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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 2 May 2001

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 2 mai 2001

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government agencies**

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**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

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Chair: James J. Bradley
Clerk: Donna Bryce

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 2 May 2001

Mercredi 2 mai 2001

The committee met at 0936 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr James J. Bradley): I will now begin the committee for Hansard purposes.

The first thing I have is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, April 26, 2001.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I move its adoption.

The Chair: Mr Wood moves its adoption. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

I have a second item that I would like to raise with you. Catherine Dannahower is unable to be with us this morning because she will be attending a funeral. I'm going to ask for unanimous consent to schedule her on May 16. That is granted? The committee has agreed to that. Thank you very much.

We'll begin our appointments review.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

BRAD BUTT

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Brad Butt, intended appointee as chair, Early Years Steering Committee, Peel Regional Health Unit.

The Chair: The first individual we will call forward is Brad Butt. He's an intended appointee as chair of the Early Years Steering Committee of the Peel Regional Health Unit.

Welcome to the committee, Mr Butt. As you probably know, you have an opportunity to make an initial statement should you wish to do so, and subsequent to that each of the three political parties is entitled to up to 10 minutes of questions.

Mr Brad Butt: Good morning, Mr Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me today to introduce myself to you and to talk about the new early years steering committees being established across the province by the children's secretariat and local health units.

My name is Brad Butt and I am a lifelong resident of Mississauga in the region of Peel. Presently I serve as the executive director of the Greater Toronto Apartment Association and have been actively involved in the property management sector for more than a decade. I have a reputation in Peel region for being an active

volunteer. I would like to share with you some of the organizations with which I have been proud to work.

I was the founding chair of the Mississauga Crime Prevention Association. I was the six-year chair of the Counter-Act Vandalism Prevention Committee, a three-year director of the Mississauga Arts Council, a three-year trustee on the Mississauga Public Library Board, and general chair of Applewood United Church, and I've been a 10-year producer and host of Conflicting Interests on Rogers community television in Peel. As well, I am presently serving as the co-chair of Mayor Hazel McCallion's citizens' task force on the future governance of Mississauga in relation to Mississauga's role in the greater Toronto area. It has been a pleasure to volunteer in these many capacities with a goal of improving our community.

A few months ago, I read the advertisement in the Toronto Star that the children's secretariat was looking for volunteers to serve on the early years steering committees. After calling staff, I applied to serve. I'm honoured to be considered for appointment not only to the committee, but also as the chair in the region of Peel.

Eighteen months ago, my life dramatically changed for the better. My wife, Rhonda, and I witnessed the birth of our first child, Sarah Margaret, and we have been adapting to life with a young child. Our daughter is very fortunate to have a strong, supportive family, and she will have access to many wonderful things through her childhood. Watching my daughter every day and seeing how even the little things interest and excite her is the real reason why I'm here today.

I want to see communities able to work with families and children to design programs and services that meet local needs and ensure that we are adequately investing in these children's future. I would like to be part of putting into action many of the great ideas of scholars and government as they affect the early years.

0940

I was very fortunate to have grown up in a supportive and encouraging family. My mother still teaches grades 1 and 2 in Mississauga and can attest to the importance of a good start in life.

Members of the committee, I would be pleased to answer any questions directly from you on this appointment and I thank you for your time this morning.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We'll begin with the official opposition.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Good morning, Mr Butt. I think that's a very important role, to be appointed to the chair of this committee within your community. Because this is a key role, you can appreciate that it would be important for you to have some background in terms of some of the documents and presentations there have been with regard to children's programs and services, both in Ontario and in other jurisdictions. Would you be able to outline for me any of those documents or reference materials you've read that would prepare you for this role?

Mr Butt: I have read the Early Years Study which Dr Mustard and Margaret McCain were involved in writing and reporting to the government. It's very interesting reading and I've learned a lot, there's no doubt about it. I think we've got a lot of various options and opportunities that local communities can look at to endeavour to improve our ability to encourage and foster our youngest children in the preschool years.

I was very pleased with how the package talks about choice and options for communities to look at while responding to some provincial policy statements. I think it's an excellent start and an excellent guide to get us on our way to looking at how in the region of Peel we could be looking at adopting some of these ideas that are Peel-specific.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with the Education Improvement Commission document, the Road Ahead V? That's the report on improving student achievement. Are you familiar with that document?

Mr Butt: I'm not familiar with that specific document.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That was the last document that was written by the Education Improvement Commission and there are recommendations in that document that make reference to programs with children.

Are you familiar with the Campaign 2000 document?

Mr Butt: I'm familiar with Campaign 2000 and what their goals have been. As a matter of fact, on the TV show that I host on Rogers television, I have had representatives from Campaign 2000 appear on that program on their issue of concern about elimination of child poverty. So I am familiar with the program, but I haven't read the entire document.

Mrs Dombrowsky: In your capacity in the area of property management, you probably are aware that there is a significant lack of affordable housing for families with children.

Mr Butt: Yes, I am aware of that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You've indicated in your remarks that you are interested, in your role as chair of this committee, in exploring programs and services for children in your community. Could you tell us about your idea of what some of those programs and services might be? These will be new programs and new services that are not in place. Could you perhaps outline some that you would be considering?

Mr Butt: One of the important roles that I think the committee is going to have when we first meet is to be briefed on what are the programs and services that are being offered on a wide scale across the region of Peel, how those programs can be enhanced, and if they can't be, what new programs and services we need to look at. I don't have any specific ideas at this stage as to programs and services that the region is not delivering or the province is not delivering through the region or the local municipality that we could be looking at.

I think the reason this process has begun, as I understand it, is that we're going to have people around the table who represent a wide variety of backgrounds, some of whom will probably be people who are working directly with young children on a day-to-day basis. I'm looking forward to them bringing their ideas forward. I think one of the roles of being chair is not to come to the table with preconceived notions over things. I think the important role of the chair is to facilitate healthy discussion and encourage the committee members to bring forward ideas.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You can appreciate, though, my question is so that I might understand exactly what your appreciation is for what programs would be of value for families and children in your community that may not be there already, so could you give me an example? You may find in your participation on the committee that in fact they are up and running, but could you maybe give me just a few examples of programs that you think are very important for young children and families to access in the early years?

Mr Butt: One of the things I know the region of Peel has not been particularly aggressive at doing—and it may be because the need isn't there, but I'm not 100% sure—would obviously be breakfast programs. I'm certainly familiar that breakfast programs are extremely active in the city of Toronto, but I don't think they have been as active in the region of Peel. I'm not 100% sure whether there is an increased need year after year for enhancing those kinds of programs. There is the Peel lunch and after-school program, but I don't believe there are very many schools that are offering breakfast programs in various parts of the region of Peel at this stage. That might very well be one of those programs worth looking at expanding, improving or introducing if the region is not presently doing it on a wide-scale basis.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with family parenting centres?

Mr Butt: Not formally, no.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have an opinion on regulated daycare?

Mr Butt: My child is in daycare.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Regulated?

Mr Butt: Yes, regulated, licensed by the province of Ontario. I'm a very big supporter of families who choose to put their children into child care, having that opportunity to do it. I think we have to look at the options. I don't think you can lump all families into one category and say it's right for everybody, but certainly

for my wife and I, it has benefited us because we are both working outside the home, and second, we found that our young child has flourished in child care. It has been a very good experience for her.

I'm a supporter of child care. I'm not sure I'm a supporter of an overall, publicly funded, across-the-board, every-child-goes-to-child-care concept, because families need to have choice, but I think government and local services need to be supportive of that choice.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you aware of the waiting lists for people in your community who would want to access regulated daycare but are not able to?

Mr Butt: Yes, it's substantial. There's no question.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It's significant, isn't it?

Mr Butt: It's significant, there's no question about it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Then, there's another whole sector of people who would love to be able to access regulated daycare but cannot afford it. Are you familiar with any daycare programs or initiatives in other jurisdictions that offer more broad access to a regulated daycare system?

Mr Butt: When we were investigating around for an appropriate spot for our daughter, we did look at various places, some of which were perhaps a little bit more structured than others. We did look at—I think the program is known as Wee Watch, where there are X number of children in somebody's home, as an option. We decided that wasn't a program that we wanted, but we investigated it. We looked at programs that are in public buildings, in schools. The one that our daughter happens to be in is in a church.

There's no doubt that there is a need to look at options around child care for families. It is probably true that there needs to be more done to help families who can't afford to put their children into child care. That's something the committee should be seriously addressing.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Thanks for coming before us this morning, Mr Butt. My concern in all of this is that we are moving ahead on some initiatives without, first of all, dealing with some of the more fundamental challenges facing families and children in the province today. I just want your view on the issue of what the fundamentals are in terms of families and children that need to be in place before we even get into the consideration of, as was mentioned earlier here in the interview, expanding breakfast programs or even looking at the question of daycare, and that's the question of proper housing and the ability of families to feed their children at home.

This government, in one of its very first initiatives, reduced the income of some of our lowest-paid families by almost 22%. If you add inflation into that, we're looking at a reduction in income of over 30% to a large number of families in the province. What's your view re that, the ability of families to feed themselves and their children, and how should that happen?

0950

Mr Butt: I'm not sure it's the role of the early years steering committee to either be an advocate for or

perhaps be offering political commentary on government policy. You may not agree with that policy; the present government does.

I think the role of our committee is to look at the issues that affect the region of Peel, and that's why I'm saying we need to look into and do our research on whether or not there is a problem relative to children going to school hungry, whether there is an increasing problem relative to affordable housing options in the region of Peel. If those are issues that are of concern, I think it's incumbent upon our committee to pass resolutions and forward them to the government, to suggest to them that in our view they take some action. But I'm not sure that it's the role of our committee or of me as chair to comment on political decisions that are made by the government of the day.

Mr Martin: Would it be your view that it is important that families be able to feed themselves adequately at home?

Mr Butt: Yes, I think that's an important principle.

Mr Martin: In fact, if you found out that there were a significant number of families in your jurisdiction that weren't able to feed themselves at home, would your recommendation personally be to set up more breakfast programs or to make sure that the families themselves had the money they needed to feed themselves at home?

Mr Butt: It could very well be either of those options or a combination of both. I can't answer that today because I don't have the stats and I don't have the information. I'm assuming the role of staff and our researchers and our community coordinator will be that when we request that kind of information—why aren't people able to feed their children at home? what are the patterns? what are the reasons for that?—if it comes out of it that there are government policy decisions that are making that situation the way it is in the region, then I do think it's the job of our committee to inform the ministry that we think there need to be policy changes.

Mr Martin: You said earlier that you read the Campaign 2000—

Mr Butt: I'm familiar with it; I can't say I've read the entire document.

Mr Martin: They are very clear in their direction that it's important that families have the wherewithal to feed themselves and their children at home and not have to depend on the largesse of the community around them to set up breakfast programs, although they come about in the end in some instances because we as a community don't have the political will to make sure that every family has what they need.

Just one last thing. I'd be interested in your view on an initiative of both the federal and provincial governments, actually, where children and poverty is concerned, because poverty underlines a whole lot of things, the potential for children and families to actually move ahead and participate and take part in the overall life of a community. There was a program put in place called the child tax benefit supplement, which was designed to give our lowest-income families on average between \$80 and

\$100 per month per child. That money is being held back from any family either wholly dependent on Ontario Works or partially dependent on Ontario Works or on the Ontarians with disabilities support program. What would be your view on that initiative, going into this work and being given an opportunity to perhaps make some comment?

Mr Butt: It may very well be that after reviewing all the research documents and all the facts on that issue, our particular committee recommends that that kind of supplement be reinstated. I'm trying to be clear, but I'm not sure that I can specifically say, because I'm one of a 10-member committee, that the answer is to reinstate that supplement. I don't know if I can honestly say that today, because I haven't seen the research documents that would indicate whether or not families are not being treated fairly and appropriately through a supplement that their family needs. If they're not, then I think we will be recommending that the government change its policy.

Mr Martin: I was at a press conference last Thursday morning by the Toronto chapter of Campaign 2000 that said that one in three children in Toronto live in poverty. There are groups out there, particularly municipal councils, who have responsibility in the area of child care right now and have been given more by this government. What they're saying is that they need money. They need resources if they are going to tackle that very disturbing statistic.

Mr Butt: Right.

Mr Martin: They're suggesting that what the government is setting up, by way of the committee that you're now going to chair, is simply an exercise in smoke and mirrors to deflect or reflect some of the real issues that are out there, and that there are already organizations set up to do that which are simply starving to death because they don't have the resources and they're becoming more and more frustrated in their attempts to get that job done. What would your response be to that?

Mr Butt: Well, I certainly can't speak about the Toronto-specific scenario, because of course I'm being appointed as the chair of the region of Peel task force and we'll be looking at region of Peel issues. There may be some crossover, but we certainly would be looking at the region of Peel.

Again, as I say, I think with the members of the committee around the table, and with me encouraging them, if we believe there need to be changes in the way government is dealing with social services that affect young children, young families, if we think there needs to be an increase in funding or supplements, I can assure you that our committee will make those recommendations to the government.

I don't think any committee is smoke and mirrors. This process may not be perfect, but I give the government credit for at least saying we're going to go out to the communities, we're going to set up these 37 steering committees across the province and we're going to make a commitment to listen to what these committees have to say. I take the government at their word that they

are going to listen attentively to the recommendations that our committees make, and I trust that they will. They may not agree with us, but I think we're going to do the best we can to propose reasonable solutions that meet the goals of the early years program.

Mr Martin: So even though this government hasn't listened very effectively to any of the groups that they've commissioned and sent out so far in this area—if you talk to the school boards, who have some significant responsibility in this area, they'll tell you. I met with my own school board, the separate school board, in the Soo a couple of weeks ago, and from the people who come into my office and the advocacy that we do on behalf of families, they just don't have the resources to deal with some of the special education needs of children, never mind getting into looking at the possibility of early childhood programs attached to schools, which a lot of the experts have suggested might be the better way to go.

When you have a government that isn't listening to an organization such as Campaign 2000, which is speaking of the very dire straits of some of our poorest families, and the fact that all kinds of housing advocacy groups out there are saying, for example, that there hasn't been a not-for-profit housing unit start in this province since 1995, what gives you the confidence that they are going to listen to you? You're a very busy guy. I'm actually quite impressed with your list of involvements, and I say that seriously. Why you would want to commit the kind of time that's going to be required to chair this committee, understanding that at the end of the day if you come out with recommendations that don't fit with the direction the government is moving, which has been for the most part very punitive, to move everything over to the private sector and to take money out—why do you think that you will be effective or successful, after the experience of all these others?

1000

Mr Butt: I think there have been committees and commissions over many years, under all three political parties when they were government, that worked hard and brought forward recommendations and they were ignored. So I think there's probably blood on everybody's hands when it comes down to work that commissions and other organizations do and submit to the government their briefs and requests for change.

I believe there's no doubt that our committee will be disappointed from time to time that some of our recommendations are not being listened to. But this government did decide to set up a children's secretariat and appoint a minister for that responsibility; that was certainly a step forward. I think they're trying to take children's issues seriously, but I don't think there's any question about the fact that there will be times when we will be disappointed, that recommendations will be made and the government will ignore them. But we're going to do our homework. We're going to make sure, when we present something to the government, that it's got teeth, that there is meat on the bones, and hopefully the government will respond in an appropriate way.

Mr Martin: Do you have any political affiliation?

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr Martin, that concludes your time.

Mr Martin: I was asking your favourite question.

The Chair: I have to ask permission of the government caucus if you can have a moment to ask a further question. "No," says Mr Wood; therefore, we will not have that.

The government caucus?

Mr Wood: We will waive our time.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Butt, for appearing before the committee.

RICK CHAMPAGNE

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Rick Champagne, intended appointee as member, North Bay and District Health Unit.

The Chair: The next individual to come before our committee is Richard Champagne, intended appointee as member, North Bay and District Health Unit. Mr Champagne, as you know, you have an opportunity to make an initial statement to the committee and then each of the three parties represented on the committee has an opportunity to ask questions for 10 minutes. Welcome to the committee.

Mr Rick Champagne: Thank you for the opportunity of meeting with you today to introduce myself and to indicate my desire to serve as a provincial appointee on the North Bay and District Health Unit.

My name is Rick Champagne, and I am presently deputy reeve of the township of East Ferris. I have been involved in many different organizations throughout the district of Nipissing over the years, as municipal representative on the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority, director of the South Shore Restoule snowmobile association, director of the Nosbonsing Curling Club and chairman of the East Ferris recreation and arena board. I'm very nervous here, so bear with me.

I am self-employed and owner of a contracting business in the excavation and heavy equipment field. I presently have a staff of 11 employees. I operate this as a family-run business in the hamlet of Corbeil—that's where the Dionne quintuplets were born. I am married with four children and a granddaughter.

I was the municipal representative on the North Bay and District Health Unit during my last term of office, ending December 31, 2000. Due to the rotation system between the outlying eastern municipalities, this seat has been replaced by a representative from the township of Bonfield. The township of East Ferris is the third-largest municipality in the district of Nipissing and would not be represented again until the year 2015.

I worked on many programs being implemented by the health unit and would like the opportunity to further represent the people of this district and as well implement the policies set forth by the provincial government. I also would like to take the opportunity to finalize some of the

programs that were recently started and in which I participated.

Another reason I believe I would be a good candidate for the health board is that of the 10 municipal representatives, seven are presently appointed by the city of North Bay. My appointment to this board would bring the perspective of the outlying areas and provide better representation.

During my term of office on the North Bay and District Health Unit, there was no provincial appointee on this board for the past six years. I feel this representation is important to communicate the future direction of the health policies of the province of Ontario.

I am a proponent of ensuring that all water supplies provide safe drinking water for the consumption of the public and that the area is provided with a smoke-free environment to ensure the health and safety of the public and mainly our younger generation. I also believe that boards such as the health unit must operate within their budgets and that expenditures must be controlled to ensure that taxes are kept to a minimum. The North Bay and District Health Unit must be fiscally responsible and must be able to substantiate all program expenditures.

Should you have any questions, feel free to ask them at this time. I'm not one for big words, so when you get to the answer you'll get it pretty straight.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your initial remarks. We'll begin with the third party.

Mr Martin: I guess the first question all of us are asking these days when there's an appointment that comes out of North Bay is, do you golf with Mr Harris?

Mr Champagne: No, I don't.

Mr Martin: After that, then, from the resumé—

Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): Neither do I.

Mr Champagne: I don't think I'm even in this category.

Mr Martin: You don't, Morley?

Mr Kells: No.

Mr Martin: Maybe that explains the sort of up-and-down history you've had here. Perhaps if you golfed with him a little more—

Mr Kells: I got it.

Mr Champagne: Maybe this appointment should have been done on the golf course.

Mr Martin: Sorry. It says here that you own a construction company.

Mr Champagne: Yes, I do.

Mr Martin: Did you do any work at all on the Osprey Links?

Mr Champagne: No, I did not.

Mr Martin: What about political affiliation?

Mr Champagne: None.

Mr Martin: None whatsoever?

Mr Champagne: No.

Mr Martin: Have you been involved in any of the political campaigns over the last few years?

Mr Champagne: No.

Mr Martin: Not at all? OK.

You're asking for appointment to the district health unit in North Bay. You know that a week or so ago there was a boil-water order in North Bay—

Mr Champagne: Yes, I'm aware of it.

Mr Martin: —applied by the medical officer of health, I guess.

Mr Champagne: Yes, Dr Whiting.

Mr Martin: Are you aware of some of the history and background of the water being taken out of Trout Lake and the fact that there is no treatment plant and some of the recommendations made by the now Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, and what would your view be on that whole issue?

Mr Champagne: I guess it has to be done sooner than later. I guess they were trying to put it off because of the money situation, but now they have applied for funding and I think it went from the bottom of the priority list of North Bay. Talking to Dr Whiting yesterday before I came down, it looks like hopefully it will happen within the next few years. Twenty-five million dollars is a lot of money for the city of North Bay, but hopefully between the province, the federal government and the city it will come up fairly shortly. But it has to be done.

Mr Martin: So you're saying that the UV technology that was recommended by Gord Miller is not what North Bay is looking at or needs to take care of this, I would say, significant problem in that area? You would be recommending that we move to a treatment plant operation, as opposed to UV?

Mr Champagne: Like I say, I'm not up on the whole situation, but after talking to Dr Whiting yesterday, she suggested that they get a water treatment plant and that they need a UV treatment plant also. But there are also other problems on the lakeside that should be looked after too, which I see as matters of conservation. There are septic problems and a few other problems on that lake.

Mr Martin: One of the problems, it seems, is there's a lot of activity—a lot of cottages, a lot of commercial activity—on the lake and that's causing part of the difficulty with the water for North Bay.

There's also a difficulty, of course—and this is something that a lot of communities are facing, particularly since the Walkerton tragedy of last year—which is bringing water and sewer systems up to standard and the very significant cost of that. In North Bay, as you said, we're looking at well over \$20 million, and I have information here that says North Bay ranks in the top 10% of municipalities in the province for per-capita debt already in place. Any thoughts on how that might or should or could be funded?

Mr Champagne: I believe it should be funded mostly by the province.

Mr Martin: Any thoughts on some of what is coming out of the province by way of turning water and sewer over to the private sector?

Mr Champagne: No, I'm not up on that.

Mr Martin: Would that be something that, just off the top of your head, you'd be opposed to or in favour of.

1010

Mr Champagne: That's the pros and cons, I guess.

Mr Martin: You'd look at that, eh?

Mr Champagne: Yes.

Mr Martin: Considering the impact and the very definite result, given the boil-water order of last week, on water by a lot of activity on the edge of lakes, do you have any view as to the correctness of the Osprey Links project in the North Bay area?

Mr Champagne: No. I'm not up to par on what's happening to the Osprey Links. That's not even on the same lake. That's not even on the same property. Osprey Links is Nipissing and the other one's Trout Lake.

Mr Martin: Yes. But as a health unit, I'm sure you will from time to time be asked for a view or to give leadership on areas of concern to the larger population and their health and the water that they either drink or swim in. I think that in southern Ontario now we have probably a circumstance that some people a few years ago thought would never occur, which is that we shut down whole beaches for weeks at a time because the bacteria level in the lake is such that it's a threat to anybody who might go in there. It concerns me that that might be the case as we move further and further north—all of the Great Lakes. Right now in my own area of Sault Ste Marie I have no fear whatsoever of putting my kids in the car on a Sunday afternoon and heading out to Lake Superior for a swim. But if we don't pay attention and if health units don't take their responsibility seriously, we may end up with every body of water in our huge province from time to time experiencing those kinds of difficulties.

What would your position be on further development on the sides of lakes where that is concerned?

Mr Champagne: What I meant to say a while ago is that there's a difference between Osprey Links and Trout Lake, because Osprey Links is on their own sewer system, which is a city sewer. So there's no impact, really, on the lake. Trout Lake is totally different. There's water coming in and there are septic systems around it. But as far as the health unit, it should be involved in new development, especially near the water where there are septic systems and they're pulling the water. Of course, it would be the minimum required; not the maximum required, but the minimum required is to make sure that our water is good drinking water and the sewer systems are up to snuff.

Mr Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Government caucus?

Mr Wood: We'll waive our time.

The Chair: The government caucus has waived its time. The official opposition.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Good morning, sir. I appreciate the way you said you like to answer straightforward. We like that as well.

Just to recap, you have been on the health council. Were you a municipal appointee at that time?

Mr Champagne: Yes, I was.

Mr Crozier: And now you're the provincial appointee, which you said hadn't been made for six years.

Mr Champagne: Six years now.

Mr Crozier: Had the members of the health council asked for an appointment and just not received one?

Mr Champagne: Yes, that's correct. I asked for one, actually, when I came on board three years ago, and I believe Dr Whiting put an application in and none was filled. There are two vacant seats and they haven't been filled for two years.

Mr Crozier: Well, that's interesting. Did you receive any reason for it?

Mr Champagne: No. I haven't.

Mr Crozier: OK.

Mr Champagne: Hopefully that's why I'm here.

Mr Crozier: I want to touch just a bit on the financing of health councils, because obviously the health council's effectiveness to some degree is governed by the financing of it. You're familiar, I'm sure, having been there with the financing of the health council—do you receive an adequate amount of financing from the municipal government or governments in the area in order to carry out the legislated responsibilities of the health council?

Mr Champagne: The problem I guess I have with the health unit is—you've got your pros and cons, like I said, but we're 65% to fill in what we want, but the problem is that our administration costs are short. So that's why we're after the province for the administration costs, because I think we've downloaded enough on the municipalities that we've paid our share, so we're coming after the province for our share.

Mr Crozier: In the past few years that you've been on the health unit, and I'll correct myself in reference to the body you're being appointed to, has the provincial government supported your health unit in any way, financially?

Mr Champagne: Financially, yes. Whenever we've asked, we've pretty well got it. But we've always asked for a little bit more. We always like to say, "I'd like a wish list," and we start at the top and we just start making our way down. That's the way I work it, even through municipal council.

You start at the top of the list and you make your way down, and whenever you've got the budget, you at least have a little bit of money left over. But the health unit needs a little bit more money and we're applying for it and that's why I want to stay on. I've worked hard toward this and I'm very hard-nosed when it comes to the financial part. I always want the answers because I don't always understand right away. It takes a while to get through my mind what the proper procedures are. By then, we usually get what we want.

Mr Crozier: OK. Thank you, I think that's enough for mine.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Champagne. With regard to initiatives by local health units, is the health unit in North Bay actively involved in promoting smoke-free environments within the community?

Mr Champagne: Yes it is. In fact, we've worked with the schools and now we can go into the schools and actually initiate a change. We weren't allowed to before, but our children are the most important thing. We've got to get to the children first, so we worked our way up. For a while we couldn't get into the schools to get the programs across. Now the schools are working with us, with Jim Stone, who is spearheading this situation. It's been very good, especially in the last two years, which you like to see.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm really happy to hear that, because I agree with you. I think that's a very important place to begin to educate people about the hazards of smoking.

I have had meetings with representatives from my local health unit about their concern with trends in this province with the fact. Were you aware that Ontario is the one jurisdiction I believe in North America that has the lowest amount of tax on cigarette products?

Mr Champagne: No, I wasn't aware of that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: This information came to me from my local health unit, so I was going to inquire of you if you were familiar with or aware of it. Or perhaps now I can ask, would you be prepared to advocate to the government that there should be more aggressive ventures in this particular area, that they should possibly consider increasing the taxes on cigarette products as a deterrent?

Mr Champagne: I'm sure that would be. That was my deterrent when I quit smoking nine years ago, when they got so expensive. That was enough for me. If it happens again, I'm sure it will happen.

If you make a cigarette too expensive, I'm sure children can't afford it and the parents won't be able to afford it. The problem will never go away but it will be minimized.

Mrs Dombrowsky: One more point on that: with regard to a smoke-free environment, are there municipalities or communities within the jurisdiction of your health unit that are entirely smoke-free, where smoking is prohibited in all public places?

Mr Champagne: Yes. It started, and West Nipissing has pushed the issue now. They went smokeless and I'm sure it's going to happen in North Bay shortly. We're looking at our municipality too. It's a Catch-22. We have a lot of fundraising and a lot of people say they won't go if there's smoking. Now, believe it or not, even most of the Tim Hortons coffee shops in North Bay are smoke-free. I think they've found in the last year that business has come back since they made it smoke-free. So they're heading in the right direction.

Mrs Dombrowsky: As a member of the health unit, you do not have a problem promoting or advocating a smoke-free environment?

Mr Champagne: No. Definitely not.

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. That's all.

The Chair: No further questions from the official opposition. That completes our questioning, sir. Thank you for being with us this morning.

Mr Champagne: Thank you.

JOHN ORT

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: John Ort, intended appointee as member, Licence Appeal Tribunal.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Mr John Ort, intended appointee as member, Licence Appeal Tribunal.

Mr Ort, you may come forward, please. As you know, you have an opportunity to make an initial statement, if you see fit, and then you'll be questioned for up to 10 minutes by each of the political parties represented on the committee. Welcome to the committee, sir.

Mr John Ort: Good morning. My name is John Ort. I appear with respect to an intended appointment as a part-time member of the Licence Appeal Tribunal. My educational background is varied. I obtained a bachelor of science degree from the University of Toronto in 1977; a bachelor of laws degree from York University followed in 1980. In 1982, I was called to the bar of Ontario; in 1984, I was admitted to the bar of New York. For about 10 years I practised law in Durham region.

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In addition, I achieved a number of designations outside the field of law, passing the engineering training examination in Michigan and becoming a certified public accountant in Washington state. This year, I also completed all academic requirements of the certified general accountant program in Ontario. I gained a master of business administration degree in 1985.

Given my wide academic background, my experience in the law, my lack of other commitments and my ability to learn quickly, I hope to serve the people of Ontario by rapidly acquiring the skills to become an effective member of the Licence Appeal Tribunal, to be part of a team that provides an appeal process that is timely, efficient and just. I look forward to the challenge.

The Chair: We begin our questioning with the governing party.

Mr Wood: Are you currently a member in good standing of the Law Society of Upper Canada?

Mr Ort: I stopped paying the annual fee in 1996, therefore, I'm shown as not having paid that fee. Otherwise there were no problems and I'm in good standing.

Mr Wood: I'm sorry, you are or aren't in good standing?

Mr Ort: I believe—I'm not quite sure how to phrase this properly—that I was suspended for not paying the annual fees.

Mr Wood: Do you have any intention of paying these fees, or what's your plan with respect to the fees?

Mr Ort: I do not plan to practise law in private practice in Ontario again. Therefore, I do not plan to pay the fees from 1996 until now, which I believe would be part of the requirement in order to be in good standing again.

Mr Wood: Do you have any plans to resign from the Law Society of Upper Canada?

Mr Ort: No.

Mr Wood: Those are my questions.

The Chair: Any other questions from the government caucus? If not, we'll move to the official opposition.

Mr Crozier: Good morning, sir, and welcome to the committee. Under your work experience, the last indication of any work experience was 1987 to 1995. So what have you been doing in the way of work, then, in the last five or six years?

Mr Ort: I have not been employed. I spend most of my time studying. I have been unemployed.

Mr Crozier: Without getting too far into this—and I want to be sensitive about it—have you had a private source of income, or a public source of income in that time?

Mr Ort: I still have some savings, private.

Mr Crozier: One other question: you're enrolled in the PACE level at CGA. What is the PACE level?

Mr Ort: I completed that level with an examination in November. It's the last level. In other words, I have completed all the courses that are required to obtain the CGA. I have not completed the employment requirement of two years' employment.

Mr Crozier: But you've written and successfully passed all the exams?

Mr Ort: That's correct.

Mr Crozier: I'll pass to my colleagues.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Just to follow up on Mr Wood's questions, then, it's my understanding that if you don't pay the fees to the Law Society of Upper Canada—I think you mentioned this as well—you in effect are suspended and you're not allowed to practise law currently in the province of Ontario. Is that your understanding as well?

Mr Ort: That's correct.

Mr Gerretsen: So you are right now a suspended member.

Mr Ort: I believe so, yes.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm just curious. You obviously have a tremendous amount of background as far as education is concerned, in business administration, in law and now in the CGA program. Is it your intent to obtain full-time employment in any of these areas? Are you going to become a tax expert or an accountant? What's your intent in that regard?

Mr Ort: I have certainly sent out hundreds of applications for positions in business, yes.

Mr Gerretsen: Did you at any time act for clients who appeared in front of the Licence Appeal Tribunal or its predecessors?

Mr Ort: No, I have not.

Mr Gerretsen: What will the per diem be in serving on this board?

Mr Ort: I'm not quite sure. I was initially quoted \$225 per day, but I see that the intended appointment is for a general member which I understand would be \$175 per day.

Mr Gerretsen: Have you made any inquiries as to how many days per month or per week you will be appointed to this position or what the expectations are as to how many days you will serve in an average month?

Mr Ort: I understand that at most it would be about three days per month.

Mr Gerretsen: What interests you about the Licence Appeal Tribunal in particular?

Mr Ort: The varied subject matter is what I would look forward to.

Mr Gerretsen: You mentioned that individuals who appear before a tribunal should obtain speedy justice, as it were, or have their situation determined in a speedy way. Could you maybe explain that a little bit further?

Mr Ort: Certainly. I understand that it takes up to 30 days for most members to issue a decision after a hearing is completed. Since I have no other commitments, that's obviously an area where I could help out in writing and issuing the decisions within a couple of days.

Mr Gerretsen: Do you have any philosophical reason for making that statement? Where I'm coming from is this: I'm a person who happens to believe that people should be entitled to know where they stand and what happens to their particular situation, whether it's a licence or something else, in a very speedy fashion. I think that, generally speaking, government agencies and bodies over the years—not a shot at this particular government—have always been almost, negligent in that.

When you hear of matters being before the human rights commission for upwards of seven years without a decision, I don't think anyone is served by that, neither the complainant nor the person or individuals who happen to be involved. I just wanted to find out whether your sentiments were somewhat along the same lines; in other words, that individuals whose rights have been dealt with in one particular way or another will be dealt with speedily. Is this a concern of yours?

Mr Ort: Obviously the sooner matters like this are resolved the better. Many people appear before the tribunal with respect to a licence suspension. I mean by that, the source of their livelihood has been suspended and they obviously wait for a decision to find out about their future. In those cases especially, it is very important to speedily provide a decision. I do know from my conversation with other members of the tribunal that, yes, this is something they are very aware of and they are working to improve.

Mr Gerretsen: How many members are there currently on the tribunal.

Mr Ort: I understand there are about 65 members.

Mr Gerretsen: And you've spoken to some of these individuals, what, to get a better understanding as to what the job would be all about?

Mr Ort: I spoke mostly with Mr Kent McClure, the chairman, and he introduced me to a couple of the members who had a break in their hearings.

Mr Gerretsen: Did he encourage you to seek this position?

Mr Ort: Yes. I understand that he does want me to be a member of the tribunal.

Mr Gerretsen: Is it your hope that this appointment will lead to other involvements with either this tribunal or other tribunals or with the public service in general?

Mr Ort: I would certainly welcome that. But I don't think that's something that is likely.

The Chair: There are a few minutes left, if anybody has any further questions.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mr Ort. Do you have a political affiliation?

Mr Ort: No, I do not.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Have you ever had a political affiliation or have you been involved in any political activity?

Mr Ort: No.

Mrs Dombrowsky: How did you become aware of the opportunity to acquire a position on the tribunal?

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Mr Ort: I submitted some applications for a number of vacancies in other tribunals, and apparently I did well in the last interview I had with the Social Benefits Tribunal. I'm told that the chairwoman of that tribunal forwarded my resumé and information on to the chairman of the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

Mr Crozier: You said that you had applied for several other vacancies on other tribunals and that you've been interviewed.

Mr Ort: No, I've only been interviewed once, the Social Benefits Tribunal and then for this position at the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

Mr Crozier: So you weren't interviewed for this one.

Mr Ort: Yes, I was interviewed for this one.

Mr Crozier: But you said you'd only been interviewed once—that covered both?

Mr Ort: I'm sorry. I corrected myself. I was interviewed for the Social Benefits Tribunal and I was interviewed for this position.

Mr Crozier: OK. How did you become aware of the vacancies?

Mr Ort: Through advertisements in newspapers.

The Chair: The third party, Mr Martin.

Mr Martin: I don't have a whole lot of questions. I was listening intently to the others. What skills do you feel you bring to this tribunal?

Mr Ort: I understand that they are looking for some background in law, that it's helpful, and I do have some skills that are unusual for a lawyer in terms of the accounting background and the MBA background.

Mr Martin: This tribunal covers a wide spectrum of concern, pulled together by Mr Wood and the Red Tape Commission, as somehow fitting. I'm not sure how they all fit together, but I guess there must be some similarity in that. Is there any particular area that you would be more interested in than another in this spectrum of—

Mr Ort: I tend to like variety. Initially I assume that perhaps the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act or the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act matters would

possibly be assigned to me. I really don't know how matters are assigned.

Mr Martin: In the past, for a lot of these tribunals that have been pulled together under the aegis now of the Licence Appeal Tribunal, people with specific expertise and experience and knowledge were asked to oversee and make decisions, as you've already said in one instance. But across the board here we have areas that affect people's lives and livelihood very clearly and directly. Decisions made therefore will have some very serious ramifications for folks. Is there any area in this package that you would feel less than capable of or perhaps even to go so far as to say it might be almost irresponsible for you to actually sit down and adjudicate, having had no particular background or experience in an area?

Mr Ort: I'm certain that there are many such areas, but I understand there is a training program where I would initially sit with more experienced members and obviously would continue to be under some supervision. There would certainly be help available in case I had problems.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Ort, for appearing before the committee.

Mr Gerretsen: Since we do have a few minutes before the next delegate or appointee—and as an outsider to this committee, this is just a question for information more than anything else—I know that the last two governments issued booklets that had every appointment that was made to every commission, with the duties and responsibilities, the per diems and the appointees and when vacancies would become available and things like that. The current government, to the best of my knowledge, over the last six years, has not done that.

I wonder if Mr Wood perhaps, as the lead member on this committee and as the gentleman who chaired the Red Tape Commission that brought all these tribunals together, could give a commitment from the government to issue a booklet once again that would indicate every person who currently sits on these boards, what their responsibilities are, when vacancies become available etc. I think he would be doing both the public out there and the citizens of Ontario a major favour because that information right now is not available.

It is commendable that at least these positions are being advertised from time to time, but in order for people to know exactly what's out there and available for them on an ongoing basis, it would be really helpful if you would go back to the system that was adopted by the previous two governments and, for all I know, the Davis and Robarts governments before that, whereby these—

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): And Drew did it too.

Mr Gerretsen: Drew did it as well and undoubtedly Leslie Frost as well. Mr Chair, has that been taken up by this committee at all?

The Chair: I think we have the gist of it. Mr Wood, would you have any response?

Mr Wood: I'd certainly like to thank Mr Gerretsen for those very helpful suggestions. What I'm going to ask the

Public Appointments Secretariat to do is to provide him with full information on how these are advertised and communicated now. After he's had a chance to review that, I'm sure he'll have some helpful suggestions that he'll pass along to us.

While I have the floor, I was going to suggest that we might deal with some of the concurrences we've already heard, if we're short—

The Chair: If I can use my discretion as the Chair, what I would suggest instead—

Interjection.

The Chair: This is an interesting conversation and we will discuss this further, but Mrs Andrewes is here.

Mr Wood: I'm sorry. I didn't realize she was here.

The Chair: I thought it would be appropriate for her not to have to wait any longer and to be able to proceed.

Mr Wood: I totally endorse that.

MARGARET ANDREWES

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Margaret Andrewes, intended appointee as chair, early years steering committee of the Niagara Regional Area Health Unit.

The Chair: I'll ask Mrs Margaret Andrewes to come forward. She is an intended appointee as chair of the early years steering committee of the Niagara Regional Area Health Unit. Welcome to the committee, Mrs Andrewes. As you know, you're welcome to make an initial statement.

Before you do, as Chair of the committee, and as the Speaker always does, I would like to extend the courtesy of welcoming to our committee Mr Philip Andrewes, who is the former MPP for Lincoln. Welcome to the committee, Mr Andrewes. Phil, as you know, was the member for the area—well, part of it now is Stoney Creek and part of it is Erie-Lincoln. When Mr Andrewes had it, it was called Lincoln itself. He has also, since that time, been very much involved in the agricultural field. So welcome, Phil, to observe the committee today.

Mrs Margaret Andrewes: Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to review my appointment as chair of the early years steering committee in Niagara.

While I am honoured and pleased with this appointment, I acknowledge that there are high expectations for the leadership of people like me to ensure that this very important initiative achieves its potential and truly makes a difference for children and their parents in all parts of Ontario. When I think of the hundreds of stakeholders who have already been involved in crafting the early years program in its initial stages, I am very excited by the challenge we have ahead in building on the momentum and securing a sustainable program for many generations of Ontarians.

When I hearken back to my formative years, my earliest memories are of the people in my community who were involved in all aspects of my growing up

experience. Indeed, many of them, including my parents, have served as role models throughout my life.

I began my formal education when I was six years old at Merton school, a one-room school perched on a bank overlooking the Queen Elizabeth Highway and Bronte Road in what was then the township of Trafalgar in rural Halton county. By then, I was well acquainted with the other 50 or so children enrolled in grades 1 through 8, because our school embodied our small community. My readiness to learn was enhanced by the fact that I was already engaged as a full member of that community and had a real sense of what to expect.

In essence, this is what I believe the early years program is all about, that is, the engagement of the very youngest children to understand intuitively that they have a sound place in society and therefore the freedom to pursue success and fulfilment throughout their lives.

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My experience during my formative years has played out well as I have found my way through life to this point. I will simply provide you with a few highlights that I hope will enlighten you as far as the knowledge and leadership expertise that I bring to the position of chair of the steering committee.

I first became truly aware of my potential as leader when I was elected president of my first-year class of 100 women enrolled in the then bachelor of household science course during my first week of university at MacDonal Institute in Guelph in 1963. That experience was my launching pad for many subsequent leadership positions that have been far-reaching and very fulfilling.

Following my post-secondary education, which included gaining my elementary school teacher's certificate at St Catharines Teachers' College in the same year as your Chair, I immersed myself in my short career as a grade 3 teacher in Beamsville, marriage and raising our three children, along with a variety of volunteer activities in the community.

Suddenly, in March 1981, I became a political spouse. Yes, I am married to Philip Andrewes—and thank you, Mr Chair, for acknowledging him—who served as a member of provincial Parliament from 1981-87. I cannot begin to express how appreciative I am for the experience that our children and I had as a result of Philip's involvement as a member. With him, we lived and breathed the challenges that faced the government of Ontario at that time and came to have a deep understanding of the commitment of all politicians, the political process and what it takes to achieve a balance between family and political life.

Philip and I are very proud of our three children, who are all university graduates and thankfully employed in well-suited professions. Our eldest daughter, Sarah, achieved her degree in political science at Carleton University and is currently working for an international public relations firm here in Toronto, with responsibility for investor relations. Our son, Christopher, also graduated from Carleton and is a fifth-generation farmer on our fruit farm in Beamsville. Caroline, our youngest,

graduated from the University of Western Ontario as a material engineer and she is employed as a research engineer at Ballard Power Systems in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Once Phil was retired as a politician in 1987 and back home in his profession as a farmer, I took the opportunity to spread my wings and move beyond my immediate community. By 1993, I had served as president of the Ontario Library Trustees' Association for one year, president of the Canadian Library Trustees' Association for two years and president of the Canadian Library Association for one year. My election as president of the Canadian Library Association is significant because I am the only trustee in the association's 55-year history to hold that position. All other presidents before and since are professional librarians.

While I achieved these endeavours as a volunteer, I also pursued a career in libraries. Between 1988 and 1990, I was employed by the Ontario Library Association as a coordinator of the Ontario public library strategic plan, a province-wide initiative that successfully positioned public libraries as an integral thread in the fabric of public services for all Ontarians.

From there, I ventured into employment as communications coordinator for ISM Library Information Services, a private sector company that provided bibliographic and information technology services for the national and international library communities.

In 1995, I was appointed advocacy coordinator of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind—CNIB library for the blind. It was in this position that I honed my skills as an advocate and came face to face with the issues of a segment of our society that continues to be marginalized with respect to equitable access to libraries and information.

Finally, in 1999, I was granted a return to employment in the town of Lincoln, in Niagara, my home community for almost 35 years now. At that time, I was appointed chief executive officer of the Lincoln Public Library by the Lincoln Public Library board. I feel blessed in my opportunity to come full circle in my volunteer and professional pursuits as I look forward to my role in providing leadership as the volunteer chair of the early years steering committee in Niagara. Be assured that I will do my utmost in engaging all members of this committee in championing the early years program and making sound decisions that will serve the best interests of the youngest members of our community and their parents. Over the years, I have always demonstrated commitment, enthusiasm and passion in all that I have done.

I welcome questions from the members of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your initial statement. I can assure you that your association with me and your husband will not prejudice you before this committee.

Anyway, we'll begin with the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mrs Andrewes. It is very nice to see you here this morning.

I'm going to begin with a statement. The Premier previously had in place a minister without portfolio, responsible for children. Are you aware that at the time of the last change of cabinet responsibilities, the Premier eliminated that position?

Mrs Andrewes: Yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you know where the responsibilities for children now fall?

Mrs Andrewes: With the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The Minister of Community and Social Services, with responsibilities for francophone affairs and for the disabled, so children now have a part-time minister.

With regard to the early years initiative for children and families, you have indicated that you're going to work very hard to ensure that the needs within your community are considered. Can you share with me what you understand to be the most pressing needs of families and children in Ontario today?

Mrs Andrewes: The most pressing needs?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yes. Just two would be fine.

Mrs Andrewes: I would like to go directly to my own community in terms of what I see. I certainly have had an opportunity to look at the Early Years Study and see that in a broad sense, but I believe that in my own community the most pressing need of the broader Niagara community is for a more integrated approach to support for families who are high-risk, who are in the lower socio-economic level.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Who are poor.

Mrs Andrewes: Who are poor, yes, and also I think just general child care issues are very important in our area. I would assume that represents pretty much what's going on across the province.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with or do you understand what the situation is with regard to access to regulated child care within your community?

Mrs Andrewes: I am not as familiar—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you know if the supply meets the demand?

Mrs Andrewes: I'm not completely up to date on that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. I would suggest it probably does not by perhaps some thousands of spaces, because that would be typical across the province. I'm sure you would find it an interesting exercise when you, in your role, pursue that information.

Mrs Andrewes: I will.

Mrs Dombrowsky: With regard to services within the community, are you familiar with family parenting centres?

Mrs Andrewes: I have just been making myself familiar with family parenting facilities and centres.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Have you been able to visit any yet?

Mrs Andrewes: I have not, no. I'm aware of one in Niagara Falls and have had full communication with the

librarian in Niagara Falls as to the involvement of the library in that centre.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with the federal health accord that was signed I believe last September? As part of that accord, there is an early child development accord. With that accord has come \$844 million to the province of Ontario over the next five years. Ontario has already received, as of April 1, \$114 million to support early child development in the province. We still have no idea what the plan of the government is in terms of how these dollars will be spent to support children within communities. Would you expect that your early years committee would be an appropriate agent, first of all, to receive some additional resources that this accord has provided, and to set about a consultation process within the community to better understand how the needs of families and children could be met?

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Mrs Andrewes: That sounds very appropriate. I was not familiar with the dollars that are involved.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Federal dollars. These are new dollars intended for new programs, not to support anything that would be existing already.

Are you familiar with any of the recent documents or studies that have been published around the needs to support the youngest of our society?

Mrs Andrewes: I'm familiar with them, but I have not studied them in depth.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That would be the Early Years Study, the Mustard-McCain report.

Mrs Andrewes: Yes, very important.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with the Campaign 2000 report?

Mrs Andrewes: I'm not, no.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with the most recent UNICEF document?

Mrs Andrewes: I'm aware it's there, but I have not—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Have you had an opportunity to review the Education Improvement Commission's *The Road Ahead—V*, the last document that was issued?

Mrs Andrewes: I've read excerpts from that document.

Mrs Dombrowsky: In that document, it talks about full-day kindergarten. Do you have an opinion on that?

Mrs Andrewes: I believe kindergarten is very, very important. I believe it would be a wise move for communities to be able to move ahead and provide full-day kindergarten.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The Early Years Study by Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain speaks of community hubs and that the school is a very logical setting, even though the government has removed the ability of school boards to afford to provide that space within a school setting. Would you be looking to partner with schools to provide space for families and children for programs?

Mrs Andrewes: I think it's wise. The point is that, as chair of the steering committee, I would be looking at all options, all partnerships, all opportunities that are there in

the community to make the most of the resources we have.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Thank you.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm not going to ask you whether or not you've got any political affiliation, because I'm positive you would have supported your husband fully in his electoral success.

Mr Kells: It's a secret ballot.

The Chair: It's a secret ballot, as Mr Kells says.

Mr Gerretsen: By the way, I know that you yourself would have made an excellent member in those days from that particular riding.

Let me ask you something, though, just following up on what Mrs Dombrowsky has asked you. It deals with the minister responsible for children. Do you basically think it's a good idea to have a minister responsible just for children's services? Do you regard it as sort of a step back that the government, in my opinion, made a very positive move by putting an emphasis on children by appointing a person in that position and now has really sort of backtracked from that? Do you have any opinion on that at all?

Mrs Andrewes: To tell you the truth, I think it was wonderful that there was a minister for children. I'm not aware of the reasons why the government chose to step back from that position. I'm not aware of how things shifted and so on. I think I would have known a little better in the 1980s what happened, but I don't know now.

Mr Gerretsen: The other issue is that they've talked about forming these committees for the last three months or so. I noted that in my own area there was a tremendous need to get people appointed as quickly as possible because a certain amount of money had to be spent by the end of March of this year to still put it into the last fiscal year. That didn't happen. I don't know whether that money has been lost or whether double the money will be available for the next year.

When were you first approached to seek this position? Was that, let's say, in January of this year? And are you not a little surprised that the process of getting the committees appointed has taken as long as it has?

Mrs Andrewes: That's a lot of questions.

Mr Gerretsen: When were you first approached about this position?

Mrs Andrewes: I was first aware of the early years program last year, where there was a lot of excitement in the community about it. I was first approached at the beginning of this year; that's correct. I submitted my application in time for the deadline, which I believe was the beginning of February. I only heard about two weeks ago that my application had been selected and—

Mr Gerretsen: Are you disappointed that things didn't move along quicker, the way it was originally suggested in January of this year? I'll be quite open and candid about it: I was approached by ministry people as well to come forward with names from my area because they wanted to get all this done in early February so that in effect the committees would be totally operating and running by the end of March and the funds for last year

that had been set aside could be expended. That obviously didn't happen. Are you disappointed with that?

Mrs Andrewes: Not really. Not personally, no. I know how much it takes to organize something like this because I've been involved in large organizations. But I do think it's very important that from this time forward very clear guidelines be given for timelines, and I would be seeking that kind of support and help from the people responsible.

Mr Gerretsen: Do you regard yourself, as chair of this steering committee in Niagara, as sort of the government spokesman for the expenditure of these funds, or do you think the committee should operate independently from government once the allocation has been given? Which of the two camps would you say you would be in as the leader that you say you are, and undoubtedly you are?

Mrs Andrewes: I would certainly be in the second camp, where I would see that my role was to take the guidelines we have from government and engage my community, facilitate a solid, sound decision-making process based on the criteria of the program as we see it and as we're advised, and go from there to make sure everybody in Niagara knows about early years, what it's about and how important it is to the future of our province.

Mr Gerretsen: Therefore you're not just a government spokesman.

Mrs Andrewes: Absolutely.

The Chair: Your time has expired, Mr Gerretsen.

Mr Gerretsen: Thank you very much. Good luck in your work.

The Chair: We now have the third party.

Mr Martin: Just in relation to the answer you gave to the last question, I appreciate that. I think it's important that all appointments act on behalf of their communities when they are made, that they give leadership from there and that they see their integrity as professionals tied up in that.

On the response you gave to Mrs Dombrowsky re the question of people most at risk in a community being of greatest concern, certainly it should be, because if we don't facilitate and help and put in place things to support those at risk, it's difficult to do the rest.

From my experience and work over the last few years, it seems to me we have a growing group of people in the province who are at risk simply because they are poor. We mentioned that word a little earlier. The depth of poverty now in the province is deeper simply by the fact that those who are most vulnerable have lost, if you factor in the 22% that was taken away from the amount of money people on social assistance got in 1995 and factor in inflation of 8%, over 30%. We have a group of people, however fewer—because the claim is made that there are fewer people on assistance out there—struggling on some very meagre incomes.

We also have people now out there working because they want to work and the system now works such that it forces people to actually go out and take jobs that don't

necessarily give them the kind of resources they had on the system to look after themselves and their children. But they are doing it and they are in poverty too. The minimum wage is quite small, and if you're working at minimum wage, a lot of times you're not working full-time hours and you're not getting benefits and those kinds of things that come with that.

If you discover in your work, in doing the good things that you obviously want to do and have shared with us here today that you want to do, that the issue of poverty and the growing depth of it and the breadth of it—because now if you listen to some of the people flowing out of Campaign 2000 across the country who say that one in five children now live in poverty, in the city of Toronto, the economic engine of this province, where jobs have been created in multitudes and the economy has grown exponentially, we have now one in three children living in poverty. If that becomes the reality for you, what kinds of messages would you be willing to send to the government and what kind of stand would you be willing to take in light of what you know are some more fundamental difficulties for those who are most vulnerable?

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Mrs Andrewes: I think in any program I've ever been involved with, and usually it's been working with government and I would continue to do that, it's always very important to raise the issues that are most prominent and the ones that are not being addressed.

If we find as we go through the process of managing, providing the leadership for the early years program in the Niagara area, that there are issues that are not being addressed, many of which you've mentioned, certainly that would be an advocacy issue on the part of the steering committee where we would say to government, the representatives that we have, both elected and staff, that these are issues that need to be addressed and they're not being dealt with properly.

Mr Martin: Just to follow up on that a wee bit, again, Ms Dombrowsky shared with you that the provincial government has received some \$114 million for programs for early childhood. The government is sitting on a \$1-billion surplus, that they can choose to do with what they will, flowing from the last budget and are projecting to give another \$4 billion in tax breaks over the next couple of years at the same time. I'm looking for a reaction from you, because I know the reaction I get when I share this with people out there. You suggested to Ms Dombrowsky that you weren't aware of the amount of money, the \$114 million.

Perhaps you're not aware of this either, because I know that there are a lot of people out there who aren't aware that a couple of years ago the federal government initiated, in partnership with the province, a program called the national child benefit supplement that gave to the lower-income families in our province an average of between \$80-\$100 per child per month, depending on the income level, to put a little extra food on the table, to maybe cover the cost of rent or to get a better place to

live, all the things you would do as a parent to make sure that your children were comfortable and safe.

But this government, in concert, I would say, with the federal government has decided—and they rationalized that because they came out this week with a report card that said the program was working—to take that supplement away from anybody on Ontario Works, or anybody on the Ontario disability support program, which means that those children who are most at risk in those families that are dependent on Ontario Works and the disability support program are getting that taken away. It's being clawed back, dollar for dollar, from them. What's your reaction to that?

Mrs Andrewes: You've just educated me a lot. I don't feel it's appropriate for me to react in terms of—I've just realized that you've pointed out an issue that needs to be monitored and carefully considered by both government and the community to make sure, if indeed there's an erosion of what is needed most by people in the community in that respect, that it is addressed.

Mr Martin: So you'll then understand when some of us, who don't tend to be by nature cynical—I don't see myself as a cynical person. I'm usually very happy and positive and constructive in my interaction with people in the work I've done in the community, but I become cynical when I see a government rolling out a whole new program for early childhood, with advisory councils and the money that's going to be spent there, while at the same time they're not addressing some very fundamental issues of the level of income for some of our more vulnerable and marginalized people, at-risk people. Most of the people I share the clawback of the national child benefit supplement with are shocked, first of all. They didn't know about it. They're shocked. Then they ultimately want to know, "What can I do?" Chances are you'll be appointed here this morning. I'm suggesting that when you get into your new job, that's something you might want to take a look at almost immediately.

Mr Johnson: I just had a couple of comments and not really any questions, Mrs Andrewes, but I am impressed with your background, particularly your contribution to libraries. Some would have us believe in this electronic age that their days are numbered.

Mrs Andrewes: Never.

Mr Johnson: But in our area anyway, Andrew Carnegie made available some money and we've taken advantage of it. A lot of communities have to build the physical space they need, but without people like you to contribute to the development of programs and those things, they would be for naught. So I wanted to add my personal congratulations, if you like, to that part of your resumé.

I also want to personally thank you for your contribution to education. We sometimes forget to give you teachers a pat on the back for all you do that most of us would rather not do and are awfully glad we don't have to because people like you do.

I don't have many connections in the Niagara Peninsula but my family are related to Jack and Pearl

Perkin. I know they were very much in the fruit business—Pearl just died a week ago—a family with a lot of roots in the Niagara Peninsula, particularly around Vineland, as I understand it.

I just wanted to add my pat on the back to you for coming forward for this job and for your contribution in education and libraries.

Mrs Andrewes: Thank you.

The Chair: Any further government questions?

Mr Wood: We'll waive the balance of our time.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs Andrewes, for appearing before the committee.

We have a couple of items to deal with. One will be the concurrences and then perhaps some procedural matters that were talked about a little earlier. We may have a little further discussion on that. We will see how that pans out.

First of all, we have the intended appointee as chair of the early years steering committee of the Peel Regional Health Unit, Mr Brad Butt.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Any comments? All in favour? Opposed? Motion carried.

The second is an intended appointee as member, North Bay District Health Unit, Richard Champagne.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Concurrence has been moved by Mr Wood. Any comments? All in favour? Opposed? Motion carried.

The third is the intended appointee as member, Licence Appeal Tribunal, Mr John Ort.

Mr Wood: I require a one-week deferral of that.

The Chair: A request for a one-week deferral?

Mr Wood: I'm entitled to that.

The Chair: Yes, it is the entitlement of Mr Wood to a one-week deferral. It is deferred.

Mr Martin: That raises an interesting question. You're entitled. I grasp this in all seriousness. You're entitled to it. Are we?

Mr Wood: You are, Mr Martin.

The Chair: I'm informed by the clerk that any member of the committee—

Mr Wood: Any member or the point person, I'm not sure. Sorry, go ahead. I thought it might be the point person, but I don't know, maybe not.

The Chair: We are going to check that out, but certainly you are entitled to request that. We are going to find out if others are entitled to do the same.

While we are doing that, we will move to the intended appointee as chair, the early years steering committee of the Niagara Regional Area Health Unit, Margaret Andrewes.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Concurrence has been moved by Mr Wood. Any discussion?

Mr Martin: Yes. I just wanted to say that the responses to questions and the dialogue among all members with Ms Andrewes was quite refreshing. I'm hopeful that she will follow through on some of the

obvious real interest and concern she has in this instance, where some of our more marginalized and vulnerable children are concerned. It's because of that, I have no difficulty supporting her appointment to that job. I think we need more people with that kind of integrity and conscience in those kinds of positions, and hopefully she will follow through.

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The Chair: Any other comments?

Mr Gerretsen: I take it Mr Andrewes was a New Democratic member, was he?

Mr Martin: No.

The Chair: The concurrence motion has been made by Mr Wood. We've had our discussion. If there's no further discussion, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

In answer to your question, Mr Crozier, according to the standing orders, it says, "Any member may request that the committee defer its determination to the next meeting of the committee, but in any event no later than 7 calendar days." So any member of the committee has an opportunity to do that.

Is there any further business that the committee wishes?

Mr Johnson: Mr Chairman, I had a note attached to my committee meeting notice. It says for the next two weeks they will be delivered in the House, the same as usual, I assume, but "Beginning May 10, yellow notices will no longer be delivered to the House." I wanted to just register my objection to this particular—I think there are people running around the House all the time and I don't think it's very expensive to have these delivered. I think they should be, and I would like them to be continued.

The other thing is, they're dependent on the absolute perfection of both fax machines. The issuing fax machine can have some problems in it. If it leaves out "am" or "pm" or a date or something, it causes a problem. The receiving fax machine also has to work perfectly for this system to work. I just wanted to register my objection to us doing it. I don't know who is proposing it. If and when I do, then I would register my objection to them.

The Chair: I thank you for doing so. Our clerk has indicated that she will bring your concerns back to the committees branch. Also, I guess we all have the opportunity to raise the issue with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Johnson: Is he the one who decided to do this?

The Chair: I'm not certain how that came about.

Mr Johnson: I want to talk to the person who's doing it.

The Chair: I'm told it did originate in the committees branch, and our clerk has indicated she will bring your concern back to the committees branch.

Mr Wood: I wonder if we might get a report on just why this change is proposed, because ultimately I think it's the committee that decides. I don't think it's decided internally.

The Chair: We will get a report on that as well.

Mr Wood: I'd like to have a report as to the reason for this change and where it came from, please, at the next meeting.

The Chair: We will get that for you, Mr Wood.

Mr Martin: I'd like to support Mr Johnson in tabling that concern as well.

Mr Crozier: Further to Mr Gerretsen's comments, and actually as a follow-up to last week, I raised informally to the clerk about vacancies, how we could find out, all of us, when there are vacancies on government agencies, whether they're advertised, whether they're not; just the mere fact that vacancies are either coming up or available. I might ask the clerk if, after that inquiry, she could report anything to us.

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Donna Bryce): I missed the first part of your request because I had a phone call, but it was a follow-up to our conversation earlier, did you say?

Mr Crozier: Yes.

Clerk of the Committee: OK. I sent an e-mail to the secretariat and they advised that somebody would be calling back with that information. So you should get that fairly shortly from Peter Allen, the general manager.

Mr Crozier: Calling back to you, as clerk?

Clerk of the Committee: That's right.

Mr Crozier: Mr Wood suggested that a call be made to someone earlier on in this discussion.

Mr Wood: I have invited the Public Appointments Secretariat to give a report to Mr Gerretsen on the terms which I indicated earlier. I'd be pleased to invite them to give you the same report if you wish it.

Mr Crozier: Yes. I just wonder if it might be best to have a written report and then we can all share it.

Mr Wood: I'm thinking in terms of a letter from them to Mr Gerretsen and yourself, if you'd like to get the letter, which I gather you do wish to have.

Mr Crozier: Sure. That's fine.

The Chair: That should come to the committee so that all members of the committee have access to it.

Mr Martin: If I remember back to between 1990 and 1995, which was my first term here, there was a book produced, and I believe Mr Pond has a copy of it behind the desk there.

Mr Kells: That's the one. It's an excellent publication.

Mr Martin: It was available in a lot of public places. It was available in my office. I know that all kinds of people became aware of the fact that we had that kind of information. They would come in—we would never give

it out because we'd never get it back—and they would sit and go through it. In that way, we were able to at least share information with some of the very best folks out there who might have an interest or might serve in a public capacity in that way. I just think it's too bad we don't have that any more.

This business of advertising is very hit and miss. If you look at the number of people who come forward here to be appointed or to be interviewed before appointment, most of them knew somebody who knew somebody. That's not a good way to run a province or to run a lot of these very important public bodies. I would agree with Mr Gerretsen that—

Mr Kells: That's something you picked up when you were in power for five years.

Mr Martin: I wasn't actually quite in power. I was like you, Mr Kells, trying to—

Mr Kells: That's mean.

Mr Martin: Yes, that's mean. There are a number of us—and every government has them—who don't ever get to be close to the fire.

Mr Kells: It's an affliction of the Irish.

The Chair: The booklet to which you have made reference is called *A Guide to Agencies, Boards and Commissions*. This is the one you made reference to. I think it was available at one time in public libraries, as well as constituency offices. I presume you wouldn't mind if this book were to be reissued if the cover were blue instead of green.

Interjection: Any colour, whether it's green, yellow—

The Chair: The cover of these various publications seems to change with the government in power. I don't know why that is. I think it's just coincidental probably, but it tends to happen. Anyway, we will be getting that report. It may be that at a future meeting of the committee we may wish to make a recommendation—or not make a recommendation, that's up to the committee—as to what we feel the procedure might be in terms of informing the public of availability of the opportunity to serve on one of the agencies, boards and commissions of Ontario.

Any further business for the committee?

Mr Wood: I move adjournment.

The Chair: Adjournment has been moved by Mr Wood. All in favour? Opposed? Motion carried. The meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1118.

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