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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 18 May 2010

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 18 mai 2010

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Ernie Hardeman
Clerk: Douglas Arnott

Président : Ernie Hardeman
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX**

Tuesday 18 May 2010

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The committee met at 0903 in committee room 1.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Recorded vote.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. COLIN HESLOP

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Colin Heslop, intended appointee as member, College of Trades Appointments Council.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I call to order the committee of government agencies for May 18. First of all, we thank all the committee members for their attendance this morning.

Secondly, the first two items on our agenda are to consider concurrences for the interviews that were held last week. The first one is the intended appointment of Colin Heslop as a member of the College of Trades Appointments Council. Do we have a motion?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I move concurrence in the appointment of Colin Heslop as a member of the College of Trades Appointments Council.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You've heard the motion. Discussion? All those in favour?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Albanese, Brown, Cansfield, Carroll.

Nays

MacLeod, Wilson.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The motion is carried.

MR. HUGH LAIRD

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Hugh Laird, intended appointee as member, College of Trades Appointments Council.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The second concurrence is the intended appointment of Hugh Laird as a member of the College of Trades Appointments Council.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I am proud to move the concurrence in the appointment of Hugh Laird as a member of the College of Trades Appointments Council.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You've heard the motion. Discussion? No discussion?

Ayes

Albanese, Brown, Cansfield, Carroll.

Nays

MacLeod, Wilson.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The motion is carried.

MR. PATRICK DILLON

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Patrick Dillon, intended appointee as member, College of Trades Appointments Council.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We will now proceed to the intended appointments. The first appointment this morning is Patrick Dillon, intended appointee as a member of the College of Trades Appointments Council. Mr. Dillon is present. If you would take a seat at the head of the table.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: I see that we have some cameras in the room. I just wonder if we could recognize the press groups that they represent.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It's possible, but it's not normal. I don't think we ever, when something happens in the Legislature—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It was just a question.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We won't have a cross-debate. I would point out that in the Legislature when something happens, we do not have the press identify themselves in the gallery. Thank you very much for that. It's not a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: I'd like to know if it's possible to swear in an intended appointee under oath. I know that happens in some committees, and I'm wondering if we could do that in this particular instance.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It's not impossible, but it would have to be at the request of the whole committee.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, how do I—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You can ask for that from the committee, as to whether they would agree to it.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to request that.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): There has been a request made that the witness this morning be sworn in to give sworn testimony.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: No.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: No.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Chair, I have another question. The Liberals are denying this request from the opposition to have this particular individual sworn in. Is he allowed to ask himself to be sworn in under oath?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I'm not in a position to suggest what the deputant wishes to ask for or not to ask for. It's not the committee's position—the request for the swearing in—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The position of the swearing-in has been cited, that the committee is not in the position to request that. If the applicant wishes to request that, that would be up to the applicant, but he would not be obligated to do that.

We have Patrick Dillon. Mr. Dillon, thank you very much for your presence this morning. As is the normal practice, we will provide you with the opportunity to make an opening statement to inform the committee as to why you proceeded to come here and your qualifications that would qualify you for the position. We will then have questions from each caucus; the caucuses will have 10 minutes to ask questions as they see fit on their thoughts on the appropriateness of the appointment. Obviously, with 10 minutes from each party, that will conclude the half-hour survey. We will begin the questioning with the third party, and then we will proceed from there. I was just waiting, filling in the time until we were sure we were all present, so we could decide where we were going to start with the questioning.

Thank you very much, Mr. Dillon. Welcome this morning. We look forward to hearing your presentation.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Thank you and good morning to everyone. I was going to start out my remarks by saying thank you for the opportunity, but by the sounds of things in the room, maybe I should just say thank you for the invitation to be here to present.

I'm Patrick Dillon. I started my working career as an apprentice electrician, graduated to journeyman status in 1966, worked on the tools most of the time between then and 1984, with some of that time spent as a supervisor in the electrical trade, and then went on to be a union representative. I must say I was honoured. I was not appointed to be a union representative; I was elected by my peers, and I've been re-elected every three years, from one job to another, from 1984 to the present.

0910

In 1991, I was elected by my peers to be president of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, which is somewhat of an ex officio position in the sense that you're not the staff person, but you run

the meetings of the executive board, and you chair the conventions of the building trades. In 1997, I was elected as the business manager/secretary-treasurer of the building trades and have been re-elected every three years from that time forward. I have to say that, in some ways, all of that is some background as to why I think I qualify as a candidate—amongst quite a number of candidates, I might add—who applied to be on the College of Trades.

I'd also say that as a tradesperson, I'm very, very pleased that we do have people elected in this province who see a need for the College of Trades, which gives some respect to tradespeople in this province. Tradespeople are the people who build the province. The moms and pops of today's society tend to look to their children to be in professions. I think one of the things that the College of Trades will do is help the moms and pops of the world, and our guidance counsellors in our schools, see that the trades should be considered as one of the real, viable career choices for their offspring. To me, the college of trades is a very, very important mechanism going forward for training the future workforce in the province of Ontario.

One of the other pieces that the college of trades has as part of its structure is to make sure that the cultural issues are advanced. Looking at our demographics and where the future workforce will come from, immigration is going to play a large part going forward, as, obviously, are the youth of Ontario. But I see that the College of Trades has a mechanism in it to help address the diversity of the province, and I think that's a very good thing.

I will leave that, and I'll say to the official opposition that I, like you, I expect, will be honest with my comments.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Chair: Since this intended appointee was chosen by the official opposition, we're wondering why we're not able to start with the questioning.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I have to apologize. I did make an error. The questioning should start with the official opposition, so we will go back, and it will end with the government side.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you. First, I'd like to ask, Mr. Dillon, if you're willing to be sworn in.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Are you willing to be sworn in?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Well, I'm—

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Do you take an oath in the Legislature?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I don't take the questions here, sir. You do.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I watched some of your comments yesterday from the House.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Listen, I've asked you a question. Yes or no, are you prepared to be sworn in?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: No.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. That's great.

Everyone in this committee is aware of your role with Working Families' campaign to spend millions in ad-

vertising on an anti-Progressive Conservative campaign to help the McGuinty Liberals. You moonlight, as a career, as a Liberal attack dog, and that is going to severely impact our decision on whether you deserve this appointment.

I have a few questions for you. To your knowledge, did Working Families or the Working Families Coalition have meetings to discuss advertising, how to create that advertising, the content that would be provided in the advertisement or just to generally discuss the campaign? At any time, did Marcel Wieder, Don Guy or any Pollara representative attend those meetings?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I think the real answer to those questions you can get from the Elections Ontario commissioner. I took an oath to testify in front of Elections Ontario. That request was put in by John Tory, who is the former leader of your party. I went in front of Elections Ontario—ironically, Elections Ontario had Tory and Tory doing their interviews, which I didn't object to, because—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The question that I have, because I'm not going there—

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I am still answering the question—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —is, did Marcel Wieder, Don Guy or Pollara attend any political meetings with you to talk about advertising that would attack the Progressive Conservative Party in either the 2003 or 2007 election? Yes or no?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: The answer to that question you'll find in the report from Elections Ontario.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And what is it? Are you willing to divulge that?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Read it.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: All right, we'll take another tack. Did you know Marcel Wieder was engaged by the Ontario Liberal Party in the 2003 and 2007 elections?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I do not know who Marcel Wieder's client base is, as I don't know who Don Guy's client base is. I don't know who John Tory's or Tory and Tory's client base is.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, now you're off track. Did you meet with Greg Sorbara in his office in June 2007?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I can't remember. If Greg Sorbara—in 2007, was he the treasurer of Ontario?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Chair, I have a copy of Greg Sorbara's calendar for June 18 to June 24 that I'd like to table with you and the clerk, which says that Mr. Dillon did meet with the Liberal campaign chair—then finance minister—in June 2007. No notes, apparently, were taken at that meeting. Do you recall what happened at that meeting?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: No.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So you don't know if you talked about Working Families?

In all honesty, your unwillingness to be forthcoming to this committee proves what a sham this is. I'm just going to make a closing statement, then, Mr. Chair, because of the unwillingness to disclose key facts to this

committee that would help us determine whether or not this person is fit for a political appointment.

We have made a determination that his answers here today confirm what we already know: He's unfit for this appointment. He's not deserving of a respectful office, and he's not deserving of one more cent of taxpayer money. That's because we already know you have been bought and paid for by Dalton McGuinty and our tax dollars. You finance—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's out of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You finance and you produce Liberal Party attack ads completely off the books, in a complete end run around election spending limits.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You must withdraw the "bought and paid for."

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

We know that, in return, he gets handsomely rewarded for doing Dalton McGuinty's dirty work. At best, it is unethical.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You get handsomely rewarded, and it's either collusion or perversion of our democracy. At worst, this is unethical. It could be an offence. It's a disgrace that you're even allowed in this committee.

This is the worst political corruption case in Ontario's history. It's quite possibly worse than Adscam and the sponsorship scandal. This is just a disgrace. You do not represent real working families, and you don't deserve this appointment. You, Marcel Wieder, Don Guy, Dalton McGuinty and every single Liberal member ought to be held accountable for what you have done. I have nothing else to say to you.

The official opposition will not be supporting this, and we will be pursuing it.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Mr. Chairman, could I make a comment?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: There were some comments made there that are somewhat inflammatory. I assume that the member probably would not want to make the same comments outside of this room.

That being said, speaking to the reason that I've been brought in front of this committee—

0920

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Chair, I finished my round of questioning and it's now the New Democrats' opportunity to question this witness. In addition to that, this individual has not chosen to actually be sworn in under oath, so—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's not a point of order. The time allotted was 10 minutes, and if it's used all for the question, that's fine, but if there's sufficient time left for the applicant to answer the question, that time must be given if it fits in with the—

Mr. Patrick Dillon: My comment simply is that I'm surprised that the member would not ask any question with any relevance to tradespeople in the province of Ontario and did make a comment about me not being qualified to sit on the College of Trades.

I'd like to point out to the member that I've had some standing in this province, being appointed by different governments and at different levels to serve the people in the province of Ontario, one of them being I was appointed to the Workplace Health and Safety Agency review committee by the Minister of Labour, Elizabeth Witmer, in 1995. In fact, when we went through that review I wrote a dissenting report to the committee of recommendations, and on the heels of that I was appointed to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board board of directors by the same Minister of Labour, Elizabeth Witmer. I was reappointed—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We are at the end of the time limit. We thank you very much for that, and I'll—

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I'll cover those things in another question.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We'll now go to the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm not sure you're responsible for this colourful activity at the committee, but it certainly is colourful.

I do have a couple of questions. The appointments council, which is what you have applied for, is going to be a very busy operation. I wonder if you could tell me how you see all of this happening?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: It's interesting. For sure, it's going to be a very busy time. I think that, out of the gate, one of the first challenges for the appointments council will be to hire either an interim—that'll be up to the council themselves—or a full-time CEO to carry the ball for the number of issues that are going to be in front of the council.

The two issues that have to be dealt with in the first year is putting a mechanism in place for deciding compulsory certification and also dealing with apprenticeship ratios. The two of those issues are in some ways political, but in some ways they're also very important to how you put mechanisms in place to train the future workforce. They're going to take a major amount of time in the first year.

During that same time, the appointments council will be not only acting as the transition board but as the appointments council, preparing names to put forward for the governing board, the industry board and the trade board.

You're right; there's a lot of work to be done and it's going to take lots of time to do it.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Since you brought it up, let me raise the issue of ratios. The issue of the number of journeymen to apprentices is a conflict-ridden issue—

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Is a which?

Mr. Howard Hampton: Is sometimes a conflict-ridden issue. How do you see yourself approaching that?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Without getting input from the council itself, ratios have never really been set by anyone but the industries themselves. I mean, it's set by government, but they get the feedback from the advisory boards of the trade committees, which have labour and management representation, and they make recommendations as to what the ratios should be. I don't see that changing a lot.

Ratios have changed over the years and ratios are different from one trade to another in the construction industry. They're also different between sectors, so what the ratio for sheet metal workers might be in the construction industry may be different than what the ratio for sheet metal workers might be in the pulp and paper industry.

Mr. Howard Hampton: One of the issues that we have certainly heard on the floor of the Legislature is that ratios are quite different—for example, in the construction trades—in other provinces.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: Yes.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Why is that?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I can't explain what other provinces do. Our trades, as I've said, meet with their employer groups. I've worked in many jurisdictions in Canada and in the USA, and this may sound very Ontarian, but I think in the construction industry, the most highly skilled construction workforce is here in the province of Ontario. So I don't think that there are standards issues because of the ratios. There may be—I know there are—from time to time issues raised in the Legislature, but I don't hear that coming so much from our industry.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Those are all the questions I have.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We'll move to the government side. Mr. Brown?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Dillon. I appreciate you coming before us today and putting your name forward for one of the very important positions in the province of Ontario for which, obviously, your credentials eminently qualify you.

I would point out as we go forward that I have, in my experience, never seen a witness asked to swear an oath, particularly when we take note of what the Speaker said yesterday about impugning motives and attacking individuals. As you know, and the Chair knows, the members all have parliamentary immunity and can say what we want to say here, regardless of how accurate it might be. You don't have that same privilege, and I am a little concerned for the institution when members take on that McCarthy-like approach to questioning.

The real question I have is, within your experience, which is about as broadly based as I can think of in the trade union movement, in the construction industry, in which Ontario, as we can tell by the number of cranes around here these days, is not only superiorly competitive but has a superior workforce that makes that—could you kind of elaborate on your qualifications and, more particularly, your members' qualifications, to do the work?

Mr. Patrick Dillon: As when I was answering Mr. Hampton's question—it's hard to put evidence on the

table that we have the best-trained workforce. But it's been my experience, as I've said, working in a number of jurisdictions in this country and in the United States—including New York City, as a matter of fact—that the workforce in the province of Ontario is unmatched, in my view, because of the range of training that our people get. I think it can be improved and I think that the College of Trades will help improve that, particularly in trades that are non-compulsory now and that have tried to be compulsory trades over the years, but the government, the bureaucracy, had difficulty in dealing with it. I'm not knocking the bureaucracy. They were getting input from many different directions on the issue of compulsory certification, so it's difficult to make a decision. We're compelled now to put a process in place that will answer that. But at the end of the day, I think the level of the standards will increase, particularly in those non-compulsory trades, as they have an opportunity.

0930

Compulsory trades have compulsory training. It has major impacts on the quality of the tradesperson who comes out of the apprenticeship at the end of the day, and compulsory certification also has—and I would encourage all parties to pay attention—an impact on prevention and health and safety. If you're a better-trained worker to perform the skills of your trade, you will not try to figure out some unsafe way of doing that. Compulsory certification has many positives, and I'm not prejudging where the committee will go with that, because there are definitely arguments from one sector to another. What the service sector needs, as compared to the industrial sector versus the construction sector—there are issues that the College of Trades will have to deal with, and each one of them has legitimate concerns about what their needs are for skilled tradespeople.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Mrs. Cansfield?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I just wanted to ask a question. First of all, I wanted to say I'm not going to be an apologist for the bad behaviour that has been exhibited in this room, but I will say that typically that's not how we deal with folks who have put their names forward. You deserve the same respect, sir, as every other individual who comes before this committee.

One of the areas that I'm particularly interested in is the whole issue around how you encourage young people to go into the trades. Years ago, we used to have agreements called articulation agreements, where we actually worked with colleges and high schools to help bridge that gap into the trades. Is that something you see that could be initiated or brought forward by the College of Trades as well? Because I know you've had some experience with that.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I don't know what impact the articulation agreements would have, but one of the things I will say, and I don't say this because I'm an electrician myself, is that the compulsory trades, again—I'm back to the compulsory trades kind of issue—whether it's the pipefitters, electricians or sheet metal workers, people in this place from time to time are talking about the

shortage of skilled tradespeople and the inability to attract people to the trades. It is much easier to attract apprentices to the compulsory certified trades than it is to the non-compulsory trades, and I believe one of the reasons for that is, at the end of the day, with a compulsory certification, you have a licence to perform particular work. In a non-compulsory trade, you don't. In the recession of the 1990s, the electricians', carpenters', pipefitters' and labourers' locals in Toronto stayed reasonably the same size: 5,000 each. Between the electrician and the carpenter, one is a compulsory and one is a non-compulsory trade. The electricians' membership, over the four and a half or five years of the recession, dropped from 5,000 to 4,700. The carpenters' membership dropped from 5,000 to 2,500. What caused that? I don't know exactly, but I know that the distinct difference between the two is that they're licensed. I think there's a real opportunity to use the College of Trades to help attract people for a number of different reasons that will help professionalize the trades and bring more people forward to the trades.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That concludes the time allotted for the interview. We thank you again for coming forward and putting your name forward for the position.

Mr. Patrick Dillon: I thank you very much and tell my friend that I take nothing personally.

MS. JOY WARKENTIN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Joy Warkentin, intended appointee as vice-chair, North West Local Health Integration Network.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The second interview this morning is L. Joy Warkentin, intended appointee as vice-chair of the North West Local Health Integration Network. Thank you very much for coming in this morning. As our normal practice, we will offer you an opportunity to make an opening statement, and upon the completion of that statement we will then have the rotation of questioning from all three caucuses. This round will start with the third party. We look forward to your presentation.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: Thank you very much for inviting me to be here this morning. I'm sure that all of you have seen my basic resumé and are familiar with its contents, so I'm not going to bore you by repeating what's in there, but there are a couple of things that I would say in support of this important position.

Throughout my professional career and also my volunteer time, I have been passionate about three things: The first is students and clients, the second is leadership and the third is sustainability. I think all of those things are congruent with what I'm being asked to take on.

Being a board member of the LHIN is an important position, and I believe that my diverse experience in health and education in rural and urban settings as a union member and as a manager brings a richness to the

contribution that I can make. I also believe that my experience as a negotiator, communicator, mentor and leader are relevant to what I'm being asked to take on.

The decision-making framework of the local health integration networks is non-partisan, non-biased and in the interests of the citizens of the region that is served. I believe that my board experience in all three sectors of health, education and social services also will contribute to my effectiveness.

I've had significant experience on boards. I served on the Premier's Council on the Premier's Council board. I chaired the local district health council and chaired a very difficult hospital restructuring. I've been able to work with different government leaderships on the priorities of the day, and I think that's an effective way of moving forward. I've also had experience with the children's aid society and various other boards, so governance is also a very important interest of mine.

I lived in London for 10 years, and at the end of those 10 years I had a choice: I could stay in London, where I had formed many contacts, or I could return to the north. I chose to return to the north because I love the north. That's a commitment that I have made, to live there and contribute to my community.

The last thing that I would say is that I see this as a continuation of the ladder of leadership that I have been on. In the first part of my career, I worked as a nurse and as a teacher, and I prepared myself to lead. I then stepped up to lead and did that for a significant amount of time in the college system and in my volunteer opportunities. Now is the time for me to give back, and I think I can do that. It is also because I believe that old age is to be resisted.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I'm not sure that last comment is appropriate or suitable for the occasion because that has something to do with age, and I wouldn't want to get into that.

With that, I thank you very much. We will go to the third party. Mr. Hampton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: You didn't elicit the fireworks that your immediate—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: They haven't had their turn yet.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Yes. Maybe we can liven this up a bit.

The North West LHIN has some very difficult work in front of it. If you go to Red Lake or Sioux Lookout or Kenora or Atikokan or Fort Frances, and I suspect if you go to Geraldton or Longlac or Terrace Bay, the view is held that everything is being centralized in Thunder Bay. I invite you to read the editorial in the Kenora Daily Miner and News—any editorial over the last month. There seem to be a lot of long-term-care beds going into Thunder Bay. Long-term-care patients in Kenora are being told, "If you want a long-term-care bed, go 200 kilometres down the highway," where you don't know anyone and you have no family. How do you think the LHIN should address these issues?

0940

Ms. Joy Warkentin: I think that's a really important question, and I think that always happens; that's natural. If you ask people in Thunder Bay, they would say that all the services are being centralized in Toronto. And I don't think it matters where you are; I think that is always the view.

One of the things that the LHIN has to do is educate people. For example, the North West LHIN has the largest area of any of the LHINs and the smallest population, about 2% of the province's population; 4% to 5% of the province's health care resources go into the north. So it is, in fact, true that the government is supporting the north in a very significant way, and all governments in the past have done that.

The LHIN has to work with the people in those communities to ensure that the basic health services are there. They're always only going to have the basic, primary services in smaller communities; tertiary services will always be in a larger centre. I don't think that anybody can argue with that. But there has to be an understanding of what is able to be accomplished in small communities. They do need appropriate health services, and it's the LHIN's job to work with them to help plan those services.

I agree that the long-term-care issue is a big issue; that's also an issue in Manitoba. My mother-in-law spent a year in a French-speaking nursing care home, when she is German, and couldn't go to her community. I think resources are stretched; that's a reality. But the planning process has got to think about how we can best meet those needs. We have to find appropriate supports in the community, and the north is severely stretched in terms of appropriate supports that help people stay in their homes.

I think all of those things are on the planning framework of the LHIN and it's very aware of that. We have members on our board from all of those regions, and they keep our feet to the fire in terms of the needs of the people in small, remote communities.

Mr. Howard Hampton: It's interesting that you'd bring up Manitoba, because one of the other issues that's brewing is that if you talk to physicians, for example, in Red Lake, Dryden, Kenora, Rainy River or Fort Frances, they prefer, when it comes to specialist care or care that they can't provide, to send their patients to Winnipeg for obvious reasons: It's closer. Secondly, they feel that the specialist services are more readily available there—less wait time, better interaction with the physician etc. But there's a public perception that the LHIN is trying to force or influence referrals the other way to Thunder Bay.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: That would not be my observation.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm just telling you what the public perception is; people who come in my office, and they're mad as hell. They want to be referred to Winnipeg, and yet they're being told, "Well, we're supposed to send you to Thunder Bay." If that's happening, do you find that alarming?

Ms. Joy Warkentin: Yes. My understanding is that people have the choice to go where they choose. I know that the one area where they are directed to Thunder Bay frequently is for cancer care, and that's because the waiting time in Thunder Bay is very short, probably the shortest in the province, for cancer care. I am not aware that people are directed. I think physicians in communities have a tendency to refer to where they were trained, and many of the people in Kenora and Fort Frances were actually educated in Winnipeg, so that's not surprising. But I'm not aware that the LHIN refers—in fact, we had a discussion about this the other night in our orientation to the board, and it was very clear that that's not the prevailing opinion of the people in the LHIN. So I don't know where that is coming from, but I'll certainly raise it.

Mr. Howard Hampton: From my perspective, it's coming from the patients themselves. And usually, if they have a perception that something is happening, that, to me, indicates there's a problem that needs to be addressed.

The other issue that, I think, also needs some attention is the—just take the hospital in Kenora, for example. The wintertime population is 15,000; the summertime population is 45,000, simply because the other name for Kenora is “Winnipeg-by-the-Lake.” When I talked with the hospital administrator there and when I talked with, for example, the physicians who are taking on the leadership role in the hospital, they're very concerned that the budgeting process and the resource-allocation process don't allow them to meet the needs of that huge population that lives there from essentially May until October. They find that in those months—May until October—they're completely stressed out. They simply cannot meet the needs of the then-local population.

I don't think it matters to say, “This person ought to go back to go Winnipeg to get health care or this person ought to go back to Minneapolis to get health care”; what happens in the hospital is, the person from Manitoba may be in the line and the person from Kenora or the person from Keewatin is the person who's waiting four, five or six hours to be seen.

How does the LHIN deal with those kinds of situations? Kenora is the second city in northwestern Ontario and in many ways has built a rather admirable record of providing good-quality health services, health services that many other communities don't have, yet that community feels that they in particular are being constrained now.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: Well, if you look at the data on wait times, the North West LHIN has made significant improvements in wait times in all areas except MRIs, and that would also be true for Kenora. So the wait times evidence would say that that's being managed a certain amount. Now, I'm not sure to what extent the summer and the winter part balances, but certainly, if that's an issue, then the LHIN would have to discuss with the hospital how the budget is struck and what can happen to support them in the summertime. I would think that most

of those visits are probably emergency room visits, so there may be something that can be done. Certainly, the LHIN would be talking with them.

I know that the LHIN staff talk with the staff of those hospitals and we also speak with the boards of those hospitals. In fact, we're having a meeting in June with the CEOs and the board leaders of all of the hospitals to talk about planning for the future, so I would think that that would come up at that point.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. To the government: Mr. Brown.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Thank you for putting your name forward. Just a quick look at your resumé tells me that you are eminently qualified. Just as an aside, I happened to have a good chat with Bob Rosehart on the weekend, and he offered some insights into your part of the world.

I should point out that I represent part of the North West LHIN in that I have a little wee slice of the LHIN at Manitowadge and Pic Mobert. I'm interested in issues in the LHIN probably related to our very rural experience, being the largest LHIN with the smallest population—I'm kind of the poster child for that.

I want you to talk a little bit about the opportunities in telemedicine that you're probably aware of and how they have improved the service to many of our communities. I know that it has made a significant difference to the people I serve over time—you don't have to go to Thunder Bay for certain things; you can actually be referred to London, but never leave the hospital. Maybe you might want to talk about those sorts of things and your view of how that might work even better.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: My experience both in education and health in the north is that the north is forced to be innovative because of its remote nature. There have been a number of things that have been done to try to serve people better in remote areas. One is telemedicine; one is that we've trained 75 trainers to help people with chronic diseases in remote communities to have better health outcomes and to not have to visit hospitals so often. There have also been diabetes trainers trained who are on reserves and in remote communities who then work with people who have chronic and sustained illness to try to reduce their dependence on the system. If you combine some of those things—videoconferencing, teleconferencing, computer conferencing—and some of the outreach.

The other thing you may be aware of is that hip and knee surgery and cataract surgery are now happening in some of the more rural hospitals. There are pediatricians—because my son is a pediatrician, I happen to know this. He goes to Fort Frances, Dryden and Kenora and offers service about once every three months, and then when those patients come into Thunder Bay, they know him and they're able to get support—and the physicians in those communities are able to get support with complex issues.

So all of the innovative ways that people can communicate are in the north. I think our use of technology is probably spectacular compared to many other parts of the province. It has to be.

0950

Mr. Michael A. Brown: On that issue, transportation is also very important to the rural communities. I recently had the opportunity to talk to the good people at Ornge, the air ambulance folks. I was surprised—pleasantly, I guess—to know that they provide 19,000 patient transfers a year. Many of those are in southern Ontario, but many of them are in the north.

The issue of just attending specialists: My folks in Manitouwadge or Pic Mobert are probably at least a four-hour drive from Thunder Bay, and in January and February and sometimes March, December and November, that can be quite an exciting journey. I don't know whether it's within the mandate of the LHIN to look at that. We had quite an interesting year-long pilot project to see if they could organize the transportation of patients to Thunder Bay in an organized sort of fashion to make it easier for folks and also to make the expense more affordable. I don't know whether the LHIN really has a role in that, but it seems to me that it's an important issue for all those people along the North Shore of Lake Superior, actually.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: It's not within the mandate of the LHIN, but the LHIN does work with its partners to try to improve that because, obviously, access to health care is dependent upon transportation, so they do work with their partners and some of the land and air ambulance people to try to improve that situation. Much of what the LHIN has to accomplish, because it's not responsible for all the aspects of health and health care, is to work effectively with its partners to identify needs and to be facilitative and supportive in delivering the appropriate levels of care.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I just want to indicate the government's support for your concurrence and wish you the best on this important board.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. To the opposition. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Ms. Warkentin, for coming today. You certainly appear to be very well qualified. I gather the hospital restructuring that you were involved in was probably during my time as Minister of Health, was it? So you probably don't like me very much, but I'm the nicer of the two.

Just out of curiosity, which restructuring did I put you through?

Ms. Joy Warkentin: It started with the NDP and finished under your term. It was Thunder Bay; of five hospitals, we ended up with two. We saved \$35 million a year in that restructuring, and I think that the citizens of Thunder Bay would feel that, despite the pain, it has been effective. It's always, of course, losses and wins, and people don't like it much.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Yeah. Thanks for doing that. I'm sure you have the scars.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: I have the scars to prove it.

Mr. Jim Wilson: So do I—and no hair.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Yeah. I need to get out of town.

Mr. Chairman, I will indicate that I won't use all of my time because Mr. Hampton, who's the member here today most affected by the North West LHIN, would like to ask another question or two.

I would say that one of the disappointments my party has with the LHIN structure—I think there's an expectation among our constituents that the LHIN will actually advocate for them. Instead, it turns out that the LHINs seem to have the job of delivering the bad news on behalf of the government, doing the tough job.

We saw in the Toronto Centre by-election, for example, when it came to giving \$15 million, that was the minister's role; when it came to saying, "No, the hospital's going to close," in concurrence with the board, that was the LHIN's role.

I'll just give you a scenario, a hypothetical. There is an acute need across the province, but particularly in northern Ontario—you mentioned it and Mr. Hampton mentioned it—for long-term-care beds. The Liberals haven't built any long-term-care beds, per se, and I don't know if they're planning on it. But if there's a real need in your area, how do you see the LHIN trying to advocate at the same time they're constrained for political reasons? We've had other people appointed to the LHINs say that they do feel that part of the mandate is that they are constrained in what they can say. How are you going to handle that?

Ms. Joy Warkentin: Actually, we have put more long-term-care beds. They're coming into a couple of areas in the next little while. There are also beds in hospitals that are closed that can be re-designated. The LHIN is working to do that.

The LHIN also has some power in terms of whether we're able to do some shared services or some things along the North Shore and south part of our region that can save some money, and that money could be re-allocated into long-term care. They're not totally without power, and the government has actually supported that.

I would say that the LHINs are quite free to advocate. I certainly would feel very free to say, "This is a need in our area that's not being met. We need help to do it." I would hope that that would be listened to.

That's not been what I'm hearing at LHIN meetings. I'm hearing that, when they say something is a screaming need, and they can work with their partners to identify it and figure out a way, the government will in fact support that.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Currently, you can see on the TV screen that we're actually debating third reading of the budget bill, and schedule 16 has a section in it that cancels the legislative mandatory review of the LHINs that was to occur this year. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Joy Warkentin: My understanding was that it wasn't cancelled, that it was postponed.

Part of it has actually happened. The first part of the review was a governance review, and all of the LHINs' boards have been assessed. We had a visit; they reviewed

our minutes, our policies etc. They came and met with us for two or three days. They watched a couple of board meetings. We received a report on the effectiveness of our board, and I'm very proud to say that we were told that we are in the "excellence" range.

My understanding is that that has happened in all the LHINs. There was a meeting last week to discuss going forward. So actually part of the review has happened. I understand that the rest is postponed, not cancelled, largely because there are a couple of LHINs that didn't feel they were ready for that.

Mr. Jim Wilson: That may be quite true, but that's an internal review. This would have been a legislative committee review with all parties looking at the LHINs.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: I understand it's postponed. I don't think it's cancelled.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Why is it postponed?

Ms. Joy Warkentin: I don't know. I didn't make the decision, and I haven't been told.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's a bit of a mystery, isn't it, especially when it was the law of the land?

Ms. Joy Warkentin: I can't answer that.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Very well. Mr. Hampton?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That does conclude the interview. Though we do allot the time to each caucus, they don't have the right to barter it away. We thank you very much for your presentation. We thank you for that, and we wish you well in your future endeavours.

Ms. Joy Warkentin: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jim Wilson: With unanimous consent, we can do that, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You can do anything you like with unanimous consent.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Including identify the press.

Mr. Jim Wilson: So I think in the future—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Including which?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Including identify the press and stop the—

Mr. Jim Wilson: Clearly, you weren't going to get it.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's right. You can do anything you like with unanimous consent. You have to have unanimous consent. Up until that point, the Chair's ruling stands.

That concludes the interviews this morning. We will now deal with the concurrences.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Chairman, Ms. MacLeod's not here. Can we defer these until the next meeting?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I would point out that the deferral to the next meeting would, in fact, eliminate the process because the next meeting will be more than seven days hence.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Oh, okay. So we have to vote?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): If we defer, it'll be two weeks that it would be, and then we would not be able to bring them back for that review, so it will require that decision. We either do it today or we don't do it at all.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: We do it today.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): With that, the first interview was Patrick Dillon, intended appointee as member of the College of Trades Appointments Council. Do we have a motion?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Mr. Chair, I am proud and happy to move concurrence in the appointment of Patrick Dillon as a member of the College of Trades Appointments Council.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You've heard the motion. Discussion?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): A recorded vote's requested.

Ayes

Brown, Cansfield, Carroll, Qaadri.

Nays

Wilson.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The motion's carried.

The second one is Joy Warkentin, intended appointed as vice-chair, North West Local Health Integration Network. Can we have a motion for concurrence on that?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Mr. Chair, I am proud to move—

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: On a point of order, Mr. Chair: Are we allowed to abstain in this committee?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes. If anybody—

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: So a person who abstains is recorded as having abstained. Is that right?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Well, I didn't see his hand go up—

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: Then it's recorded that the NDP abstained?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): No. Abstentions are not recorded.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's the same way we vote in the Legislature.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: Thanks.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): They just have the right to do nothing. I think they called that, at one point, sitting on one's hands.

Mr. Brown.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I move concurrence in the appointment of L. Joy Warkentin as vice-chair of the North West Local Health Integration Network.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You've heard the motion. Discussion?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Brown, Cansfield, Carroll, Hampton, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The motion is carried. That concludes the meeting.

I have one other item. I think there is one appointee who is coming for interviews whose time will be lapsed before we come back because of the two-week spread. We need unanimous consent for the committee to extend the deadline for the interview. If we can get that from the committee, that would save all the calling around on behalf of—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I would so move.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Say that again? What is going on?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Ian Fraser, an intended appointee as member of the South East Local

Health Integration Network—his timeline will have passed before we get back to interview him. If we don't give unanimous consent, we cannot do the interview later. With that, we have a motion from Mr. Brown to extend the deadline. That concludes that.

The next meeting will be at 9 a.m. Tuesday, June 1, in committee room 1, when we interview appointments and will commence in writing the report on the Ontario Municipal Board.

Thank you very much for your indulgence. This meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1001.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 18 May 2010

Intended appointments.....	A-53
Mr. Colin Heslop.....	A-53
Mr. Hugh Laird	A-53
Mr. Patrick Dillon	A-53
Ms. Joy Warkentin	A-57

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