave for a moment because the bells were ringing.

Thank you, sir, for being with us.

Parties appearing before the Human Rights Tribunal often don't have legal representation. This can create some challenges. How will you work with them to ensure that they have a fair hearing?

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): You have around 50 seconds.

Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham: Thank you for that question.

It is very important that the people who have human rights issues need to hear a fair and unbiased kind of opinion from somebody. That's where I can play a crucial role. I can do some research if necessary, and I can advise them of the unbiased, fair and neutral approach that they have to take.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): We have about 20 seconds. No other questions? Okay. So that brings us to the end of this particular appointee review.

Unfortunately, Regan Hayward, we're going to have to call you back because the committee finishes in a couple of minutes. The Clerk will be back in touch with you. We hope we are able to see you next week.

Now we are going to move to the concurrence in the appointment for Mr. Quintus Thuraisingham.

Any discussion?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Oh, sorry. I forgot the motion. Is somebody moving the motion for concurrence?

Mrs. Martin has moved concurrence.

Any debate? Mrs. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Chair, I just wanted to ask for a recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Okay, a recorded vote.

Anybody else? Debate? All those in favour, please signify by raising your hand one at a time. Mrs. Martin—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Okay, I'll let the Clerk do her job then; how about we do that? It is a recorded vote.

Ayes

Babikian, Bouma, Coe, Martin, Norman Miller, Pang.

Nays

Gates, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. Gilles Bisson): Concurrence is adopted.

We are now at the end of our meeting. Is there anything else, Clerk? That's it.

I want to thank all members of the committee.

I want to thank the people who applied for appointments for being here today.

We will see you all next week. Have a great day. We're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1015.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Chair / Président

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins ND)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr. Aris Babikian (Scarborough–Agincourt PC)

Mr. Aris Babikian (Scarborough–Agincourt PC)

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