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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 27 November 2002

Standing committee on government agencies

Intended appointments

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 27 novembre 2002

Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Nominations prévues

Chair: James J. Bradley Clerk: Anne Stokes Président : James J. Bradley Greffière : Anne Stokes

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# STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Wednesday 27 November 2002

The committee met at 1003 in room 151.

## INTENDED APPOINTMENTS GLEN CAMELFORD

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Glen Camelford, intended appointee as member, Social Benefits Tribunal.

The Chair (Mr James J. Bradley): I'll call the meeting to order. Our only item of business today is under appointments review, and our only appointee today is Mr Glen R. Camelford, intended appointee as member, Social Benefits Tribunal.

Sir, you may come forward. As you are likely aware, you have an opportunity, if you wish, to make an initial statement. Subsequent to that, each of the political parties represented on the committee has a chance to direct questions to you for up to 10 minutes. Today, I understand, the rotation would be moving; it will be the official opposition.

Welcome, sir.

**Mr Glen Camelford:** Thank you, Chairman Bradley and members of the committee, for inviting me to attend this examination to consider my appointment as a member of the social services tribunal. By way of introduction, I would refer to my background as a financial manager for a Canadian division of a US multinational firm. While the title denotes financial stewardship, a large portion of my efforts were devoted to the evaluation of processes and competing proposals from a varied range of stakeholders. Invariably, as the gatekeeper for the Canadian division, my role demanded that I conduct my analysis and decisions with objectivity, thoroughness and at all times within the law.

Throughout my career, I have served and have been sensitive to multiple stakeholders who would be impacted either directly or indirectly within any given evaluation. Some of the stakeholders who could be impacted on any one decision would be employees, consumers, owners, officers and directors and, not least, legislative authorities.

Through my work in industry I have discharged my duties with trust, dignity and respect for all those impacted. My broad review of the position of member, social services tribunal, indicates that this is composed of many facets and principles, some of which are independence, objectivity and integrity, to name but a few. ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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My approach to this position, if confirmed today, would be based on the same values of trust, respect, dignity and responsibility discharged through objective and timely evaluations. My readings relative to this position indicate that it promises to be both challenging and provide a forum of continuous learning.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that my broad professional background and my work ethics, combined with a continuous learning habit, make me a suitable candidate for the appointment in question. I am well prepared for the rigours of this position and have the full support of my wife and children.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We'll commence the questioning with the official opposition.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Good morning, Mr Camelford. Thank you for coming and sharing your remarks with us this morning. I'm always interested to know how it is that you have come to be here this morning as an intended appointee for the Social Benefits Tribunal.

**Mr Camelford:** Certainly. I had made inquiries of our local constituency office as to opportunities within the government that might best utilize my skill sets.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Your local constituency office would be with whom?

**Mr Camelford:** It's in Whitby and it would be with Minister Flaherty.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Minister Flaherty. So you indicated that you were interested in a role on a government board, agency or commission?

Mr Camelford: That's correct.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Did you specifically indicate you wanted to participate on the Social Benefits Tribunal?

Mr Camelford: Not specifically.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I am curious because when I read your background—and certainly you have some very impressive credentials—I would say, however, there isn't anything in your background, at least that you have put in this document, where you've had any experience in social service agencies or areas. Perhaps in a volunteer capacity; have you any of that experience?

**Mr Camelford:** Yes. If you're looking at a résumé of mine, I believe at the very bottom it would indicate that in my community activities I was one of the founding

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directors of the facilities for the disadvantaged within the Whitby area.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Whitby Housing.

Mr Camelford: That's correct.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** A non-profit housing corporation. OK, do you think the levels of support for people on social assistance are adequate?

Mr Camelford: Overall, I believe that they are adequate.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** And what would lead you to say that? Why would you say that?

**Mr Camelford:** In reviewing the materials that have been made available to me and looking at both the numbers and the improvements that have taken place, as I mentioned, from an overall perspective I believe that they are adequate.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Are you aware that people who would be receiving Ontario disability support, who would be participating in that program, haven't had a raise in their support in about 10 years?

Mr Camelford: Yes, I am aware.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** With that knowledge, you would still say that you believe they are being adequately supported?

**Mr Camelford:** On the basis that the support levels for this province are in excess of support levels for other provinces.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** But I'm sure you are also aware that while support levels compared to other provinces may be higher, relatively speaking so are all other costs of living. Would you agree with that?

Mr Camelford: Yes, I would. I think there are all different indicators within the cost of living. 1010

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** You've indicated that you bring a broad professional background to this role. Can you explain for us today, with your background, what you think makes you particularly suited to a role on the Social Benefits Tribunal, where you will be dealing with our poorest and most disadvantaged citizens? What in your background, as a business person, what experiences would you be bringing to this role that you think will qualify you well to deal with the cases you will be dealing with?

**Mr Camelford:** I would refer to evaluations. I mentioned in my opening address doing numerous evaluations within a corporate setting. In all cases, it involves people, livelihoods, multiple stakeholders. An example might be looking at a change in process where people are being impacted, either for employment or for change of employment. In each case, I have addressed and managed these evaluations and recommendations with the best intentions of all the individuals kept in mind; ie, if somebody must change a position, then I had certainly looked at ways to have the person retrained. I don't know if that gives you a reasonable example of what you're asking.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I understand that when people come before the tribunal, they are usually in situations of

distress. I want to understand what in your work experience, your professional background, would qualify you to assess particular situations and render a fair decision. I have to say that I believe that as to the kind of example you've provided to me, it's difficult for me to connect the similarity in the two situations.

Another point I want to make—I think Mr Crozier perhaps has some points—around the issue of poverty: you're aware of the fact that, sadly, in this province, in spite of our very strong economic times, we continue to have children who live in poverty. Very often these are children who live in families who receive social benefits. In some cases, the social benefits are received because the parents are disabled, in which case the parents are unable to save for their post-secondary education or even save for their own retirement. Are you aware of that?

Mr Camelford: Not specifically.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** These are the kinds of cases you will encounter on the Social Benefits Tribunal. I'm very interested to know how much of an issue this is for you, the fact that in this province we have children living in poverty, and they will continue to live in poverty even if you make some affirmative decisions in favour of families on the tribunal. Is that a significant issue for you?

**Mr Camelford:** Yes, it is. I, like all others, do not want to see people living in poverty or children being disadvantaged.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I have to say that response confuses me, because initially you indicated that you believe the compensation provided for people on social benefits is adequate. I would suggest to you that the reason we have many children living in poverty is directly related to the fact that social benefits—in the case of people on Ontario Works or welfare, their rates were rolled back by over 20%. In the case of people who receive Ontario disability support payments, they have not had an increase in their support in about 10 years. So I must say that I'm more confused by your responses than satisfied.

That would conclude the questions that I have for this appointee.

The Chair: Any further questions?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Is there any time? The Chair: Yes.

**Mr Crozier:** Good morning, sir. In your review of the material you were given, do you know the percentage of appeals that are either granted or denied before the tribunal? It's not a trick question. I don't know, so I just wondered if you did.

**Mr Camelford:** I remember reading a fair volume of data, but I don't specifically recall seeing the percentage of denials.

**Mr Crozier:** In your review of the material you've been given for the responsibility you will have, do you see where it is reasonable that you could have a degree of flexibility in dealing with cases that come before you?

**Mr Camelford:** That's my understanding. That's what I'm looking to action as I would go forward, if accepted by this committee.

**Mr Crozier:** Because those, as has been pointed out by my colleague, will be difficult decisions because prior to that someone has made a decision in their review of a particular case, presumably based on the rules and regulations that are in place. That's why I need to be assured that you could still, under those circumstances, look at each case on its own with an open mind.

**Mr Camelford:** That would be my prime goal, that I would look at each case with objectivity and not with any preconceived outcomes.

**Mr Crozier:** Do you think you would look at it from kind of a legal standpoint? In other words, was the person who first ruled on a particular case wrong, or can I interpret it differently than that? In other words, I want to get to the point that you may not look at it just as being a line drawn and there's no flexibility there, but that there is that opportunity and that you have the authority to have some flexibility.

**Mr Camelford:** My approach would be to use a measure of fairness within these evaluations, and while there is a law, there is also the need for compassion and for an understanding. Maybe to answer your question, yes, I would use that flexibility in those judgments.

Mr Crozier: Thank you, Mr Camelford.

**The Chair:** That concludes your questions, and we now move to the third party.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Thank you very much. Mr Camelford, do you belong to any particular political party?

Mr Camelford: Yes, I do.

Mr Martin: Could you tell me which one?

Mr Camelford: Certainly. It's the Progressive Conservative Party.

**Mr Martin:** Have you been actively involved in any of the campaigns in the last couple of elections?

**Mr Camelford:** Not in the last election, but I am an active member.

Mr Martin: Have you donated to a political party?

Mr Camelford: I'd say no.

**Mr Martin:** I'm looking at your résumé here and you've worked for Paxar to the year 2000.

Mr Camelford: That's correct.

Mr Martin: And then did you retire?

**Mr Camelford:** No. The Paxar company had gone through a radical downsizing, removing the bulk of their operations from Canada, back to the US, leaving my position—

**Mr Martin:** So what have you done for the last two years?

**Mr Camelford:** I have initiated my own practice in a consultancy and that's what up to this point has occupied my time.

**Mr Martin:** You understand that this is a fairly fulltime position, this appointment to the Social Benefits Tribunal?

**Mr Camelford:** I do. I see this as very much a fulltime position and, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, quite rigorous. 1020

**Mr Martin:** Is this a career move for you?

Mr Camelford: I see this as a career move, ultimately.

**Mr Martin:** Do you understand the importance of this tribunal to many of our most vulnerable and at-risk individuals out there?

Mr Camelford: Yes, I do.

**Mr Martin:** Do you understand the impact of decisions by this government on the lives of many of our atrisk and most vulnerable citizens?

Mr Camelford: Yes, I do.

**Mr Martin:** The fact that in 1995 they lost about a quarter of their income: there are many people who are dependent on social assistance because they're not well physically or mentally or are in circumstances where they just can't work, yet they've lost 21.6%, and according to the analysis of what's happened since then, they are now about 30% below the amount of income they were bringing in in 1995. Does that bother you in any way?

**Mr Camelford:** When I take a look back, the readings I have been able to assess so far would indicate that the level of amount of payment prior to 1995 had grown at an exceptionally high rate over the preceding, I believe, eight to 10 years. While the cutback was apparently large, it still left it in a position that was equal to or better than the majority of the other provinces by way of rates.

**Mr Martin:** A single person in Ontario now gets \$520 a month. Do you figure that's enough to pay for rent and food and clothing, and to support one in participating in a community? You figure that's enough?

**Mr Camelford:** I would have to think that obviously \$520 a month is a very minimum amount.

**Mr Martin:** We had a woman in Sudbury, Kimberly Rogers, who was trying to live on that. Then she got cut off completely and then was reinstated, and at the end of the day, because she chose to go to school and collect student assistance, she ended up living on \$18 a month for food, after the rent was paid, and she and her unborn child died. Do you think that's an appropriate circumstance or situation for somebody to have to live in?

**Mr Camelford:** No. I'm somewhat familiar with the Kimberly Rogers tragedy. I have done some reading on it. Quite frankly, I don't profess to have read all that is potentially available. I've read a number of articles. Obviously, I referred to it as a tragedy, but I also had noted that other members in the community had come forward to alleviate some of her needs, ie, I believe the landlord had waived some of the rent and I believe there was some other assistance as well. So while I think from a pure mathematical point, leaving it down to \$18 a month is extremely difficult, but I do see that there were some other areas of relief that were being offered to her.

**Mr Martin:** Do you understand that according to the rules that are in place now, to actually accept that help from others in the community would also be factored into the amount of money a person could receive? It would be taken off. And if that wasn't reported, it would be considered fraud again and further penalties could have

been imposed. That's the regime under which and within which very poor people in this province now have to live. I frankly don't know how they do it myself. Kimberly Rogers, even with the help she got, and it's obvious many people in Sudbury cared about her—she died and her unborn child died.

Are you aware that the federal government introduced a program a couple of years ago, in response to an allparty resolution that was passed in 1989 to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000, to give a supplement to the child tax benefit to our very poorest citizens, and that in Ontario, we claw that back? It's significant. It can amount to over \$1,000, to \$1,100 a year per child under a certain age to help with food, clothing and that kind of thing. This government, in its wisdom, has decided that people collecting money from the province shouldn't get that money, so they're clawing it back penny for penny from their social assistance cheque. Do you think that's an appropriate thing to be doing?

**Mr Camelford:** Truthfully, I was not aware of that particular legislation, from a federal perspective, and not aware of the total impact, the total numerics, as to what's going forward to a family. I'm really not in a position to give a valid comment on that.

Mr Martin: What concerns me is that we already have a significant portion of our population at risk and vulnerable in the province, by way of decisions made by this government very directly on their behalf. We have established a tribunal to be a court of last resort for these people when they don't find that system working for them. That we would appoint people to this tribunal who would be supportive of, or not understanding, the effort of this government to really push people who are already in poverty into even deeper poverty, and by that expose them to even greater risk to themselves, their children and in fact, in the case of Kimberly Rogers, to their lives—I'm wondering, is there anything else you can tell me here this morning that would give me any comfort or reason to believe that you would, if not be an advocate in some way on the tribunal on behalf of those who come before you who are at risk-we know the risk because we've seen it now in the province-or at least, given your political affiliation and your response to some of these questions, and to the question that was asked earlier whether you thought the amounts were sufficient, that in fact you thought they were, is there anything there to indicate to me that I should be comfortable in agreeing to your appointment to this tribunal, given some of the things I've put in front of you this morning?

**Mr Camelford:** As I maybe mentioned in my opening remarks, I would be looking at each case in an open and objective manner and would deal with or work through it in a fair and honest manner. With that comes—fairness has to be the operative word.

**The Chair:** That concludes your time allocated for questions. The government caucus?

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): I thank you very much for standing for this position. My comments are more to our committee. I think this committee has an

important role. Many of the people who come before us are looking for positions where they're adjudicating, whether it's this board or other types of adjudicating positions. Some of the people who come before this committee are looking for a position on an oversight body, like a civilian or community member, whether it's a health body or a police services board. I think there have been some good questions by the opposition in relation to one's ability to adjudicate. However, when we get into policy items, I think we put people who come before us in a very unfair situation.

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I'll say it simply. It requires political leadership by our parties and our leaders to tackle those problems and not the people that we have before us. So if some of these issues are a problem that have been brought out, I would suggest we do something about it internally, come out and say how we're going to fix those problems and certainly not ask every member appointed to a board, which has to stick to the legislation, whether they agree with the legislation or not. The question is whether that member applies the legislation in an impartial manner. That's what we want of these people being appointed to these boards.

Again, I thank you for putting your name forward. Good luck.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): We'll waive the balance of our time.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. You may step down, sir. Thank you for being with us.

We now proceed to consideration of the appointment

Mr Wood: I move concurrence re Mr Camelford.

**The Chair:** Mr Wood has moved concurrence in the appointment. I'll ask for any discussion and, a little later on, the votes.

**Mr Martin:** I just wanted to respond to some of what I think were sincere comments put forward by Mr Mazzilli a few minutes ago and to explain why it is that I can't support this particular appointment.

I understand the divisions and the breakdown in the responsibility that each of us has in this. In my view, it's our responsibility to at least, at the very minimum, not expose those people whom we govern on behalf of and have particular responsibility for-and in my view, those who are most vulnerable and at risk are at the top of the list-to any further damage. So I think its important that we understand where a particular appointee is coming from and what their leanings might be before we make these appointments. I don't know how a person is going to interpret the act or view the act or make decisions based on the information that's put before him. I want to get a sense of perhaps where he or she may be coming from. Certainly where the member's call for leadership is concerned, I've been clear, as has our caucus here, what it is that we would do, given an opportunity to be government, in front of some of the circumstances that we see affecting some of our most vulnerable and at-risk citizens and that they have to deal with.

My concern is that the tribunal we've set in place here to be the court of last resort for people who have been turned down or told that they don't qualify, be as balanced and fair as is absolutely possible. I guess I'm looking for somebody, first of all, who has some experience, knowledge, background and understanding of what the issues are or might be, who understands the policies within which decisions are going to be made where this tribunal is concerned. I also want to know what their political leanings are, if they support the agenda of a particular government like your own, like the one that's in place here in Ontario right now, and where they've indicated they want to go over the last eight years in this province and, from all that I hear, intend to continue to go.

The minister is on the record in the last couple of days as saying, "We have no intention of reviewing the circumstances within which some of our most vulnerable and at-risk citizens have to live," absolutely no intention of revisiting the clawback of the child tax benefit supplement; no intention of revisiting the benefit level of people on ODSP in this province; and no intention of revisiting the overall framework within which very vulnerable and at-risk people have to live in this province—absolutely no intention. So if there's no intention to review those things, I think it's really important that we consider very carefully, in all good conscience, all appointments to these tribunals.

It is my judgment this morning from the questions and the answers that were put by both the official opposition and myself that this person doesn't leave me the level of comfort that I would need to actually support his appointment. It concerns me if members across the way are willing to support this appointment and in that way participate in the obvious direction of the minister of this government now responsible for community, family and children's services.

When we get a report like we did two days ago that one in six children in this, the richest city in the country, is still living in poverty, we've got a problem that we're not addressing, that we're not taking seriously. To put them further at risk by appointing people to tribunals that will make decisions about the levels of support and income they might expect who don't have any obvious background or understanding or experience in it, who obviously support the political agenda of the party in power—we know where they've been over the last eight years and where they're going—I think it would be irresponsible of us, and you, to make that appointment.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** The public record of this committee will certainly demonstrate that I have always been able to support candidates who bring to their intended role a keen interest in the area they will be appointed in, or at the very least some significant community involvement, an understanding of the process to which they will be appointed. This is a quasi-judicial body, and my disappointment was when this appointee was asked, "How is it you've come to be here?" "Well, I just wanted a job. I just wanted an appointment of some

sort." It wasn't indicated, "This is an area I have always had an interest in. This is an area I've had some experience with."

Further to that, I was not satisfied that there was a real understanding or appreciation of the many issues that impact the families, the individuals, who will be coming before the tribunal for adjudication. I need to be very certain that when people are appointed to quasi-judicial roles, regardless of their political background—and I think the record will also show that I've been able to support people from all political backgrounds, that it's more important for me to understand that there's a real commitment and understanding of the issues they will be facing. In this case, I certainly was not satisfied this morning that the individual was especially interested in social issues or that he was even clear on many of the issues out there that will be coming to him. So I will not be able to support this intended appointee this morning.

**Mr Mazzilli:** I will acknowledge that over the last couple of meetings of this committee we have been able to vote in a reasonable manner on people coming before us, and it's not always 4-3. So that has changed, but that's not the way it's always been.

I will be very clear in a matter that I disqualified myself from. When we talk about qualified people, there was a person who came before this committee with a master's in social work who was being appointed to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, with 18 years in the civil service on social issues, housing and everything else. And we talk about people not having the qualifications? That was a 4-3 vote. Without getting into it, often many qualified people come here and are badgered to the point where they wonder why they came here.

I think this committee has an important role. If it's an oversight body, like a police service or a health unit, then we have to make sure those people have a keen interest in their communities, have a keen interest in those fields. If it's an adjudicative body, quasi-judicial, we have to ensure that they have the skill sets to do those jobs and to go by the legislation that you and I pass in this building. In fact, you don't want people appointed to go outside the legislation.

Anyway, without delaying this any further, Mr Chair, I turn the floor back to you.

The Chair: Any further comment before we vote?

**Mr Martin:** I'm just wondering if the person Mr Mazzilli is speaking of, about whom he disqualified himself in terms of his participation that morning—was that your sister-in-law whom we were appointing here that day?

Mr Mazzilli: That would be correct.

Mr Martin: OK. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr Crozier, you had a comment?

**Mr Crozier:** Just an additional comment to what has been said this morning. It's interesting to revisit this committee, which I sat on for a number of years. When someone is making a job application for what, in his own words, was a career change, he might expect some tough questions, like any job applicant. A-164

The Chair: Any further comments?

Mr Martin: Recorded vote.

**The Chair:** Mr Martin is requesting a recorded vote. The motion by Mr Wood was that the committee concur in the intended appointment as a member of the Social Benefits Tribunal of Mr Glen R. Camelford.

#### Ayes

Johnson, Mazzilli, Wettlaufer, Wood.

Nays

Crozier, Dombrowsky, Martin.

The Chair: The motion is carried.

There being no further business, I will entertain a motion of adjournment.

Mr Wood: So moved.

**The Chair:** Mr Wood has moved a motion of adjournment. All in favour? Opposed. The motion is carried. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 1041.

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**Vice-Chair / Vice-Président** Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord L)

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines L) Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington L) Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord L) Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex PC) Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie ND) Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe PC) Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre / -Centre PC) Mr Bob Wood (London West / -Ouest PC)

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