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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 19 March 2008

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 19 mars 2008

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Julia Munro
Clerk: Douglas Arnott

Présidente : Julia Munro
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 19 March 2008

Mercredi 19 mars 2008

The committee met at 1003 in room 151.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Good morning. We will begin our proceedings of the standing committee on government agencies. Our first order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, January 3.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: The revised report of the subcommittee for January 3:

Your subcommittee considered on January 3, 2008, the selection of intended appointments for committee review, and has agreed to recommend that the following intended appointees from the certificate received on December 20, 2007, be selected for review: official opposition party, no selections; third party, no selections; government, no selections.

I move acceptance of this report.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there any discussion? If not, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, January 24. Ms. Van Bommel, perhaps you might just move its adoption.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: That might be easier. I would like to move adoption of the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, January 24, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion? If not, all in favour? The motion is carried.

The third order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, February 7, 2008.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move adoption of the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, February 7, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there any discussion? If not, all in favour? The motion is carried.

The next order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, February 14, 2008.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move adoption of the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, February 14, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion? All those in favour? The motion is carried.

The next order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, February 21, 2008.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move adoption of the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, February 21, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion? All those in favour? The motion is carried.

The next order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, March 6, 2008.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move adoption of the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, March 6, 2008, as revised.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion? All those in favour? The motion is carried.

The next order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, March 13, 2008.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move adoption of the report of the subcommittee for Thursday, March 13, 2008.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any discussion? All those in favour? The motion is carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

JOAN LOUGHEED

Review of the intended appointment, selected by the official opposition: Joan Lougheed, intended appointee as member, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario board of directors.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): We now move to appointment reviews. Our first review is with Joan Lougheed, intended appointee as member, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario board of directors.

Ms. Lougheed, please come forward. Good morning, and welcome to the committee.

As you may be aware, you have an opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Subsequent to that, there are questions from members of the committee. Just to let you know, we will be commencing questioning today with the official opposition, but each party will have 10 minutes allocated for questions, and we will go in rotation. As is the practice of this committee, any time you take for your statement will be deducted from the time allocated to the government party. Please begin.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you so much for the opportunity to present myself and my qualifications for a position on the board of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. I know that you already have an overview in the resumé that has been provided, and I'd like to talk to you a little bit today about the process that brings me here.

My search for the next chapter in my working career has been taken with a lot of care and deliberation. I have been seeking a role that enables me to continue to make a contribution to the community; one that is challenging and makes full use of the skills and experience I've gained over the years.

I believe that my capacity for hard work under challenging circumstances was clearly demonstrated when I ran in two major political campaigns, back to back: the mayoral campaign in Burlington, followed almost immediately by the Burlington provincial by-election in February of last year.

But more importantly, I believe that the skills and experience gained in 15 years as an elected official give me qualifications and grounding that will be needed to be an active and contributing member of the board. During my tenure in municipal government, I represented one of the busiest and most diverse wards in the city. It included the downtown core, which encompassed arts, culture, heritage, retail and commercial activity. There was the waterfront rejuvenation and the city's largest park. I spent a great deal of time working with citizens in a variety of well-established high- and low-density neighbourhoods and also with businesses that were immediately adjacent. We were all working to revitalize the area, and I can tell you that it was a truly exciting period of incredible change and progress.

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During this time, I worked closely with several restaurants, bars and nightclubs. In fact, one of those nightclubs became quite notorious. It was through developing partnerships with the business owners and working with the fire and police departments, bylaw enforcement officers, the neighbours and even the taxicab companies, that this effort received recognition and, in fact, an international award. It was presented to all the participants through Halton Regional Police Services. I'm very proud of this, as I am of other initiatives.

There were many times when I would work with businesses and residents who were going to be involved in hearings related to licensing. Helping them understand city bylaws, enforcement and their responsibilities was part of the support and counsel I provided. Having an appreciation of the links between the governing laws and regulations, understanding provincial legislation and municipal bylaws, and having governance experience in building community were really essential to me in my role as a councillor, and I believe they are going to be equally important when working with the large and diverse portfolio of the AGCO.

Over the years, I earned a reputation for being able to make difficult decisions using common sense and fair-

ness as my guides. Problem-solving, mediation and creative approaches were key elements. A resident once told me that he didn't always agree with me, but he always respected the fact that I came prepared, that I had done my homework before coming to a decision. I consider this one of my greatest compliments.

There are times when a person knows it is time for change. Early in 2006, I knew I would not run again as a ward councillor. As I considered my future options and explored what I would do next, I talked with a number of people, including Joyce Savoline, who was then a regional councillor; I talked with former colleagues who had received public appointments; I even spoke with the chief of police and the city solicitor. It was my desire to continue in public service.

As a city and regional councillor, I had already served as a provincially appointed member of the Halton-Peel District Health Council, at that time, and the Halton Regional Police Services Board as well. So I had an understanding of the process of appointments and the opportunities that are available through the Public Appointments Secretariat.

I did my research and found I was really attracted to the depth and breadth of the portfolio of the commission. Knowing that there was a vacancy on the AGCO board, I submitted my application. I have to tell you that I underwent one of the most thorough police checks I have ever been through, and that brings me here today.

Ladies and gentlemen, as a member of the AGCO board, I will bring diverse skills, experience, a strong work ethic, and a sound track record in advocacy, fairness and decision-making. I am proud to have earned the respect of my colleagues locally and nationally, and of citizens in the workplaces and communities in which I have served.

If appointed, I will serve with dedication and hard work. I understand the demands of the position, and I look forward to once again serving the public to the best of my ability as a member of the board of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll move to the official opposition and Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Welcome, Joan. Congratulations on your distinguished career of public service in the city of Burlington and for being chosen to represent yourself here today. That's no small feat. Anybody who is crazy enough to want to serve the public and to put themselves in front of this group—I know it takes a lot of courage too.

I have a few questions, just relating to your background and tying it in a little bit more to the job you have been chosen for and that you're here because of.

You did not mention which political party you ran for in 2006. I thought it might be helpful for some of us who were just being elected at the time, and the two new colleagues here, if you could just let us know which party that was.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: I ran as a Liberal candidate.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Just to move along then, you did mention at the beginning that you were looking to create a new career choice for yourself, whether that was running for mayor or running to become an MPP, and that was sort of the impetus of making a decision today to move toward the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. What wasn't clear to me was how that process evolved. Can you enlighten us today on whether or not you had approached the governing party, or if they had approached you, in terms of applying for this position?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Actually, I had already undertaken some investigation into the public appointments that were available even prior to the mayoral race getting under way. My decision not to run as a ward councillor was made before I knew that the mayor of Burlington in fact was not going to run again. So it was not my intention to run against Rob MacIsaac, who was a very popular mayor in Burlington.

The approach was not by the Public Appointments Secretariat; it was part of my job search.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Did you speak with anyone in the Liberal Party about this position?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Actually, I did a fair bit of research. I was on the Internet, and I also met with the chair of the AGCO—not specifically with the Liberals. The chair of the AGCO agreed to meet with me—that was last year as well—in terms of providing me with a little more background, because it wasn't a committee that I had full knowledge and understanding of; I had elements. So I felt I needed to have a little more information before making that application.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So basically you haven't spoken to any Liberal MPPs or any Liberal staff regarding this position prior to today?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: No.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm just further curious—and I appreciate your answer on that: Was the job of a Burlington city councillor a full-time job, as it is in the cities of Ottawa and Toronto?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is. And what would roughly be the pay scale there?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: It was combined, because we sat on both the city and regional government. Our combined salary was around \$86,000.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And it was a full-time job.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: That's correct.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And you're aware of the remuneration for this position?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Yes. I understand it's around \$90,000.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So, similar; it's almost as if it were a replacement.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Are you fully aware of the chief role of the AGCO?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Yes, I think I am.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Could you elaborate maybe a little bit more—I know you have an extensive background in public service—on how you think that what you've done in the past as a city councillor and in your work with the FCM would relay into the AGCO with respect to lotteries and licensing? Have you ever sat on a tribunal, for example?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: In fact, I've had a number of experiences on tribunals. As you know, in the municipal environment we are in public hearings all the time as it relates to development applications. That's every two to three weeks, in fact, that the standing committee meets to hear those applications, and those hearings are conducted under legislation as well, so we have to work within that framework in coming to our decision. I was also a member of the Halton Housing Corp. and served on the sub-committee for the housing tribunal. I think the most interesting smaller-scale quasi-judicial group that I sat on was a fence dispute committee. It was probably more challenging—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Trust me: We've been through committees here where that comes up, so I understand.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: When you get into boundary disputes, it's always interesting.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes. Well, I think that we'll move on, unless my colleague has any more questions at this time. Perhaps at the end?

Thank you, Ms. Lougheed.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): All right. Thank you very much, and we'll move on to Ms. Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Welcome to Queen's Park, Ms. Lougheed. I too would have a few questions for you.

The first one is, I was a little bit surprised to see in your resumé that you still hold your licence for nursing.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: I do. We do a self-review of competency, and that's done on an annual basis. I'll be honest: There was a point in my political career, when it became full-time, that I considered whether it was worth going through that self-evaluation or whether I was still current, but, in doing that, I realized that many of the initiatives that I was involved in—from an environmental perspective, social infrastructure, health and well-being and building community—very much reflected a nursing capacity, even in the work I was doing in an elected position. So whether it was on the district health council or working on housing initiatives, they still reflected a nursing capacity and I still met the qualifications required under the College of Nurses.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. Very good.

My riding is Nickel Belt. It is in northeastern Ontario. I would be interested in understanding a little bit more your knowledge of the facts of life about alcohol and gaming in northern Ontario.

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Ms. Joan Lougheed: I don't think I can speak specifically to that. Again, it's an area where I know that there's a lot of work, a lot of studies that have gone on. There are organizations that are providing community support. This being gambling addiction month, I know

there have been a number of things in the papers as well. I don't think I'm well versed to answer that specifically for the north, and I would expect that that will be part of my orientation to bring me up to speed on some of the issues.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. My next question also builds a little bit on the reality of northern Ontario, where we are home to most of the First Nations in Ontario. I was wondering what your knowledge and capacity is toward alcohol and First Nations, gaming and First Nations; if you could expand on that.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Well, I know that there are some gaming initiatives, the Blue Heron in Port Perry and certainly Rama, that have been very successful. I don't know if First Nations people are looking to pursue other opportunities and where they stand on the initiatives that are under way. Again, those are issues that I would have to be brought up to speed on.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. I would say there's a long learning curve ahead of you, so good luck.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: I understand that.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Those were my questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We do have three minutes remaining on the government side, if you wish to make some comments.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Joan, it's great to see you here. You've got a great resumé here, and I think you've got a very extensive background. You and I had some dealings in the past as members of the same council for a good many years. Two issues I'd like you to expand on, two of the things I think you've raised yourself this morning, are your involvement with the police services board and how that might aid you as we move forward, and also your involvement with zoning issues. You spoke about a nightclub, and I think I know which nightclub you mean. Certainly zoning—

Interjection.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Not in that way; I've heard about this nightclub. I've never been to the nightclub. I know it took an awful lot of work to solve that issue within the city of Burlington. I wonder if you could just expand on that experience a little bit as well.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: There were two major nightclubs in the city, so you might be thinking about either/or, but I think they're both reflective and certainly they created some challenges for us both in the capacity for those facilities, the challenges in maintaining a safe environment from a fire perspective and the policing of it as well. So when their licences came up for renewal, there was a lot of community interest in what was going to happen, or if there had been a charge against them as well. Certainly the city was very actively involved because the draw on resources from a community perspective was huge. I think as a hearing officer I have some experiences that I would bring to the table that would prove to be valuable. When you're dealing with the public, you're dealing with building committee—it isn't just a ruling on a technical basis; I think you have to consider all of the evidence before coming to a decision

on what is the best outcome for the business as well as for the community at large.

In terms of my work with the Halton Regional Police Service, I think that when I left municipal politics, the endorsement of the chief of police, a couple of letters I received from staff sergeants because of the partnerships that we had—I've always taken the approach that it's not you against us; we're not in different camps; we're really working together. That was very critical. I think, as you look at the role of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, it's just as important that you understand the linkages between the legislation, between building healthy communities, supporting business and having sensitivity to citizens as well. Those experiences were my learning curve in that regard.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): I believe, Ms. MacLeod, you had something more. We have two minutes left.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Sure. I have two very quick questions. You consider service on this agency to be part of your political activity or public service. I'm just wondering if your political affiliation will have an impact on your decisions on this committee.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: I don't think it will at all.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. I have a question: What is your view on the sale, or the possible sale, of the LCBO—on the privatization of the LCBO? Could you provide that to us?

Ms. Joan Lougheed: I don't have a position at this point in time. You can have some assumptions as a citizen on what you read in the paper but I will say that, from political experience, you know that what you read in the paper may not necessarily cover all the details that you need to make an informed decision. I don't know what has brought it to that point, I don't know what all the points of consideration are, and I would need to have that information in hand.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, thank you very much, Ms. Lougheed. I appreciate the opportunity today.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. That concludes the time that we have allocated. You may step down.

Ms. Joan Lougheed: Thank you very much.

JACQUELINE CASTEL

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Jacqueline Castel, intended appointee as member, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario board of directors.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Our second interview is with Jacqueline Castel, the intended appointee as member of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario board of directors. Please come forward. Good morning, and welcome. As you may know, you have an opportunity, should you wish to do so, to make a few remarks, and subsequent to that, there will be questions from the members of the committee. In rotation, we will

begin with the third party. Again, as I'm sure you know, we have allotted 10 minutes for each, and we will go in rotation. You may begin.

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: Thank you, Madam Chair and committee members. It's a pleasure to be here today. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to be able to highlight and elaborate on my relevant experience and qualifications for the position of part-time board member of the AGCO.

I am a lawyer by profession, a graduate of the University of Toronto faculty of law, and was called to the Ontario bar in 1993. I would bring to the board of the AGCO approximately 15 years of experience in the areas of gaming law and regulatory compliance.

I began my career in gaming with the Ontario government, specifically with the Ontario casino project, where I was involved in researching and recommending models for casino regulation and ultimately in providing drafting instructions for the Gaming Control Act regulations on casinos.

When the Gaming Control Commission was established in 1994, I went to work for this agency. I was responsible for setting up and administering the agency's first compliance program for casinos, and I also served in the capacity of deputy registrar. In this capacity, I administered the regulations governing casinos and gaming suppliers, developed policy, reviewed and approved regulatory submissions, and made registration suitability decisions.

In 1995, while still employed by the Gaming Control Commission, I assisted the government of Nova Scotia in drafting its gaming legislation and in setting up its regulatory agency for casinos.

For the last 11 years, I've worked as general counsel and chief compliance officer for two commercial casinos in Ontario: Casino Niagara between 1996 and 1998, where I was part of its opening team; and Casino Rama between 1998 and the end of October 2007. As chief compliance officer, I designed, implemented and enforced the companies' regulatory compliance programs, which included programs for complying with the Gaming Control Act and the Liquor Licence Act. This involved developing compliance procedures with checks and balances built into them, writing compliance handbooks, designing compliance training programs, training senior staff on regulatory compliance, and chairing the compliance committee.

Since retiring from Casino Rama at the end of October 2007, I've done consulting work for the AGCO on gaming policy as it pertains to casino regulation, and for the New Brunswick Lotteries Commission. For the New Brunswick Lotteries Commission, I have provided drafting instructions for its new gaming legislation on casinos, and am assisting with the set-up of its regulatory agency.

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I have written a legal textbook on gaming control law in Ontario which was published by Canada Law Book in 2002 and which I update annually to include the most recent developments in the law in this field. The book

includes chapters on casino law, charitable gaming, lotteries, liquor compliance and setting up an effective regulatory compliance program. I recently completed an update to the chapter of the book on lotteries to incorporate the new Gaming Control Act regulations governing lottery retailers and equipment suppliers and disputes over lottery winnings.

I have written and spoken quite widely on the subjects of regulatory compliance, gaming, liquor and currency reporting law and compliance.

I am also a member of the International Association of Gaming Attorneys and the International Masters of Gaming Law.

In summary, I believe my legal background, and my 15-year career in the gaming industry, would make me a strong member and contributor to the board of the AGCO, and it would be my honour to serve on the board of this important agency.

Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll go to Ms. Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Again, welcome to Queen's Park. With a name like Jacqueline, do you speak French?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I do speak French. My French, unfortunately, is a little bit rusty. My father is French, and I grew up speaking French part of the time at home, but I haven't really had the opportunity to practise it for many years.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No problem.

I was curious to see what motivated you to apply for this position with AGCO when you could have continued to provide legal counsel to a lot of their members and a lot of their agency. What motivated you for this position?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I was interested in having a change. I relocated to Mississauga about 18 months ago, prior to the birth of my daughter, and I was finding the commute between Mississauga and Orillia, where I was living and working at the time, too difficult. I actually didn't apply specifically to the board of AGCO; I was interested in serving on a board with quasi-judicial powers and applied online to about seven or eight boards. Obviously, given my gaming background, I had a particular interest in the board of the AGCO, but I didn't apply specifically to this position.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You applied online; then they responded back to you?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: Yes, I applied online and then, given my background in gaming law, I also sent a note with my resumé to the chair of the board of the AGCO, David Gavsie, and I met with him in early November about the possibility of an appointment to the board.

M^{me} France Gélinas: How did that meeting go?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: It went very well.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It went very well. Okay. And a similar question—what was your interaction with and your knowledge of northern Ontario gaming and alcohol licensing?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I really haven't had a lot of exposure to gaming in northern Ontario. Orillia is probably about as far north as I've had direct exposure to. I'm aware that there are one or two charity casinos and slot facilities in northern Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: In working for Casino Rama, do you feel you have a good knowledge of First Nations' needs—I would call them special needs—toward gaming and alcohol?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: More so gaming, but yes. Casino Rama is obviously located on a First Nation reserve. I had a very good working relationship with the Chipewas of Mnjikaning First Nation, and I have had the opportunity to research some of the First Nations issues around gaming and their various legal disputes with respect to the government in writing my book on gaming control law.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would be curious to know, what is your opinion of off-site betting for racetracks?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I don't really have an opinion on that subject.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That's okay. Those were my questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll go to Mr. Hillier.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much for coming here today. I listened with interest to your recap of your activities involved with various casinos. One of the things that piqued my interest was your extensive compliance background—writing about regulatory compliance and being involved with aspects of compliance. In my community, that has, of course, been a very significant problem for many of the licensed establishments dealing with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and this very one-size approach with regard to compliance.

I'm sure there are some bad bars down in Burlington; there are not too many up in my country, but they're often treated the same way. I'm wondering, when you wrote your compliance books, what mechanism did you use to get out into the community to hear or, after writing them, to evaluate your compliance regulations?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: Are you talking about compliance on the gaming side or the liquor side?

Mr. Randy Hillier: These are mostly liquor establishments. But the same would apply—what mechanism would you use to evaluate yourself and evaluate your regulations to see if they are indeed appropriate and functioning the way you intended them to?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I haven't done anything to evaluate the regulations myself, as for the last 11 or 12 years I have no longer been working for the government; I've been working for organizations which are responsible for complying with the legislation. Although, I would suggest that a way of evaluating the effectiveness of the legislation would be by looking at the number of infractions, the type and seriousness of infractions, and conducting audits and inspections to evaluate whether the

risks that the regulations are designed to minimize are in fact being addressed.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think that's one of the great things we have to be aware of when we make decisions, whether they be regulatory compliance or whatever: that we have some mechanism to evaluate after and audit ourselves to make sure they are achieving the objectives.

One other question is, what are your thoughts and views about community gaming—local bingos and community fundraising? Do you believe there is a significant role for the community and local bingos, or that it ought to be all under the control of the province? Why I ask that is, a number of our local bingos are facing significant hardship staying in business, contributing to our local associations, and that doesn't seem to be lessening in any degree at all.

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I certainly believe that charitable gaming is an important tool for fundraising for many charitable organizations. I recognize that revenues from charitable gaming have declined in recent years with the stiff competition from commercial casinos, OLG casinos and OLG lottery products. But I still believe that there is a significant role for charity gaming and that it's an important fundraising tool.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Hopefully, we can see down the road that there would be a greater understanding in the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of the value of that local charitable fundraising, how important it is to our province and our local communities.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Welcome, Ms. Castel. I have some very brief questions for you. First of all, have you ever been a member of or a donor to a political party in Ontario?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: No, I have not.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No? Okay.

I do notice that you have applied to several boards within the Ontario government, as wide-ranging as this one, which is alcohol and gaming, to the Ontario Racing Commission, police arbitration, and the labour relations board. I'm wondering: How did you hear about these appointments? Was this undertaken completely by your own initiative? Have you spoken with anyone in the Liberal Party or in the Premier's office?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: No, I haven't spoken to anyone, other than, as I indicated before, after applying I met with David Gavsie, the chair of the AGCO board. I applied online, and they were simply boards that I would have been interested in serving on. I obviously had a specific interest in the AGCO board, given my background in gaming, but there were a number of other boards I would have been interested in as well.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Given your extensive background in gaming and your connections to Casino Rama and Casino Niagara—as well, one of your references is from Casino Niagara—do you think that would raise any questions about you being an overseer of your former employers?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I can appreciate the perception of conflict, and I would suggest that it may be appropriate for me to refrain from participating in any decisions regarding Casino Rama in any case for a period of time, perhaps a year. But I would like to note that there are thousands of licensees and registrants, and Casino Rama is only one of thousands. In the last 14 years, or since the inception of the agency, I'm not aware of there having been any hearings before the board involving a casino operator. The board's jurisdiction in relation to casino operators is fairly limited; most of the power under the legislation rests with the registrar. And it's my understanding that most of the hearings will be on the liquor side.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Who told you that most of the hearings are on the liquor side? Is that from personal research, or is it from your meeting with the chair?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: David Gavsie, and also from personal knowledge.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So that's where you learned that it's unlikely that Casino Rama would come before your tribunal?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: It's unlikely. It's possible, but unlikely. As I said—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And you would recuse yourself if that ever became the case?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: Yes. I would suggest that that would be appropriate for a period of time.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Have you spoken to the chair about this?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: No.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: In terms of your mentioning that perhaps for a year you would recuse yourself—that has not come up in discussion with the current chair?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: We didn't discuss that during our meeting.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Would this be a personal decision to recuse yourself, or will this be a decision by the board? Would you bring that up?

Ms. Jacqueline Castel: I would discuss it with the chair.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): We have some time remaining. Any further comments? All right. Thank you very much for being here today.

SIVAM VINAYAGAMOORTHY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party and third party: Sivam Vinayagamoorthy, intended appointee as member, Mississauga Halton Community Care Access Centre.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Our third interview is with Sivam Vinayagamoorthy, the intended appointee as member of the Mississauga Halton Community Care Access Centre.

Welcome. Thank you for coming. As you will have heard from the others, you have the opportunity to make

a few comments, and subsequently we'll have questions from the members of the committee. So it's all yours.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Madam Chair, thank you for this opportunity to appear before your committee to discuss my innate desire to be a part of the public service.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." When I first read this quote from Mahatma Gandhi about 10 years ago, it made me realize that having a life of 9-to-5 work and weekends with the kids in front of the TV set did not make me happy. That's when I realized I could do more with my free time to help others. I joined the Mississauga hospital as a volunteer, the Mississauga Sai Baba centre as a volunteer coordinator, the Churchill Meadows Residents' Association etc—so many volunteer groups. Looking back, I always knew that I wanted to be part of the community action group. Ever since my childhood, I have detected in myself a certain compassion and innate desire to help others, and took part in many volunteer projects. Today, as a father of two teenage kids, I still desire to help others who are not so fortunate.

You may ask: Why this? I chose to apply for this for a number of different reasons. My enthusiasm to be part of the community care access is simple; I want to be part of the group to develop and advocate policy decisions that will benefit society as a whole, not just a few influential special interest groups. I also believe, with my experience and working with Peel seniors, I could bring some valuable insights.

One reason I particularly enjoy public service and the challenges that go along with it is the opportunity to connect with people. I am even more convinced that this board is right for me. On the road to "Love all, serve all," I've encountered twists and turns and some detours. It is unquestionably the hardest battle I could fight. However, in the process, I accumulated a tremendous amount of valuable experience and knowledge. My diversity of experience is my biggest asset. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the government. Comments? Okay; thank you. We'll move, then, to Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, sir, for your appearance here today. I'm just curious: Have you ever been a member of a political party or a donor?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, I do.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Would you care to elaborate on that, with your political activities?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I'm just an ordinary Liberal Party member.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: "An ordinary Liberal Party member"?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Have you ever donated to the Liberal Party of Ontario or Canada?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I did in the past.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Are you a member of—any other activities with the Liberal Party? I see from some of our research that you have made substantial contributions to

the Liberal Party—totalling \$3,817 in 2006—and that you're also a member of the GTA Liberal bloggers. I find this curious because your reference is Harinder Takhar, the minister responsible for small business.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: He is my MPP. I did some volunteer services with the party in my riding, but I have resigned from most of the activities right now.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I just have a further question with respect to that. Were you approached by Mr. Takhar to fill this vacancy?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: No, ma'am. You can go through your research and see that I always go online if I see any board of any public service, as a part-time, I always apply—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, the difference is that the person who spoke before you—we did see in her application that she had applied for 11 boards. It does say here that you've applied for one board and it was the community care access centre here in Mississauga and that your reference is Harinder Takhar. I'm just wondering, in light of that fact that you're a substantial donor to the Liberal Party—

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I'm not that—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Well, most people—I'm a member of a political party and I can tell you that \$50 is a lot for one person. So I'm curious as to the political motivation behind this position and this appointment.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Nobody approached me, honestly. I'm telling you again, I went online. If you can go back and talk to the public service and find out, last year before the—I always go online and I apply for several boards.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, well let's change tracks, then. Perhaps you can tell us a little bit more about your role with the CCAC, if and when you're appointed, and what you see as the most obvious need, as you take on this appointment, in your region, but also in the rest of Ontario.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: There are lots of things I can do. I can work with the chairman of the board and implement there, whatever—the Ministry of Health community care access guidelines. We'll go through that and implement the future plans. I can work with it. I went through lots of things. I was volunteering with the seniors' homes. My wife and I go every March and October and do lots of volunteer service. For example, we service wheelchairs free of charge for nursing homes. I see lots of things I can do there.

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Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Specifically, could you list about three?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Specifically, home care. We are improving Peel region.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So home care.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Home care, for an example. I'm saying that there are lots of things to be improved.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Specifically, what do you bring to the table on this CCAC?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Home care, as an example: We are reducing the waiting period. In health care, there are of waiting periods in some of the areas.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So you believe you're qualified to be on this CCAC?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes. Even though my field is engineering, on the weekends my volunteering is mostly involved with seniors. In fact, I'm an associate member of one of the seniors' clubs. I can't be a senior yet, right?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That's good for you, I guess.

Health care is obviously one of the most important priorities of any elected official, regardless of political party. I would point out that I think it's really important that we have people involved in this particular area, in CCACs, who know what they're doing. I would like to know how you would go about implementing the board's mandate.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I would do more research. I already did some. I will work with the other board members to implement whatever that feature—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Do you know what the board's mandate is?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Could you clarify that for those of us that are from different regions, other than Mississauga and Halton?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Funding, budgeting—I can explain more, but in shortened form, they manage community care access centres.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Could you share some of the research that you've just told us that you've undertaken on the CCAC?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Nursing home funding—I did lots of work, but it's hard to explain to you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, that's enough. Madam Chair, thank you.

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

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Indirectly, health-care-related social services, supplies and acute care, for example. I did lots of research, but I don't know how to—

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Okay, thank you very much. We'll move on to Ms. Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you for coming here this morning. I happen to be the health critic, so health care is a portfolio I know very well. I wanted to know: What is your knowledge of home care?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: By volunteering over the years, I've been to several nursing homes, several hospitals, chronic care units. That is my hands-on experience.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That is not home care, though, sir. Home care is care that is delivered in the home, not in a nursing home, not in a hospital. What is your knowledge of long-term care? CCACs are responsible for long-term-care placement. What is your knowledge of that field?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: It's a publicly funded agency, and they look after all the nursing homes, home care service, clients in determining eligibility, and purchasing arrangements on behalf of proposals—case referral, case management, all these things, but community care access mostly.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Are you aware that community care access centres use competitive bidding to give contracts for home care?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, I am.

M^{me} France Gélinas: What do you think of this process?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I heard of this in the newspapers several months ago. I really want open transparency. For example, somewhere in Hamilton, the minister went over the bidding process and he automatically gave it to the previous one because of the good service, the quality of the service, I can say.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That's not exactly what Minister Smitherman did. He halted the bidding process in Hamilton so that they could review it. So it could very well be that there will be a new process at the CCAC for home care. In your view, is the bidding process to give out home care contracts something that serves the people of Ontario well or not?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Can you repeat the question?

M^{me} France Gélinas: In your values, do you think the competitive bidding process is something that serves the people of Ontario well or not well?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Well. Open bidding is better.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. Do you understand how the bidding process works?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, I do.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Could you explain it a little bit?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Like any other departments, they open tenders. Whoever is qualified and the price is right, with the quality there, they will go for it.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Are you aware that there are a lot of for-profit companies that bid for those contracts?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, I do.

M^{me} France Gélinas: What are your views toward for-profit companies providing public health care?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: At this present moment, I can't comment on that because I am not a member of the board.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I just wanted to know your values. What are your values toward medicare? What are your values toward private, for-profit companies in public care?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Again, I want to emphasize that I'm a believer in a publicly funded health care system, and a private health care system is going to put down the poor and needy.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Sorry?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I'm a firm believer in the public health care system, so I'm not a supporter of the private.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You don't support private? Could you tell us if, once you're at the CCAC board, you would hold those same values and speak against private companies?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: No, no. If most of the nursing homes are run by private companies—

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was talking home care.

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Home care. At this moment I can't comment on that, ma'am, because my beliefs are in a public health care system and I have to do more research on that.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay, so your values, your beliefs, are that you want the health care system to be public?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, ma'am.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And is it also that a for-profit health care system is not part of your values?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: No, no.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. And is this something that you will be bringing to the CCAC, the community care access centre?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, I will.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay.

How do I know how much time I have left?

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): You have about two minutes left.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. I wanted to talk to you about long-term care. If you read the newspaper, you'll hear that there are problems in long-term care regarding the quality of the care that the people in long-term care receive. Do you have an opinion on that?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: At this moment, again, I am not appointed yet. I read, like you said, in the newspapers that there is lots of room to improve the service.

M^{me} France Gélinas: There's lots of room to improve the service? So would you say that you agree that the level of care in nursing homes and homes for the aged need to improve?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Some of the places, yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Here again, you are aware that there are for-profit, long-term-care homes in our health care system?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: I'm not sure yet. I'll have to look into it.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, I can tell you that there are for-profit long-term-care providers right now. As I said before, you've told us that your values were for a public health care system. So here again, is this something that you would be willing to speak against once you're on the CCAC board?

Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthy: Yes, if the time is right and I've looked into it. Anything that is good for the public health care system, I will speak for that.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay. Those were my questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much for coming here today. That concludes the questioning. Thank you for your participation.

Mr. Sivam Vinayamoorthy: Thank you, ma'am.

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BRIAN DESBIENS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Brian Desbiens, intended appointee as chair, Education Quality and Accountability Office board of directors.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Our fourth and final interview today is with Brian Desbiens, the intended appointee as chair, Education Quality and Accountability Office board of directors.

Good morning, and welcome. Thank you for coming forward. As I'm sure you've heard from my previous instructions, you have an opportunity, should you chose to do so, to make an initial statement, and subsequent to that we will have questions from the members. Please proceed.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning everyone. I have a prepared statement and I've given a copy to you, so I'll follow along that, and then we'll get into the questions.

First of all, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the appointments review committee, but especially to have the privilege to be put forward for chair by the Minister of Education. I have served on the EQAO board of directors for one term of three years and I am the acting chair presently, having been selected by the membership at our last board meeting, after Dr. Pascal stepped down on February 1, 2008.

I retired three years ago from Sir Sandford Fleming College after 16 years as its president. I started my career at St. Clair College as a faculty member and counsellor. I served as head of counselling and health services, dean of students, vice president of administration and campus principal at the Thames campus while at St. Clair before moving on to Fleming. My entire career was dedicated to student success, innovative learning and teaching strategies. I have a master's degree in guidance, counselling and higher education and a doctorate in counselling psychology. This educational background includes an understanding of testing and assessment.

I have also taught at the secondary, college and university levels; that includes the privilege of facilitating learning for diploma, bachelor's, master's and doctoral students. I have established at St. Clair College and at Fleming institutional research centres focused on the study of learning and program development. My own doctoral dissertation focused on student retention.

I have enjoyed the opportunities to contribute not only to educational development at the post-secondary level but also to the secondary and the elementary levels. I have done this through my teaching for the Ministry of

Education and serving on many government panels. Perhaps the most relevant to the issue before us is the working group I was on that was established to reform the secondary school structure in the 1990s. It was through this panel that the secondary school curriculum was shortened to four years and that the concepts of large-scale assessment were discussed. Frankly, I did and still believe that diagnostic testing that assists the individual student is most crucial if followed up with proper interventions to remediate the differences that individuals have. I was sceptical back then, quite frankly, that standardized testing on a large scale would be able to create the culture necessary for student success. The working group presented a student success strategy back then that was not employed. Perhaps this was the reason that Dr. Pascal asked me to serve on the EQAO board three years ago.

I have agreed to continue on the EQAO board because I believe that it has, over the past decade, contributed significantly to creating a culture of evidence-based decision-making relative to proper intervention strategies. The focus of EQAO on providing data that identifies for the student, the teacher, the school and the province where we should be focusing our resources has been a success. The use of over 5,000 teachers annually in all stages of test development, administration, scoring, analysis and intervention is unique in the world, as is the testing in Ontario of the curriculum by standardized testing.

I believe we have a world-class assessment process and organization. Our focus on utilizing the evidence to improve learning has shown that we can improve learning outcomes. We have much to improve upon, but we have an excellent basis on which to build. The work of the literacy and numeracy secretariat, for example, that helps over 1,100 schools each year in this province develop improvement strategies for the most at-risk students, depends upon the EQAO data as the basis of identification.

I believe the independence of the EQAO is crucial to building a trusting assessment body for teachers, parents and the public. I believe that proper research to continue to develop the best testing instruments and processes is crucial. I believe that the proper use of evidence that fosters student success and learning is key to our helping the most crucial resource in our province—our youth—to reach their potential.

Given that this is a three-party committee, I suspect that you would like to know whether I have particular political connections. Throughout my entire career as a public servant, I did not belong to a political party and have enjoyed the trust of all major parties through appointments. In fact, I was appointed to the EQAO board prior to joining a political party.

A little over a year ago—perhaps a year and a half—I did join the Liberal Party and I am presently active as policy adviser to the federal candidate in our local Peterborough riding. I also have excellent working relationships with members from other political parties. For example, Laurie Scott, my local representative—provin-

cial member of Parliament—has sought my advice on many educational issues and we have worked together on issues such as the Frost Centre Institute.

I see no problem in chairing this independent board. It has been the practice of organizations to brief all parties in its functions and results. In my role as chair, if appointed, I will have a primary obligation to the citizens of Ontario to inform them of how our youth are progressing in their learning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. In our rotation we will commence the questioning, then, with the official opposition.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is an honour to be here with somebody who received the Order of Ontario, so congratulations on that.

I have a quick question. You mentioned that you are a member of the Liberal Party. Is that federally, provincially or both?

Dr. Brian Desbiens: My membership is actually federal at this time, yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. And you're supporting a candidate there in Peterborough? Could you let us know—

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Yes, Betsy McGregor is the federal Liberal candidate.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Now that we've got that housekeeping out of the way, I understand that you were a member of the Education Quality and Accountability Office and I just wanted to know how you knew that there was a vacancy for chair. If you could just share that with us.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Certainly. Dr. Pascal was the chair at the time and I served, as I mentioned, for three years. He approached me last fall and asked if, in fact, he was going to be leaving the committee, would I consider, I think is the way he put it, being chair. Then he approached me later in the fall after his announcement was made by the Premier that he was going to be the commissioner for the Early Years study. At that time, he approached me again and said, would I be willing to have my name put forward. Then, subsequently, I was called by the appointments group saying that my name was coming forward.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Excellent. Well, I just have one quick question. Do you see yourself going in a different direction as chair than was previously the direction of this office, or in a similar direction? If maybe you could elaborate a little bit on that.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Sure. First of all, as I mentioned, this is a successful organization. My objectives that I would put out are, one, to renew the board—we have three vacancies on the board, so we have to renew the board; secondly, obviously to build on the success that's there, particularly the success of working with the teachers, as I've mentioned. When you're working directly with the people in the field, it really does—but we have to continue to work at that.

We also have to continue to evolve the tests themselves based on our curriculum—just as our curriculum has to. So that's building on the success that's there. But there are some new directions. For example, we believe that there still is more room to work and improve upon the public's understanding and parents' understanding of assessment and its role. We also believe—and we just finished a retreat—that the present model we have tests students at grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 and then we have the international test. Well, we have to integrate that into a more effective model. Also, if you would take a look at that, we aren't really testing the students or gathering the evidence to assist our teachers at what we call the critical transition stages. When a student goes from preschool into school, we now know from the EQAO data that there are already differences in performance. So we need to look more at that interface. Dr. Pascal and the EQAO board will be looking at that jointly.

Secondly, we need to refine the hand-off from elementary to secondary, and work on what is the right kind of information, that you go from elementary to secondary to help students be successful in secondary. If you also notice, there is no kind of exit assessment of our curriculum or of learning of our students. The last time we test is really, you know, in grade 10. So there are these transition periods. That last transition period, particularly either the post-secondary or the world of work and citizenship, is a pretty important one. This is one of the things that we're looking at as a board.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just as a parting comment, I want to thank you for your presentation here today. I know, having spoken about you with Laurie Scott, whom you mentioned, that she's very, very pleased that you are here today. There is no problem here with the official opposition endorsing your candidacy. So I wish you the best and thank you very much.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Thank you.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Desbiens. Here again, you have a very French name. Do you know how to speak French?

Dr. Brian Desbiens: I'm afraid not.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'll keep trying. Eventually I'll get one.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: I'm sorry.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That's okay. I just wanted your opinion. I come from the north. There are lots of northern and rural schools in my riding. The schools are small. There are lots of split grades where one teacher will teach two, three, sometimes four grades in the same class. Do you feel that the province-wide testing that's presently available properly reflects the special needs of those kids who attend split grades in small rural and northern schools?

Dr. Brian Desbiens: One of the other areas—I didn't elaborate all of them—we're doing analysis of is in fact that very thing. We're trying to take a look at the inequalities; in a sense, the differences. Whether it's rural,

whether it's gender or race, we think there's some real help that the data can provide to us if used in a constructive way. I believe the testing is fair because it's testing the curriculum, and the curriculum is common across Ontario.

However, the interventions are what's critical. The literacy and numeracy secretariat, using the EQAO data, plus our identifying partner schools or neighbour schools, is, I think, a strategy to be able to help, particularly in the north where a school may not have all of the resources or even a school board might not have all of the other resources. If they can partner up to be able to look at what the strategies and best practices are to be able to intervene, it can be very helpful.

There are unique challenges across the province. Once of the myths out there is that you can use the EQAO data to compare. We are absolutely adamantly opposed to that. What you have to do is look at the uniqueness of the students, the uniqueness of the challenges in each of those communities, and then develop intervention strategies that are unique. I think there the EQAO data actually is supporting the kind of challenges that they have in the north and in rural Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I understand that the standard testing is done in English and French. There are more and more schools in my riding that introduce Ojibway to the students. The students are actually starting to speak it pretty good. Is this something that is on your radar that you are looking at?

Dr. Brian Desbiens: It's a wonderful question. Presently, we only test in the two languages. We do not test in any aboriginal language. As you know, there are several languages. It is something we're looking at, but I can't say that we are planning to do that. It's something we are looking at to see whether it makes a difference what your first language or your second language is.

But certainly, on aboriginal performance, we are very interested in identifying how we can improve that across the province. And it's just not in northern Ontario. It's also in southern Ontario. I happen to live in Peterborough and we also have language issues and testing issues in our region.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments? Thank you very much for appearing here before us today. We appreciate you coming and offering your comments to the committee.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: Thank you very much. It was delightful. You were very easy on me. Excellent questions, and I'll—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We're all afraid of Laurie Scott. That's why.

Dr. Brian Desbiens: It's a privilege to serve this government but also the province of Ontario. We certainly will look into a couple of the areas that have been raised here. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): It is now time to deal with concurrences, members of the committee. We

will begin first with considering the intended appointment of Joan Lougheed, intended appointee as member, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario board of directors. Is someone ready to move concurrence?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I move that the application of Joan Lougheed be accepted.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mrs. Van Bommel. Members may make any comments at this point, if they wish.

Seeing no discussion, all in favour? The motion is carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Jacqueline Castel, intended appointee as member, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario board of directors.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I would move that we accept the appointment of Jacqueline Castel.

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

We will now consider the intended appointment of Sivam Vinayagamoorthy, the intended appointee as member, Mississauga Halton Community Care Access Centre.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I would move the concurrence of the appointment of Sivam Vinayagamoorthy.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a procedural question. Is there an opportunity for this committee to postpone this vote for a week?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Douglas Arnott): Yes. The standing orders do provide that if a member requests a deferral of the decision, that would automatically be deferred for up to seven days.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Would I be able to put forward a motion, then, and would it provide the opportunity for the intended appointee to come back to this committee and provide some more detailed information to us? Because at this point in time, the official opposition cannot support this appointment. It's not clear to me that he understands fully what he will be expected to do, and I want to give the individual an opportunity to prove to us that he is the right candidate for this job. We—my colleague and I—are not prepared to make that decision today.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Douglas Arnott): There is no need for a motion inasmuch as simply the member's request that there be a deferral represents, then, that deferral. There is no provision, however, in the standing orders for recall of an intended appointee. So the deferral would be simply the deferral of the decision-taking.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you. I would request a deferral.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): All right. That is not a debatable suggestion, so we will defer, then, until we meet next week.

I would ask now to turn our attention to consider the intended appointment of Brian Desbiens, the intended appointee as chair, Education Quality and Accountability Office board of directors.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I would move the concurrence of the appointment of Brian Desbiens.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Any comments? Seeing none, all in favour? The motion is carried.

Thank you very much. That concludes our business of this morning on intended appointments. If there are any other comments at this point—yes, Mr. Flynn.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'm just wondering if somebody could explain to the gentleman whose application was deferred for a week what the process will be from here on in, just so he knows when he leaves that he's not being called back, that a decision will be made next week on this.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Certainly. Yes, I will make that undertaking.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): This committee stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1119.

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