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Assembly  
of Ontario



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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

A-20

**Standing Committee on  
Government Agencies**

Organization

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

Tuesday 29 October 2019

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

A-20

**Comité permanent des  
organismes gouvernementaux**

Organisation

1<sup>re</sup> session  
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Mardi 29 octobre 2019

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Chair: John Vanthof  
Clerk: Jocelyn McCauley

Président : John Vanthof  
Greffière : Jocelyn McCauley

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 29 October 2019

Mardi 29 octobre 2019

*The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1.*

## APPOINTMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEE

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** I'd like to call this meeting to order. Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 28, 2019, a change to the composition of the subcommittee on committee business is required. I will now entertain a motion for the replacement of a subcommittee member. Mr. Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Mr. Chair, through you, I move that Mr. Bouma replace Ms. Khanjin on the subcommittee on committee business.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Is there any discussion? Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Far be it from me to tell the government side who they should have on this committee, but I just want it noted that there is not one other woman on this committee—which I find kind of alarming and interesting that there are no women on the government side represented on this committee at all.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you for your comment. Any further discussion? If not, I'd like to call a vote. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion carries.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Our second item of business is the reports of the subcommittee on committee business dated June 6, 2019; June 13, 2019; June 27, 2019; July 4, 2019; August 1, 2019; August 22, 2019; September 20, 2019; October 3, 2019; and October 17, 2019. We have all seen the reports in advance, so I will now entertain the motions. Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I know that this is just a report of the subcommittee, but the subcommittee, as far as I'm aware, has not actually ever met. Since we last met as a committee, we haven't had a subcommittee meeting. Actually, what I would appreciate is maybe a report on when the last time was that the subcommittee did, in fact, meet.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Would you like the committee to ask for that? Is that the will of the committee or is that a personal request—a member's own request?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** A personal request, I guess, yes.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Okay. We can provide that.

Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Just a question: How does a subcommittee compile a report on intended appointments when the subcommittee has never met? What are the logistics around that? We know we get this, and we get a composition of the people who have had their names submitted, but what is the entity that is compiling these reports?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Once again, would you like the committee to ask for a report or would you like to do—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm interested as a personal point of information, yes.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Okay.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Jocelyn McCauley):** Sure. The way in which this committee works, a number of the deadlines required by the committee—basically what they found over the years, for the last 20 years or so, is that it was more feasible to handle all of the subcommittee reports electronically.

Basically what happens is, after a committee receives a certificate on the Friday, it's sent to the subcommittee members, who then make selections from that certificate. Then that is compiled into a subcommittee report which is distributed the following day to all of the members of the committee.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Done automatically? Done by rote?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Jocelyn McCauley):** Yes, so it's done electronically, basically. That's why we have the subcommittee: so each member of the subcommittee has the ability to make their selections. That's contained in the report, and then here we adopt the reports that are following.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Great. Wonderful. Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I do want it noted on the record that there were numerous requests made by myself as a member of the subcommittee for the subcommittee to meet, and I believe the Clerk sent around a request of the other side, the government members, and our side to meet. My understanding is that there was never a response received, and maybe the Clerk can confirm that.

This was, I would say, an important few months in the arena of public appointments in this government. The fact that this committee, whose responsibility it is to actually meet to review those public appointments, could request

repeatedly that we have an opportunity to meet during the summer, or during that five-month break period, the fact that we could not even get the government members to agree to meet and talk about having a meeting to review those appointments, meant that appointments—which has actually been our experience generally in this committee; let's just be clear. Our experience in this committee over the last year has been that we request to see people appear—and we started out being quite reasonable about that, I think. We were very careful in who we chose, not wanting to overreach. Now we're requesting more because it's so clear that the government's own process for vetting has been sorely inadequate. We request and request and request that people appear, and the government's practice appears to be to allow that to time out so that we never actually get to see the vast majority of the appointees.

The fact that we couldn't even meet all summer at a time when this government was under, I would assume, pretty significant pressure to provide greater transparency and accountability of those appointments—I really want that noted in the record, that there were numerous attempts by the official opposition to hold meetings of the committee, to hold subcommittee meetings, to discuss meetings of the committee and request for appointees to appear that simply timed out because the government side would not agree to extend those timelines.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Ms. Stiles. Further discussion?

We've all seen the reports in advance, so I'll now entertain the motions. First motion, Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, June 6, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated May 31, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Is there any further discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Further to the point that my colleague Ms. Stiles makes, throughout the summer, we heard some contrition from the Premier and from the Premier's office around the way that they've dealt with government appointments. Some of the steps that the Premier took were to essentially fire his chief of staff, who bore the brunt of the blame around who was being appointed to various government agencies and committees.

However, post Dean French firing, the Premier committed to a review of the process. I'm wondering if any information from this committee has been requested from the Premier's office around how this committee works. Can you inform me if any information has been requested by the Premier's office?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Independent requests—it's confidential.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** So in order to retrieve that information, we'd have to do a FOI request on whether there has been anything?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. Do we do that through this committee?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Freedom of information? Okay. Maybe have it noted that we'll endeavour to do that as soon as possible, because if the Premier is actually taking what happens in this committee seriously and has acknowledged that the way things have been operating aren't the way that they should be operating, then I would hope that he would endeavour to inform himself on how this committee is supposed to work, as opposed to how it is currently working, and work through the members of this committee and the staff of this committee to understand how important it is and how important it is to function correctly.

That being said, I'll continue on with the motions, if that's all right.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Yes. Well, we need to hold a vote. All those in favour of the first motion? Opposed? The motion carries.

The second motion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, June 13, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated June 7, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Is there any discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** This subcommittee report contains the names of several intended appointees, I imagine, and the various agencies that they are to be appointed to. My question is simply that I wonder if any of the members of the government could tell us anything about any of the members that have been appointed to this committee and why they should be appointed. Does anybody have any knowledge of any of the intended appointees? Do you have any knowledge of who is being appointed to these agencies at this time through this motion? Did you study, did you review any of them?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Yes.

0910

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** You did?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Can you name any of them?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Can you name them? Can you name them?

I'll take that as a no. Thank you very much, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? I would like to hold a vote. All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion carries.

Motion number 3.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, June 27, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated June 21, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I guess what I'd be curious about is whether or not—there's quite a list here. I haven't counted how many are here. These are all names of people who will be appointed to bodies like the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the college of dental surgeons, police services boards, the Species at Risk Program, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. and the Consent and Capacity Board. Since

we haven't been permitted to, I think it's fair to say, and the public has not had an opportunity to review any of these appointees, I'm wondering if the members opposite would be able to provide us with any information about any of these appointees.

For example, I would be really interested in knowing something about R.J. Taylor, who is being appointed to the Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee. I'm sure the members opposite agreeing not to extend the period when we could review and have these people appear, or not wanting to meet all summer, have done their due diligence in reviewing these appointees and ensuring there are no issues of concern.

That was a question to the members opposite.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I guess that's a no. Is there anybody on here that you could provide—I mean, surely, somebody on here, because not surprisingly, some of these are government appointees, so they're obviously sometimes connected in some way. Somebody will know them. Can anybody provide any information?

Maybe what would also be useful would be, could you tell us a little bit about the review that took place internally through Mr. Ford's office—because presumably there's some mechanism in place? He said that during the summer. Maybe they could shed a little light on what the process was to review a particular appointee; for example, Edith Myers to the Ontario Media Development Corp.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** As a follow-up, I think that's a really important question that my colleague just raised around understanding who these good folks are. It's well known that the criticism of the Ford government and the way in which it has gone about appointing people was borne out of some deep connections to Doug Ford and to Dean French—people who weren't necessarily qualified for these positions, people who were simply appointed because of their connections. I'm wondering if the members of this committee on the government side, on the Conservative side, could assure us that none of the names in this entire packet will have any connection, any financial relationship with anyone in the Premier's office, the Premier himself or his executive council, any business dealings, any partisan affiliation that might make it look as though it would be a patronage appointment. I wonder if the members could just simply—because it seems as though they're ready to rubber-stamp hundreds of intended appointees. I wonder if they could simply give us that assurance that they've done their job, their duty—because they are duty-bound by virtue of being a member of provincial Parliament, and taking an oath to review these and to ensure that taxpayers are protected and that we are getting the best people for these positions and not simply folks who have been named because of their connection or affiliation or relationship to Doug Ford or any of his inner circle.

Can someone on that side assure us of that, put themselves on the record and do that?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Mr. Chair, I've listened to what members of the opposition have been talking about this morning. I do have some concern that they may be imputing motive with regard to appointments and so on.

You probably get the same information as we do. We get names, but there are people associated with those various appointments in different ministries whose responsibility is to vet those names. Then we get those names that are brought forward.

To impute motive, in my opinion, I don't think is correct. I think that we are doing our due diligence.

I do know that there were probably, over the summer-time, close to 100 names that came across that we were asked as to whether we wanted to extend their listing, I suppose, or not, and that we chose not to. We have to trust the process as well. I know you don't have the time, nor do we have the time, to individually sit down and review every name that has come forward in this particular process.

Again, I would just caution that I do have concerns, especially when it refers to former employees of the government as well as the Premier—I'd be careful not to give the impression that you are imputing motive. I want to share that with the members.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Further discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I appreciate my colleague's comments. He has provided some clarity that I'm not sure his party will want him to have clarified in the way that he did, but nevertheless it's on the record. The member clearly stated that he doesn't have time. I would argue that we had five months when this House did not sit, and New Democrats, time after time, requested any meeting at any time to get through these people.

Number two, the member suggests that the vetting process is done in backrooms by bureaucrats who are hired by the Conservative government, when in fact—maybe this is news to the member—by virtue of him being named to this committee, it is his job to do the vetting. That is why we're here. We have people appear; we have them give deputations; they talk to us; we can ask questions in a format where we are all protected by privilege. We can ask any question that we want in here. This is why it is structured in this way, and it's an important part of the appointments process.

It's fundamental that we get to ask questions of these appointees because—the member says I'm imputing motive. I am not imputing motive. I am pointing to the facts and the history. They have named people who have been in conflict of interest. They have named people who didn't deserve to be named to committees, and when caught—when we highlighted and identified those very few who we've been able to actually review personally—they backtrack.

So when I'm stating fact—the member should review the history of this committee and understand that he has a

chance to do it differently. If he doesn't, he'd better expect the same results.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Seeing none, I would like to call a vote on this motion. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion carries.

Number four.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, July 4, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated June 28, 2019.

0920

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Mr. Chair, I note here that in these reports where it lists the names—we only requested two people from this list here: Michael Stramaglia, on the Ontario Internal Audit Committee, and Tiff Macklem, for the Ontario Internal Audit Committee. The time recommended for consideration, as it always is, was half an hour.

I'm thinking now it was in July when a lot of these issues arose around past appointees of this government—appointees, in some cases, that we had requested to appear here and the government side had allowed those to time out so that they were unable to appear before us. I would presume that the members opposite had the same concerns we did about those appointments and, as my colleague has said already, those appointees who were clearly in a conflict of interest and in many cases clearly not qualified in any way for really important roles and, in some cases, high-paid positions. These are taxpayer dollars, something this government purports to care about. I'm just curious. I would like to ask the members opposite why they were not willing to allow us to hear from these two appointees. An hour of our time in the summer, yes, but we had a five-month break. Many committees in other governments meet during the summer. I certainly would have been willing. I think we made that pretty clear.

I'm just wondering if the members opposite could explain why they weren't willing to extend the period so that we could actually hear from these two individuals.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** So nobody on the other side—

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** —is willing to explain why they weren't willing to extend the period so we could actually review these appointments.

I wonder if anybody on the other side could at least, then—because I certainly can't support this. I'm surprised that they will, if they don't really have any information about these individuals. I wonder if they could share with us information about these two appointees—any information, any details of what review took place, what their background is, if they've reviewed any potential conflict of interest. That would be very useful to us, I think.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I really would be interested in hearing what makes these candidates worthy of appointment, their credentials and to hear their voice. Sometimes, in appearing before these committees, we hear some really wonderful, encouraging things from people who are excited about it. That breeds some confidence into the appointment, into the future of whatever agency. But we don't know. We do not know.

This committee sits at the will of the committee. It is unique, I believe, in its construction in that it can sit any time of day, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, should this committee and its members decide that there is important work to do. Time after time, I believe the record shows that New Democrats have requested that this committee sit outside of its normal time frame and outside of when the Legislature sits normally, because we believe that this is important work, we know that this is important work.

We know that if you don't do this work, what ends up happening is that you get people who are appointed to agencies who shouldn't be there, who cast a shadow over the government agencies process, and that eventually and ultimately breeds discontent with Ontarians, and anger. I think we saw that reflected through the nominations—certainly those that we've been able to identify so far—that have had deep connections to Doug Ford or Dean French in one capacity or another.

Just for a point of clarification: This committee can sit whenever it wants to.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Jocelyn McCauley):** Whenever the House is sitting, the committee can meet only on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Whenever the House isn't sitting, the committee has the ability to sit up to three times in a month. So three full days in a month, on the day they choose.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Essentially doubling or more the workload that we could do here. I mean, if we're able to sit when we aren't sitting, then we could sit three times a month. Yes, it would double. We would essentially double the ability for this committee to sit.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Very good. Okay. Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Mr. Natyshak. Any further discussion?

Seeing none, I would like to call a vote on this motion. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion carries.

Motion number 6?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, August 1, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated July 26, 2019. I'd ask for a recorded vote too, please.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you. Any further discussion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Oh, I don't even know if I can—my goodness. There's a lot of—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** How many are in there?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I know. Let's see. There are 34 appointees. That's a lot, and it's a big one.

Mr. Chair, this list includes appointees to—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes. For example, let's talk about Mike Smith. Mike Smith is being appointed by this government to the Walkerton Clean Water Centre. That seems like an important role. I remember what happened at Walkerton; I think we all do. I think a lot of the families that were affected and the people who died and were—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Still are.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** —who are still impacted and are still dying. This is a very important role, and we had requested what? It's half an hour; half an hour of Mr. Smith's time. I have to be fair; I would assume Mr. Smith will be quite willing to come in and talk to all of us and may be proud to be appointed to this position. I don't know. We don't know because we didn't hear from Mr. Smith—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** We'll never know.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** —and we'll never know because when the government members opposite, which I presume, like in each case, have voted unanimously to rubber-stamp this appointee, we'll never hear from Mr. Smith.

I would like to know what process took place that they're aware of, what they each individually endeavoured to do to review Mr. Smith's appointment.

I'd also like to hear about—I don't know. Let's try the—oh, my goodness, there's so many. There's a number here on the Consent and Capacity Board. I would love to hear them talk about the appointees to the Consent and Capacity Board. Perhaps they could shed some light on—let's see. Gosh, there's so many.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** WSIB.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes, WSIB. There's a number here of appointees to the WSIB. I wonder if perhaps they could shed some light on these appointees. I'm just going to say it again. I hope they maybe will even reconsider whether or not they can support approving these appointees without ever having had them appear, which is really our role—to review those appointees, to ask the appropriate questions on behalf of Ontarians.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Ms. Stiles. Any further discussion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Mr. Chair, for the record, silence; no answer at all; heads down.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Ms. Stiles. I would like to call for a vote. Mr. Natyshak has called for a recorded vote.

**Ayes**

Bouma, Coe, Gill, Nicholls, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Natyshak, Stiles.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** The motion carries.  
0930

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** What are we voting for?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** What are we voting for? Who are these people?

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** You feel good about that?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Could we please have motion number 7?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, August 1, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated July 26, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** We did that one.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** We did that one? Okay. They all look the same, right?—except the dates.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Once again: Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Chair. I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, August 22, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated August 16, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Natyshak has requested a recorded vote. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I would like to call for a vote.

**Ayes**

Bouma, Coe, Gill, Nicholls, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Natyshak, Stiles.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** The motion carries.  
Number 8?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Friday, September 20, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated September 13, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** There are 32 appointments on the certificate. They range from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Science North, the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the Consent and Capacity Board to the Child and Family Services Review Board. They are touchstone entities in our communities that support people, that deal with important, critical issues in the lives of Ontarians. To sit on a committee where the members of this committee on the government side refuse to do the job of reviewing these appointees, relying solely on the discretion of bureaucrats to do their work for them, I think, belittles and diminishes the role of this committee, it diminishes the role of elected members of this House, it dilutes the trust that Ontarians have in this process and it damages democracy going forward.

A lot of people in our communities don't understand the complexities of government. It's our job to explain it to them and to breathe some confidence into the fact that

there are some safeguards put in place. This committee is a safeguard. It is supposed to be a safeguard—and soon enough you see the writing on the wall. You will not be on that side—you will be either on this side or down there or outside—and you will regret the day that you didn't protect democracy when you could have.

Don't take this as a partisan thing. There is a lot of history in this building; there is a lot of precedent, legal precedent. This isn't a joke. You're setting a pattern here where governments in the future can relinquish their responsibility in doing the due diligence that is required to ensure that the people who are appointed to these boards are the right people. You will go down in history—we will look at this point for a long time, where people failed to protect the taxpayers of Ontario and failed to protect these important entities. I don't know what orders you're getting on your side. I think there has been a change of tone, but there has not been a change of direction. That is clearly evident in this committee. You're supposed to do your job, and we're here to help you do your job. If we have—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** You'll get an opportunity, if you like—and I hope you do.

If we have people who come to this committee who are worthy, who have the credentials and who have the experience, my goodness, we are happy to see them through this process, and hopefully they'll play an important role in the governance of this province. Without the fail-safe and the protections that this committee provides, no one has any idea, and it is a shame.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Further discussion? Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I just want to go back to ask some specific questions, as well. I really appreciate the comments of my colleague.

I wonder if somebody can comment on the appointment of Tamara Jordan, for example—I don't know Tamara Jordan; I'm sure she's fantastic—to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. If somebody could speak to her qualifications, what review took place—obviously, I'm assuming that they're willing to go on record that they feel there are no concerns about any of these appointees in terms of potential conflict of interest.

I'm just reflecting on the summer, Mr. Chair, when the various scandals emerged around public appointments by this government. I've got to say, my stomach turned, because I feel, as a member of this committee, a great responsibility to ensure that those sorts of things don't happen. I know the other members across the way feel the same way. We're not in this to appoint 20-something friends of Dean French's son. That's not what we're in this for, and we all know that. We all want to appoint good people to represent our province, to sit on these important boards and commissions and agencies. It is an enormous responsibility.

I would be interested in some specifics, if anybody has them—but also how the members opposite felt when those issues emerged. I can tell you, when we spoke about it, I felt that people needed to understand that there is a process

in place and that those appointees had not appeared before us, and that is really unfortunate. I don't know if anybody wants to comment.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Call the question, Chair, please. Thank you.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** There's no question.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** You've got a motion in front of you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** No. Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** We've already set some records in this committee, in that never has a committee failed to extend the period to review appointments to the extent that this committee has. I believe—with some assistance from the Clerk—the previous Liberal government only did it once or twice in their entire tenure over the last 14 years. Other than that, that committee functioned status quo. They went through their list of appointees as a functional committee, and there were no crises that arose out of that committee. The precedent that has been set here, I think, shatters any of those numbers around not giving this committee the opportunity to review appointees.

So when members of this committee look back on their tenure and their role in this House, they'll see that they were a part of a government that refused to do their job. I don't think it's a record that they will be proud of or should be proud of. I hope they have the ability to change course, because we—whether you think so or not, what we're asking for is simply that this committee function as it should by reviewing the intended appointments on a regular basis and be allowed to pose those questions to those appointees. Unfortunately, this government is not allowing that to happen. The point is that that can offer these members some protection.

I am certain you don't want the embarrassment to happen again of what you went through this summer. I am certain that you don't want that, sir. That is not a good thing. I am certain that you didn't play a role in naming those people, but your role was to protect the government and to protect the taxpayer from those people.

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And they didn't slip through the cracks; the crack was dynamited wide open into a gully, into a cavern. It was exploded so that all of those people could flow through with ease and without scrutiny of this committee. It's that simple. I know you understand it and I know you, in your heart, agree with it. You have the ability to do that.

This is what your legacy will be as a parliamentarian, and it will be forever known. You have the opportunity today to change direction. We'll close this committee at the end of the committee—I think we adjourn at 10 o'clock—and my hope is that you send a message back to the powers that be in the Premier's office and say, "Look, we have to change direction here. They're not putting up with it. This is not how we should be doing things."

I think the time is now to do that. I hope that is the direction that you take.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Mr. Natyshak. Any further discussion? Seeing none, I believe you called for a recorded vote on this one as well?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, please, sir.

#### Ayes

Bouma, Coe, Gill, Nicholls, Thanigasalam.

#### Nays

Natyshak, Stiles.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** That motion carries. On to the next one.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, October 3, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated September 27, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you. Any further discussion? Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Mr. Chair, I counted in advance this time, so I didn't put everybody back in, and there are 38 appointees on this list.

Now, these were all, to be clear, folks that we as the official opposition requested appear, that we selected, and I think in every one of these cases the government has never selected, that I'm aware of, anyone to appear. I can't do better than my colleague in terms of expounding on this, but I think not even selecting anyone—I have to say, our experience thus far has been that when people appear here, most of the time I think they seem very pleased and proud to appear, actually, because there is some pride in being appointed to these agencies and commissions. I know I would be proud to sit on these, and it's a huge responsibility. So to come and to be here and to be asked really basic questions, for the most part, but to be able to share your experience and why you think you can be of value is important.

And let's face it, this government has a majority on this committee, so, as Mr. Natyshak said, they can do what they want here. They've sent a pretty strong message today about their lack of interest, I think it's fair to say, in playing a role in improving transparency and accountability.

I guess I would just end by saying that just because you can does not mean you should. So I do hope—I would echo my colleague's comments—that the members opposite will take this away, because today we are, you are, approving more than 100. I'm not going to put us through that and tally up the entire number right now, but it's well over 100 appointees without us as individual MPPs having had an opportunity to do our due diligence. If it only falls to the official opposition, frankly, to do the kind of investigative work that's required, we'll do that. We'll do that. We do it, and sometimes we find things that are not so good. But I would hope that we all want to avoid those situations. Nobody wants that. We don't want a scandal-plagued government. We want to ensure that

people who are appointed are properly vetted, and this is the space where we are supposed to do that.

So I just hope that the members opposite take this away and give this some serious consideration. I really do think that it's unfortunate. I had hoped that we could maybe have a conversation at some point about how this government agencies committee could work more effectively and transparently.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thanks to my colleague again for highlighting the really important need for us to work together and to get through some of these names.

Look, if the fact that New Democrats want to review the vast majority of your appointments makes you uneasy and you don't believe that it is within your ability to carry that workload as a caucus—I think you have over 70 members of your caucus, and if not any of them are available to do that work and are not able to do that work, we understand. You're stretched thin, or whatever. But that's what the subcommittee is for. Maybe we can talk and work out some process in which we can highlight those who are of mutual interest or those who are highly qualified. I don't know what it would be, but time and time again, New Democrat members of this caucus have requested to meet with members of this committee at subcommittee to work out some sort of understanding of how we get here and have been met with silence each and every time. It's interesting. Human nature starts to kick in here, and you have to ask the question: What are you hiding, who are you hiding or what are you hiding from?

We were supposed to hear a new tone, to see a new direction, a new way of governing, from the headstrong ways of the past year to a new, collaborative, collegial approach. I don't see that on day 2 of this Legislature, certainly not from this committee, and I wonder why that is. Is it pro forma? Are you taking whatever they tell you to do and do it? I don't know.

Speaker, we do know that sunlight is the best disinfectant, and we need to open up the curtains on this committee—probably quite literally, because it's dark and dingy. It feels like there's a cloud over this committee, and there will continue to be a cloud if the government continues along this path. It is not the way that things have happened in the past.

Cynicism was at an all-time high before that. Maybe we can agree on that: that our constituents, by and large, don't trust governments. They don't trust the way that things happen because they aren't able to see, to understand, things that are done behind closed doors, in secret, without transparency and without accountability, and they get mad. This is not doing them any favours.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? I believe you also would like a recorded vote on this motion.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes, a recorded vote.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** If the members don't mind, I'm going to open up the drapes on our side to shed a little light on the committee here.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** I would like to call a vote.

#### Ayes

Bouma, Coe, Gill, Nicholls, Thanigasalam.

#### Nays

Natyshak, Stiles.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** This motion carries. Number 9: Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** This is the last one?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Speaker—

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** A promotion. The Clerk just mentioned that.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** You have all of the dignity of the Speakers, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Another job I don't want.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Chair. I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, October 17, 2019, on the order-in-council certificate dated October 11, 2019.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, just to tie a knot on this thing here: The last—how many? Did we do a count?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** There are no selections.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** There are no selections, although there are certainly some appointees attached to this process. We don't know who they are; we don't know where they come from; we don't know what their experience is; we don't know what their vision is for the various agencies that they're appointed to; we don't know their credentials. We don't know anything about them, and it is

our job to learn as much as possible about them and to share that with the public, because the records in this House, in this chamber, in this committee are public. They go out and people read them. People in my riding read them, and they can't believe that this is happening, because it's a far venture from the way that it has—and they wonder what the hell is going on in this place.

It's an affront to the history of this building and to those who came before us and put these rules in as standing orders and as regulations and as measures of accountability for us to follow. This isn't our job by virtue—this is our job by the sake that we are entrusted by our constituents and for that, we have to ensure that we operate within the confines of the rules, and it may be that the rules need to change.

I look forward to hearing what the Premier has come out with from his internal review of this process. I imagine that for the sake that he had to even perform an internal review of the process indicates that there is a problem. I wonder what his remedy will be. If it's simply changing the faces on the committee and those who sit on this committee, I don't think that's moving forward. I'd like to see a new direction and I hope the government members take that.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Any further discussion? Seeing none, a recorded vote.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** I'd like to call for a vote.

#### Ayes

Bouma, Coe, Gill, Nichols, Thanigasalam.

#### Nays

Natyshak, Stiles.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** The motion carries. We now move on to a committee briefing by committee staff. This will take place in closed session.

*The committee continued in closed session at 0953.*







## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

### **Chair / Président**

Mr. John Vanthof (Timiskaming–Cochrane ND)

### **Vice-Chair / Vice-Président**

Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)

Mr. Will Bouma (Brantford–Brant PC)

Mr. Lorne Coe (Whitby PC)

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto (Mississauga–Lakeshore PC)

Mr. Parm Gill (Milton PC)

Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)

Mr. Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent–Leamington PC)

Ms. Marit Stiles (Davenport ND)

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam (Scarborough–Rouge Park PC)

Mr. John Vanthof (Timiskaming–Cochrane ND)

### **Clerk / Greffière**

Ms. Jocelyn McCauley

### **Staff / Personnel**

Mr. Andrew McNaught, research officer,  
Research Services