

Third Session – Forty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Legislative Affairs

Chairperson
Mr. Jon Reyes
Constituency of Waverley

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley)

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East)

ATTENDANCE – 6 QUORUM – 4

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Mr. Goertzen, Hon. Ms. Squires

Messrs. Isleifson, Lindsey, Ms. Marcelino, Mr. Reyes

APPEARING:

Mr. Dougal Lamont, MLA for St. Boniface

PUBLIC PRESENTERS:

Bill 19–The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2)

Ms. Zainab Mansaray, Canada Sierra Leone Friendship Society Inc.

Bill 55–The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021

Mr. James Beddome, Leader, Green Party of Manitoba

Mr. Sudhir Sandhu, Manitoba Building Trades

Mr. Jim Silver, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba

Ms. Shawn Kettner, private citizen

Mr. Patrick Falconer, private citizen

Ms. Michelle Dallmann, private citizen

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Bill 14 – The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020

Bill 19 – The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2)

Bill 55 – The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021

Bill 68 – The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Katerina Tefft): Good evening. Will the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs please come to order.

Our first item of business is the election of a Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I would nominate Mr. Reyes.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Reyes has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Reyes, will you please take the Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Good evening.

Our next item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): I would nominate Mr. Isleifson.

Mr. Chairperson: Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Isleifson is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to order—or, sorry. This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 14, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020; Bill 19, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2); Bill 55, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021; Bill 68, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

I would like to inform all in attendance of the provisions in our rules regarding the hours of adjournment. The standing committee meeting to consider a bill must not sit past midnight to hear public presentations or to consider clause by clause of a bill, except by unanimous consent of the committee.

Prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for meeting in this committee. In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations with

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another five minutes allowed for questions from committee members. If a presenter is not in attendance when their name is called, they'll be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they'll be moved from the presenters list.

The proceedings of our meetings are recorded in order to provide a verbatim transcript. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA or a presenter, I first have to say the person's name. This is the signal for the Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

Also, if any presenter has any written materials for distribution to the committee, please send the file by email to the moderator. We'll distribute it all to committee members. Thank you for your patience. We will now proceed with public presentations.

Bill 19—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2)

Mr. Chairperson: I will now call on Zainab Mansaray of the Canada Sierra Leone Friendship Society Incorporated and ask the moderator to invite them into the meeting.

Please unmute yourself and turn your video on.

Ms. Zainab Mansaray (Canada Sierra Leone Friendship Society Inc.): Sorry about that. I think it's the way it sounds coming.

Mr. Chairperson: Hello—Mrs. Mansaray?

Ms. Mansaray: Yes?

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed with your presentation.

Ms. Mansaray: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Zainab Mansaray. The Bill 19—I'm here on behalf of the Bill 19, just to plead about the international education and other—more.

I've been going out every day, meeting people, crying out how education is very important and it helps me. We are pleading on behalf of the Sierra Leone committee—community and in the country itself to please include us for the education.

I just sent the presentation to the clerk, but I can speak it out of my mind how education is affecting us in Sierra Leone. As we are registered both Canada and Sierra Leone, we have all the resources for lack of education. We want to invite Sierra Leoneans so that they can implement the method of Canada—and Manitoba, to be specific—because I'm so proud.

I'm just pleading. If there is any question I can ready to answer it, for it's a pleading to include on the bill for education.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Mansaray. Thank you for your presentation. Your presentation is complete, correct?

My apologies. Again, Mrs. Mansaray, thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I want to take the opportunity to thank you for coming out tonight to present. It's not always easy to come to these committee meetings and express your thoughts, so we really appreciate the fact that you came out and did that.

And is there anything else you'd like to add?

Ms. Mansaray: Yes. I'd like to add, in terms of the country itself, we are lots here but the problem in Sierra Leone is human rights violation. And because the Canada name is so big and I registered this organization, we have lots of problems because people are looking forward to that.

* (18:10)

Thank you for the bill, the bridge grants that we got. This is why we are here—I am here today to plead to the Canadian, to the Manitoba specific because we want to share our culture and the education.

Mr. Chairperson: Are there any other questions?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I just want to say, on behalf of the Manitoba government, thank you, Ms. Mansaray, for being here this evening and coming to committee and putting a few words on the record on Bill 19 and introducing yourself to us. It's nice to meet you virtually and I appreciate your comments and your words.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Do members of the committee have any more questions for Ms. Mansaray?

Thank you for the presentation.

Bill 55—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021

Mr. Chairperson: I will now call on James Beddome, Leader of the Green Party of Manitoba, and ask the moderator to invite them into the meeting.

Please unmute yourself and turn your video on.

Mr. Beddome, please proceed with your presentation.

Mr. James Beddome (Leader, Green Party of Manitoba): Thank you very much, Chairperson. I won't take too, too long tonight. I once again want to thank the committee. I want to thank the clerks and the legislative staff for ensuring that we continue to have these public presentations on legislation. I think it's really important. We're one of two provinces across the country that has this public process, and it was disappointing to only receive the email with notice of this committee this morning, so I'll try to be quick.

When it comes to this act, there is a number of changes, so it's a big piece of legislation making changes to a number of acts. So, some of them, honestly, seem logical, but I'll leave this Legislature with a question for themselves.

Could they take any sort of thought—some of these changes to The Family Farm Protection Act, as well as The Farm Machinery and Equipment Act, I think in the midst of the pandemic, in the midst of COVID pandemic, rising rates of poverty, people facing credit issues, I think they're going to end up making it easier for family farms to have their equipment seized.

So that really, I think, shows this government's true colours with respect to that change. I'm not going to spend a long time commenting on it, but I do want to comment, as I indicated when I last appeared before legislative committee, that I think a standard should be set of two weeks notice for all committees. I think you could adhere that into the rules. The legislative rules have proved themselves very ineffective, and this is one of the 19 bills that Manitobans had to wait months to even see.

And I'll note that in the past committee—I hope, Mr. Chairperson, you don't make the same mistake of trying to interrupt the public that are pointing that out because I think this process is sacred. And sometimes, quite bluntly, you are lucky enough to sit in the Legislature, you need to hear a word or two from the public even if it isn't directly on point with the legislation at play. And I think, bluntly put, the delay of the 19 bills, all parties share in that blame, but what I'd like to see this Legislature do is spend some time on thinking on improving this really important public process.

You give us two weeks, we will give you better suggestions, and it means better legislation for the people of Manitoba.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Thank you for coming out again, Mr. Beddome, to make a presentation to the committee. You talked a little bit about the part that deals with the farm credit and stuff. What are your concerns specifically with those particular sections of this bill that touches so many different pieces of legislation?

Mr. Beddome: Sure. And I wish I can focus on all the legislations, but it's the one that—it's what most stood out to me. Firstly, removing the Manitoba Farm Industry Board that assists in helping mediate farm disputes with creditors. I think that's valuable, having a mediator that's paid for by the public that's involved in trying to deal with those disputes can all—help them sell them and help ensure that family farms survive.

Similarly, now creditors are no longer going to require leave of the Manitoba Farm Industry Board to repossess farm equipment. I mean, I think we need to think carefully about this because that could be someone's livelihood. If they don't have the equipment to plant that crop, if they don't have the equipment to get the hay off the fields, that can mean the farm in its entirety. And, obviously, anyone that's facing such a creditor proceeding in terms of that is obviously probably not in the strongest financial position to start with.

And it's surprising to me that when I think of how many MLAs come from southern Manitoba and are—an agrarian belt, that this government doesn't realize that. Maybe they just don't care about family farmers.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): Thank you, Mr. Beddome, for presenting this evening and in the past. I won't get into too much about the comment you had about family farms. You will know the long history of this government and its support for family farms, and we'll let that stand on its own.

I do want to speak, though, a little bit to your comments about committees themselves, and I agree with you. It is one of the great sacred things of the Manitoba Legislature that we have public presentations after second reading, one of only two

provinces, as you mentioned. I'm glad to see that this year, spring legislation was made public much earlier than it normally is. Often, the Legislature didn't resume sitting 'til April, sometimes as late as May, and then legislation would be seen. This is, I think, is a much better process.

But I take your point to heart about two weeks notice and while that might be difficult in sort of the legislative calendar perspective, I mean, this piece of legislation has been known to—and distributed to the public for more than two weeks. Maybe it's about ensuring that the public knows the legislation is out there, knowing that the committee hearings are going to happen at some point; whether it's in, you know, two weeks or whether it's in two months, it's coming. And at that initial point, doing a better job of ensuring that people understand that that legislation's available on the website, that's it's out there for public discourse and that a committee hearing will be coming at some point. So there is that time to make those presentations.

So I think your point is worth considering and valid from that perspective about doing a better job of ensuring that we can advise the public when there's legislation for consideration, knowing that this process is going to come at some point.

So, thank you for that.

Mr. Beddome: I thank the member for his comments. Certainly, I recognize many Conservative members of the Legislature are—do have connections to family farm, but I still wonder why you inserted this into the legislation.

With respect to your comment about the two weeks, I'll note this is something I've asked from the previous NDP government. I recognize there's some scheduling challenges, but I think the Legislature should be able to figure out those scheduling challenges. Obviously, when we appear in person we have sometimes out-of-town presenters, but even tonight, we're presuming that the public, with less than a day's notice, can rearrange their schedule and have their speaking notes put together for this Legislature.

What we should aim for is giving every member of the public two weeks notice, and you know what they're going to do? They're going to give you better presentations. I would've given you a better presentation tonight, and I think that's an important part of the process because I think it's incumbent on members of the Legislature to hear from the public, to reflect on those and hopefully make some good amendments as

a result. And, you know, that does happen from time to time.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Thank you very much, Mr. Beddome. Yes, and I—you—it's a very perceptive comment you've made. I think that this government has been—it's quite keen on creditors and landlords when it comes to family farms and that—and people who supply—sell stuff to farmers, rather than farmers so that—it's that aspect—there is quite a different aspect of the agricultural economy.

I'm just wondering if there are any other particular stand-out concerns for you in this bill. *[interjection]*

* (18:20)

Mr. Chairperson: Mister—sorry; my apologies. Mr. Beddome.

Mr. Beddome: Sorry. My apologies. I know better. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Honestly, some of the aspects—quickly looking at it—make sense. I certainly understand allowing documents to be filed electronically, on the elections financing of elections act, is going to be convenient. So some of the aspects I didn't see a huge issue with, but, at the same time, I didn't have the appropriate amount of time that I would have truly liked, to give you the best comments possible.

I will acknowledge that I did register for this a while ago, but then you get the email from the clerk and so I put it together on short notice in addition to, you know, I do work a day job as well.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Beddome, thank you very much for your presentation. Your time is up.

I will now call on Sudhir Sandhu of Manitoba Building and Trades.

Mr. Sandhu, please proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Sudhir Sandhu (Manitoba Building Trades): Good evening, Mr. Chair, and good evening to the panel, as well as legislative staff who work hard to make this process work.

For all of us, I appear before you this evening as—we're Manitoba Building Trades, our 13 member unions and over 10,000 skilled professionals across the province.

As an organization, we work very hard every single day to streamline processes and procedures to both reduce bottlenecks, as well as to eliminate efficiencies in our own organization. So we strive

for continuous improvement to deliver value to our members and our clients, across the system.

We expect the same from government that we, as a private organization, we expect it for ourselves. So we have no issue with efforts to find efficiencies and to streamline service delivery as Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, Bill 55, intends to do. We, in fact, encourage it.

Having said that, we do have some concerns that are founded on fact and information we'd like to share with you today.

When these initiatives lead to unintended adverse consequences, I think it should garner all of our attention and capture all of our attention. And those unintended consequences are thus: where there are corollary downstream impacts that are unintended and unrealized at the time that legislation is contemplated. Similarly, if there is a misapprehension or misunderstanding of what the actual benefits of a particular piece of regulation or act have been, over time.

So Bill 55 includes the repeal of The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act, and if this act is repealed there will be unintended consequences for Manitobans. And before I give you some specifics on that, let me just ask you to consider this for a moment: so apprentices are trained through employment—20 per cent of an apprentice's learning happens in the classroom and 80 per cent happens in the workplace.

If apprentices do not work, they cannot complete their education which, in this case, would yield journeyed status in their chosen skill trade.

Most of Canada's apprentices get their work experience on larger projects; that's just a fact. Small employers typically cannot support an apprenticeship. They don't have the numbers and they don't have the work volume to do so.

So larger projects have the capacity and those are the ones that create opportunities for apprentices Canada-wide. That's just not a Manitoba syndrome; that applies everywhere.

This act, the apprenticeship opportunities—employment opportunities act, created opportunities for apprentices to work on public projects which, by definition, tend to be larger projects, an ideal for engaging apprentices.

Since 2018, and I cite Build Force data from 2018-2019 and now 2020-21, that Manitoba is

winding down a number of large institutional and government projects, and it is well projected, and since 2018 we've been sounding the alarm, about diminishing opportunities in Manitoba to train apprentices. Opportunities are drying up.

So, in March 2021, the government—this government—increased apprenticeship ratios one to one to two to one across the board. This means that we will now have twice as many apprentices looking for work, and currently, through the repeal of this act, as the ratio changes to create more apprentices, Bill 55 will eliminate work and training opportunities for these apprentices. That's counter-intuitive and you increase the number of people looking for work, while reducing the opportunities they have to go to work.

The impacts of these changes will be exponential impact. It won't be marginal; it will be exponential. As the system creates more apprentices, there will be fewer jobs.

So we note that the apprenticeship opportunities act does not create any undue regulatory burdens, so it is couched in a bill that is intended to reduce red tape and increase efficiency, but to our knowledge there has really been no issue with this bill. And I say this in jest, but in the existing act, apprenticeship opportunities act, there are enough loopholes to drive aircraft carriers through. It was only intended to create a circumstance where it required that, when appropriate and feasible, contractors in Manitoba—and not only Manitoba contractors, those wanting to do business in Manitoba—had to demonstrate a commitment to apprenticeship. They could seek all kinds of exemptions and exceptions but if they were any employer of any size and they ought to be supporting apprenticeship in Manitoba, they had to do so.

Simply put, that is a good deal for Manitoba and quite frankly, we submit that if that is red tape, let's have some more of it. Manitoba tax dollars and Manitoba public works, supporting Manitobans in employment, training and education and workforce development; that can't be considered red tape. It ought not to be.

So we were certain that was not your intent. Look, there are unintended consequences associated with legislation from time to time.

In closing, I would simply ask that we proceed thoughtfully and make Manitoba the most efficient jurisdiction in Canada; we're on board. But we also ask that we do so without creating unintended harm that is going to do the last thing you intend to do, and

that is to remove opportunities for Manitobans. I would stop there.

Thank you, and I'd be happy to answer any questions, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lindsey: First off, let me thank you, Mr. Sandhu, for coming out and making your presentation tonight.

Now we know there's several pieces of legislation in the queue that are going to affect apprentices going forward. The project labour agreement one and the changes in the ratio, and now this piece.

Can you think of a good reason why all of these changes—that are going to affect young people coming up, hoping to get a better life—what would be the possible benefit or the reason that a government would do these things all at once?

Mr. Sandhu: Thanks for the question, Mr. Lindsey.

And I say this in a non-partisan way, practically speaking, pragmatically speaking, we know the cumulative impact of the number of pieces of pending legislation are going to have a devastating impact on youth in Manitoba.

Just—the 2020—or March 24, '21, this year's BuildForce projections for Manitoba projects—and I'll quickly read—that employment is going to drop 4 per cent through 2024 and during the forecast period, which is the next decade, we're going to see a growth of only 500 workers in the residential construction sector, to be offset by a loss over 650 jobs in the industrial institutional sector, which is where apprenticeship training happens.

So all of these diminishing opportunities, you know, whether it's Bill 13, whether it's Bill 55, this is going to have an—it's going to have a very deleterious effect, not only on journey tradespeople that exist today, but young people. They will be discouraged because they won't see employment in front of them. And we're a training institution—training organization. We do not train unless there are promises of a job and we are looking to wind—slow down our training initiatives to—in the face of diminishing demand.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Thank you, Mr. Sandhu, for coming out and sharing your concerns regarding this provision of the bill—this proposed bill.

I was just wondering if you could please let the committee know how many apprentices are we roughly talking about in the doubling of them. And do you have information on how many of these apprentices are women or part of other types of under-represented groups?

We know that young people, women and under-represented groups have been disproportionately affected by this recession that we're in right now and I think that, you know, the skilled trades is a wonderful avenue for these folks to kind of get into because of the type of good jobs and compensation that it has—that this type of work leads to.

Do you have any more information regarding that?

* (18:30)

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you for the question. There are thousands of registered apprentices in the system, and we know it's a matter of fact that under-represented groups do worse when the economy is underperforming.

And in these times, particularly with construction, with employment projected to decrease in Manitoba, our initiative is to bring more women and more designated, you know, more Indigenous workers into better paying, higher classifications in the trades, as well as new Canadians—we will have fewer opportunities.

There's—there are no ifs, ands or buts about it. Those are just plain facts of mathematics and statistical facts. So, yes, we are very concerned about that.

We have some of the largest initiatives in the country to increase the representation of both women in the trades and to promote Indigenous workers from entry-level trades to higher classifications. And currently we are, again, as I said, we're scaling back on some of those initiatives because we simply do not have the jobs to train people and send them to.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Mr. Sandhu, for your presentation. I appreciate you cautioning committee members, cautioning the government, more specifically, about the unintended consequences of legislation. That is something that all governments need to be aware of and that we appreciate the work of you and organizations like yours who will continue to monitor legislation, how it plays out in the real world and that is important, an important part of organizations like yourself.

I do know that one of the challenges with this particular piece of legislation, and I know the minister who's responsible directly for the legislation will watch these consequences, but that there were many exemption letters that were granted year over year going back to 2014 and '15. Even under a previous administration there was upwards of 100 exemption letters provided to industry because they simply couldn't meet these provisions, and so it wasn't adhering to the intended consequences of the legislation.

And so both have to be observed to ensure that the legislation is fulfilling its intended consequence, that by making changes that there are not unintended consequences.

So I thank you for your caution, and I know that the minister that is responsible for the bill will certainly be watching that, and I'm sure will be in contact with your organization, others, as it proceeds.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Sandhu, for your presentation.

I will now call on Jim Silver of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba and ask the moderator to invite them into the meeting.

Please unmute yourself and turn your video on.

Mr. Silver, please proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Jim Silver (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members. Good evening, everyone.

So, my name is Jim Silver. I'm presenting on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba. I'm a professor emeritus at the University of Winnipeg, recently retired, and for the past 25 years, I've worked in low-income communities in Winnipeg, with many community groups and particularly on matters relating to adult education and adult literacy.

And, for that reason, I want to say that I believe that repealing The Adult Literacy Act is a mistake. Some have said, well, Manitoba is the only province in the country that has an adult literacy act and so we should repeal that act so that we're on a level playing field with the rest of the country. And that just isn't a sensible way of thinking, to my mind.

I think if Manitoba is the only province in the country that has an adult literacy act, that places us at the head of the class. And rather than repealing the act,

we ought to be investing in adult literacy. So you might ask why. Why does that matter?

Well, a lack of literacy leads to poverty. Poverty produces poor educational outcomes. Where there is poverty, people do poorly in school; children and young people do poorly in school. There have been hundreds of scholarly articles on the relationship between poverty and educational outcomes done over decades, done in many countries in the world. They all confirm high levels of poverty produce low educational outcomes. We have done studies like that here in Manitoba. The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, affiliated with the faculty of medicine at the University of Manitoba, has done such studies repeatedly and that is what they find as well. High poverty areas, low educational outcomes.

So, for example, the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy studies find that in the highest income quintile in Winnipeg, 98 per cent of young people graduate high school on time. In the lowest income quintile in Winnipeg, 55 per cent of young people graduate high school on time; roughly half the proportion.

The same is the case with the early development indicator, the EDI scores, which measure kids' readiness for school at age five. What we find there is the same as what is found every single time. Those neighbourhoods where poverty is high are the neighbourhoods where a high proportion of children are not ready for school at age five. So they walk, first time, through the school doors already behind other children who have grown up in higher income neighbourhoods.

We know from the most recent data done by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg that there are 87,730 children in Manitoba living in families who are in poverty.

So that takes us to the issue of literacy because poor literacy skills are a major factor in producing poverty and we have a major literacy problem in this province. We have a literacy problem right across the country, but we certainly have a problem here in this province. The latest data that I've seen says that about 285,000 adults in Manitoba have literacy levels at level 1 or 2, when level 3 is what is required for full participation in the economy, in this society. And the funding available for adult literacy meets the needs of 1 per cent of those 285,000 people who don't have adequate literacy levels.

This is a very expensive issue. This is a very expensive problem. That is to say, it's costing all of us an awful lot.

Economists have looked at this, interestingly. I don't know what the reason for this is but it's bank economists, economists working for the chartered banks in particular, who have spoken to this issue and they have found that two thirds of those people on social assistance have poor literacy skills. More than two thirds of those people in prison have poor literacy skills. They have found that low levels of literacy add to our health-care costs, obviously a major problem in this province and right across the country.

Illiteracy costs, one bank economist says, quote, hundreds of billions of dollars in lost opportunity. So this is costing us a great deal to have so many people who are illiterate in our province and yet, economists find that investment in literacy programming has a very short payback period.

For every dollar that we invest in literacy programming, we get that dollar back, it's figured, in less than a year's time. It makes good, good sense to invest in adult literacy programming.

We should have adult literacy and adult education programming available and accessible to everybody in the province who needs it and wants it. What would that get us?

Well, it would mean that a whole bunch of people who are now on social assistance would move into the paid labour force. That would mean, from the government's point of view, social assistance cost down, tax revenue up. That's a good thing for all of us.

It would mean health-care costs being held down. It would mean children doing better in school. All the evidence is that when mom or dad are in school, their kids do better in school for reasons that I think, you know, are pretty obvious. Mom's doing her homework at the kitchen table after dinner. The kids see that. They realize that school is something that is important.

This is a low-cost intervention—investing in adult literacy programming—a low cost intervention that would produce big benefits. It would produce fiscal benefits. It would produce, more broadly, economic benefits. It would produce social benefits.

* (18:40)

Just to give you a couple of examples, I did some work in a Manitoba Housing complex right at the west end of Winnipeg, close to the Perimeter off Roblin

Boulevard—Westgrove housing, it's called. So we ran a little adult literacy program there because the residents in the community had wanted it, and I was involved in doing an evaluation.

And some of the parents that were involved in this program when we asked them, you know, did you like it and what reasons did you like it, one woman told us, well, you know, for the first time ever I am able to read bedtime stories to my children, and I love that, and they love it. Another one said, well, you know, now when notes come home from school, from the teacher at school for my kids, I can read the notes. I know what's going on at school. Others told us, well, you know, they're beginning to read the newspaper. So if you start to read the newspaper, all of a sudden a whole world opens up to you.

So there's so many benefits to adult literacy programming and it is so obvious that we ought not to repeal The Adult Literacy Act. I mean doing so makes no sense to me whatsoever; it makes no financial sense, it makes no ethical sense. We should not have huge numbers of people in our province who do not have sufficient literacy skills to participate meaningfully in our society.

Rather than repealing the act, we should be investing aggressively in adult literacy programs. The benefits will be substantial and the benefits will accrue to all of us in the province.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Silver, for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lamont: Thank you very much, Mr. Silver. I've read some of your reports and they're really, really striking and very important. I also remember a Free Press story talking about the enormous benefits of improvements in adult literacy, and I agree this is something that needs to be a much greater focus.

I'm just wondering, just in your experience, what has been the challenge of getting attention or funding for this, because you said that only 1 per cent of the people who need it get it. What is the—what's the resistance or the bottleneck because clearly this isn't something that's brand new? But if you could just tell me about—explain that to me, if you would.

Mr. Silver: Sorry, yes, thank you. A very good question to which I do not have a very good answer. It is such a no-brainer to be investing in adult literacy.

We have the Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba now offering the mature grade 12, not nearly enough of them. But those that we have—a program introduced, by the way, by a Conservative government, the Filmon government in the '90s, highly effective; these Adult Learning Centres earning students who would not otherwise get a high school education, the mature grade 12 designation. There simply aren't enough of them.

And appeal after appeal after appeal to the civil service to increase funding for Adult Learning Centres falls on deaf ears. I don't understand it.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Mr. Silver, for your presentation. I think all members of the committee would largely agree with your presentation on the importance of adult literacy, literacy in general and the impact that it has on life and on poverty for certain.

I think the question perhaps is more about what interplay or what specific value, then, is it in an act as opposed to being driven by policy like most other provinces? And you mentioned that in your opening comments that every other province does it through policy as opposed to legislation, and yet, most other provinces statistically would show are doing better when it comes to literacy.

So I'm not sure that it's been proven out that an act is actually a better form of driving literacy policy as opposed to purely through policy, which sometimes is more nimble and more easily adaptable and more flexible than legislation or regulation. So maybe you could speak to that. In particular, if the act is—if specific value yet it hasn't been shown to be the end result that we all would want in Manitoba, why would policy be less effective, recognizing and maybe looking forward to your answer that funding is always an issue, and will always be an issue.

But is there anything particularly less effective with a policy driven approach as is done in other provinces where they've gotten better results?

Mr. Silver: Well, that's an interesting observation and I can see the logic of it, but I'm here because when The Adult Literacy Act is being repealed, it gives me no confidence whatever that there's going to be investment in adult literacy programming.

If you are saying to me, Mr. Goertzen, that despite repealing The Adult Literacy Act the government is going to significant—make significant investments in adult literacy programming; thank you very much. I'm pleased. But, you know, one has to be suspicious when the act itself is being repealed.

Ms. Marcelino: Good evening, Professor Silver. Thank you so much for your comments today and for all the work that you've done over the years with families on this very, very important issue.

Today I was just talking to a principal at an adult learning centre, and I asked him why has—why, in your opinion, has registration—going down significantly over the last few years, you know? And he said that it's tied to the lack of funding for board and lodging that used to be part of what was offered to a lot of adult students.

When you say that the one—that there's 1 per cent of all the folks that need adult learning—adult education—are you also talking about those kinds of wrap-around services like that board and lodging as well?

Mr. Silver: No, I wasn't thinking about that particularly, but your having raised it is a very, very good point. The adult literacy work and the adult education centres, adult learning centres, that's a very tough slog—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Silver. Mr. Silver.

Mr. Silver: It's hard work. It requires—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Silver, if I could just kindly have you answer the question very quickly, because your time is up.

Thank you.

Mr. Silver: Oh, okay.

Supports for students in adult literacy programming and adult learning centres is essential. The supports are essential. They have not had sufficient supports in their lifetime before.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Silver.

I will now call on Shawn Kettner. I'd ask the moderator to invite them into the meeting. Please unmute yourself and turn your video on.

Mr. Kettner?

Ms. Shawn Kettner (Private Citizen): Hello? Hi.

Mr. Chairperson: Oh, my apologies. Ms. Kettner, please proceed with your presentation.

Ms. Kettner: Thank you. Thanks Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee and express my views on Bill 55, the reducing red tape and improving services act.

My name is Shawn Kettner. I've lived, worked and raised my family in Manitoba. I grew up in the North End of Winnipeg, chose to settle here and raised my family here. I'm also a retired business owner. I'm a proud Manitoban—at least I was—always speaking highly of our beautiful province and the place I call home.

That is becoming harder and harder to do. I often find myself up late at night or welling up with tears as I go about my day as I observe the destruction and deterioration of what makes, or used to make, our province the place that proudly calls itself friendly Manitoba. And I'm not alone.

Everyone I talk to, every analysis of the current trends in Manitoba politics I read in mainstream media, everywhere I look, people are frightened, frustrated and fearful for the future of our province. By that, I am referring to the barrage of proposed changes to the many government bills, including Bill 55, that will dramatically change the essence of who we are and how we will care for each other now and in the future.

* (18:50)

From what I understand, government bills are there to act as a guide or set of rules for our various programs and institutions that we collectively determine, resulting in the best practices for all Manitobans and for the future generations. The varying steps in our legislative procedures provide—or at least intend to provide—that the democratic process ensures inclusivity and transparency. Here is where things seem to have gotten messed up.

The very heart of democracy is based on working together to collectively determine the will of the people. But that means inclusion, not exclusion. Bill 55 was introduced for first reading by Minister Squires, the minister of Municipal Relations as well as Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs (Ms. Squires).

As we are all aware, the bill was introduced with a title and no text. We, the citizens of Manitoba and the MLAs, all had to wait a full four months until March of 2021 before this information was made public. Not only were the politicians and the general public not privy to the text, but the professional members of our society hired to serve us, those who best know the effects of the bills on Manitobans, were also not provided with the text.

Not having access to the proposed changes in a timely manner grossly limited the opportunity to

analyze and advise as to how the proposed changes will affect the very people whom they serve. It is our trained professionals, like Mr. Sandhu, who we heard from this evening, not our politicians, who are the experts and are able to understand and best advocate for our communities. It is only through transparent and democratic consultation that truly good choices and political decisions can be made.

Bill 55 is only one of the 19 mystery bills that was introduced last November with no text. Nineteen bills that included sweeping changes that will potentially affect the lives of Manitobans for years to come. Yet, this government chose to withhold the text of these bills to the last moment. Nowhere else, never in the history of our Province, in the legislatures of all other Canadian jurisdictions, or in the established norms in every international jurisdiction that responded to the inquiries by the Manitoba Legislative Library have there been the tabling of so many bills without any text.

This unprecedented act is and was undemocratic and a grave disservice to the people of Manitoba. We must work together to right this wrong. I ask that you determine how to proceed with Bill 55 as you take into account the lack of time allowed for examination of this bill, and therefore your responsibility for enabling the tabling of the 19 bills with no text. I ask that you listen to the current concerns of citizens like myself and make the necessary adjustments to Bill 55 in light of it being one of the 19 mystery bills that did not sufficiently allow for the democratic process to be upheld.

Most importantly, I ask that all party members work together in an open, public and transparent process to amend the rules of the House before the next session to better reflect and respect due process, as well as to promote more meaningful public participation in the legislative process.

I ask that you listen to your hearts, that we can once again proudly call ourselves friendly Manitoba and celebrate our caring, kind society that honours the democratic process and is inclusive, and therefore, it leaves no one behind.

I respectfully submit these requests to you. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lindsey: I just want to take the opportunity to thank you for your presentation, and certainly, yourself and previous presenters here tonight have pointed out things that we can do better with the process.

I guess the good news is that we at least get this part—we get the opportunity for the public to have comment on bills. Was there anything specific with Bill 55 that you wanted to raise as an issue here tonight other than the process issues you've highlighted?

Ms. Kettner: No. Really my concern is the process, in that as a citizen I'm concerned when I listen to people speak about the various issues tonight in the committee you realize that there are so many issues that are not going to be properly addressed because of the unprecedented presentation of these bills, and I find that that's just 'inconscionable' and it's just so hard to understand how that can happen in our democratic system.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you very much, Ms. Kettner, for your presentation here this evening.

Certainly things have changed in the Manitoba Legislature. Historically, the vast majority of bills were introduced in Manitoba's legislative calendar in the spring. Usually, though, that only started in late March, sometimes in April, sometimes actually in May, and then those bills would primarily be voted upon in June. And so, often bills only got one month of scrutiny in the Legislature, and I can imagine how that must have disturbed you at that time when that was done for so many years.

Now, with the new rule since 2016, bills are historically again introduced in the spring, but much earlier now at the beginning of March, and then are voted upon largely in June, and a handful are held over 'til generally November. So much more debate time for bills, much more time for the public to see them in the last five years than there has been historically, certainly in my time in the Legislature in the last 20 years, but I would say probably over the last 30 or 35 years.

So I'm glad that it's—it is unprecedented that there's this much time for bills to be seen, but of course things can always be better.

But with the fact that there is more time now for bills to be seen than there has been historically in the Legislature, I would go back to Mr. Lindsey's question. Is there anything particular in this bill that you've now had the opportunity to examine that you would like to see improved upon?

Ms. Kettner: Well, I would just like to thank you about your comments and the bringing to our attention the fact that we have had, traditionally, more time now in the last little while to look at the bills.

But under the circumstances, by having 19 of those bills have no texts, that became a huge problem. So I really don't understand why that was allowed to happen and I hope that we won't see that ever happening again and that the committees work together—all members from all parties—to rectify that situation. But I do not have anything directly related to Bill 55 that I would like to address.

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing that there are no other questions, thank you for your presentation.

I will now call on Patrick Falconer and ask the moderator to invite them into the meeting. Please unmute yourself and turn your video on.

Mr. Falconer, please proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Patrick Falconer (Private Citizen): Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairperson, committee members, thank you for the opportunity to present my views this evening on Bill 55, the reducing red tape and improving services act.

My name is Patrick Falconer. I'm a 63-year-old Manitoban who has struggled for most of my adult life to improve the province that I proudly call home. I, like most of us, had finer and have had less finer moments in these efforts.

Like the previous speaker, I'd like to remind you that Bill 55 was introduced for first reading by the Honourable Ms. Squires, the minister of Municipal Relations back on the afternoon of Monday, November 2nd, 2020. The bill was introduced with this title alone; no text or explanatory notes were released.

Citizens, taxpayers, stakeholders and MLAs alike all had to wait until this March before the contents of the bill was made public. In terms of the Legislature, that represents a delay of 12 sitting days. In terms of the public, that represents an astonishing delay of four months—a full 120 calendar days.

Even more shocking, Bill 55 was an aberration, a lone wolf, so to speak. Bill 55 was one of 19 so-called government mystery bills that were introduced in November with no text.

* (19:00)

Bill 55 is the first of these 19 mystery bills that have reached the attention of this standing committee. Bill 55 and each of the other 18 mystery bills are now seriously tainted by the disturbing history, the result of an escalation of partisan procedural disputes the Pallister government has taken to the extreme, an extreme that entailed the unprecedented breach of due process and long-standing democratic standards.

Indeed, this is the first time this has happened in a combined 1,369 years of legislated proceedings across all Canadian provinces. Let me say that again: 1,369 years. In strictly Manitoban terms, this is the first and only time in 150 years, five full generations.

Was there provocation by the opposition? Surely. Has governing during the midst of a pandemic been challenging? Surely. Was withholding the text of Bill 55 and the other of the four—for four months defensible? Surely not. I repeat, surely not.

As the March 2nd letter to Premier Pallister and leaders Kinew and Lamont from six distinguished and deeply concerned Manitobans from across party lines, clearly and unequivocally stated, this is, and I quote, this is unacceptable.

The March 2nd Winnipeg Free Press editorial stated, and I quote, the procedural infighting in Manitoba's current legislature has taken petty politicking too far.

Excuse me, I got a drink of water.

These are the softball descriptions. Others have been much more critical. Scott Forbes, president of the Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations, described the government's conduct as showing, quote, a stunning contempt for Manitobans.

Dennis Pilon, a political studies professor, whom 'nork'—from York University, was reported to have called it, quote, a new low in parliamentary behaviour from Canada's right wing, and that's saying something, unquote. He goes on to call it, quote, a very bad precedent.

Molly McCracken, director of the Manitoba office in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, reportedly referred to the government's conduct as being part of, quote, the global attack on democracy, unquote, and called it, quote, disrespectful to Manitobans.

In an attempt to find middle ground, I refer to it as serious case of democratic backsliding.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairperson, committee members, as we consider Bill 55, I would like to creatively paraphrase a quote from Edmund Burke. Burke is the political thinker from the 18th century who's often referred to as the father of conservatism. Here is the quote: The only thing necessary for democratic backsliding to triumph is for good persons to do nothing.

Premier Pallister, in the end, is most responsible for this unprecedented breach with parliamentary tradition. But I must ask: Whose actions, through either omission or commission, have allowed this to happen?

My answer is, the members of the PC caucus, who I'm sure are good people but seem to have done nothing, or at least not done enough to rein in what had been described as the Premier's controlling, hyper-competitive and even authoritarian tendencies.

These are not qualities that most good people admire. These are not the qualities that inspire trust and confidence. These are not the qualities that we would want to promote in our children. No, these qualities are one of the reasons that two thirds of Canadians believe that most politicians cannot be trusted. These are the qualities that, if left unchecked, both enable and propel democratic backsliding. Resistance is not futile. No, indeed, democracy is fragile. A resistance to backsliding by good people is obligatory.

So I conclude my remarks on Bill 55 by providing the PC members of this standing committee with a certificate of investiture, investiture in what I am watching this evening, as the order of 1369.

I've provided copies to the clerk in advance of today's meeting. Like the Order of Canada, the Order of 1369 has a very exclusive membership. This, capped at a maximum of 35 people and set out in certificate, these are the Manitobans whose, quote, support and/or silence enabled the tabling of 19 bills for first reading without text, thereby breaching a democratic tradition established and unbroken in 1,369 combined years of legislative proceedings across all Canadian provinces and denying the public and stakeholders their right to a timely review of legislative initiatives.

This investiture may seem playful to some. I prepared it to be symbolic: symbolic of your responsibilities as MLAs to serve a higher good than your party affiliation, a much higher good than enabling

government misconduct through your active support or your silent acquiescence.

So, as you review Bill 55, I ask that today—starting today, the PC members of this standing committee hold your government to higher standards, to admitting rather than denying responsibility for the 19 mystery bills and listening to public concerns and making adjustments to or withdrawing the many highly contentious bills now before the Legislature, and then committing yourself and your party to work together with the other parties in an open, public and transparent process to, first, amend the rules of the House before the next session to better reflect and respect due process, and second, to promote more meaningful public participation in the legislative process.

I ask that opposition MLAs who are members of the standing committee hold their own parties to these same high standards. While my comments may have largely focused on the PCs, it seems disingenuous not, at best, to ignore the shortfalls and provocations of opposition MLAs, including but far from limited to the reported heckling of the Minister of Mental Health by NDP MLAs last week, as well as the overall conduct in the Legislature that has been described as, quote, abysmal.

You can do better than this. We need you to do better than this.

Thank you very much for your time and your attention.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lindsey: Well, thank you very much for taking time out of your life to come in and present. That is part of the whole democratic process that we should all hold near and dear. And I encourage you to talk to your friends, your family, your co-workers, to get them actively engaged in holding us all to account for doing a better job.

So, thank you.

Mr. Falconer: I appreciate the comment. I mean, I think we all struggle to do a better job. There's an old consulting quote of what's the biggest room in the world? It's the room for improvement. There's always more room for improvement.

I think that the situation—the highly partisan, conflicted situation that's certainly in the Legislature—is a sad state. I think we all need to do better.

Thank you.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, and Mr. Falconer, for your presentation.

In fact, the rules that currently exist under the Manitoba Legislature, largely designed in 2016, were a collaboration between the NDP—Steve Ashton and Dave Chomiak played a significant role as their House leaders and their deputy House leader—along with Jon Gerrard, the current House leader for the Liberals, and myself were involved in the rules.

And a big part of that was because during the spring session, what we found was that legislation was introduced very late, often in April, May, and then the expectation would be that it would be passed before the House rose in June, which left very little time for those to be able to present, for the committees or for legislators to be able to digest and then to also speak about legislation to their constituents.

So the rules were crafted in such a way that it would bring the House back much earlier than had been done before by rule, and so it now starts early in March, and that legislation could be held over until November.

And so where in the past there were only weeks sometimes to have bills debated, now there are several months.

You may not feel that that's an advancement; I think that that is an advancement. You may not have the history of that.

You quoted Edmund Burke, and I think he was once—it may not have been his quote—but he often quoted, saying rudeness is the weak man's imitation of strength.

And I would say that we all can do better both in our presentation and in our ability to bring democracy here to Manitoba. I have indicated to the Opposition House Leader I'm willing to again work on the rules to make things better—always open to that—again, with Mr. Gerrard as well.

But where we are today in terms of the ability for legislation to be seen by the public and debated by legislators is far greater, in terms of time, than we had five years ago. So it's not perfect and it needs to be

improved, but it is better. And any representation that is not is simply not accurate.

* (19:10)

But I do thank you for your presentation here this evening, and I look forward to seeing you at future committees.

Mr. Falconer: Yes, while I think there are many views, clearly I don't hold monopolies on wisdom or of understanding of all these issues. What we're asking for, I think has been asked for in the letter by the six distinguished Manitobans, was a open, public and transparent process. Currently, the standing committee on House rules doesn't meet in open, transparent and public processes, and there is not room for people like myself and others to be able to suggest here are rule changes which make sense.

So, while there may have been improvements, clearly there's been a miss in terms of this situation, with the unprecedented breaking of democratic tradition that goes back a long way. And clearly there needs to be fixes, and we're saying those fixes need to be done. They should be done before next session. And it should be through a process which is open, public and transparent; and we hope that, again—the in the spirit of improvement, that we all want to work together to be able to make those changes. So let's go that way.

Thank you so much.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Falconer.

I will now call on Ms. Michelle Dallmann.

Ms. Dallmann, please unmute yourself once the moderator invites you in and turn your video on. Thank you.

Ms. Dallmann, if you can put your video on. Thank you.

Ms. Michelle Dallmann (Private Citizen): Yes, I'm just—it's not allowing me to. Like there's—I can speak at you, but you can't see my face.

There we go, I think. There. Yes, that should work, right?

Mr. Chairperson: Just give us one moment.

Ms. Dallmann: Yes, take your time. I'm here until midnight.

Is that my face? Yes, it is.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, we have you on video.

Ms. Dallmann, please proceed with your presentation.

Ms. Dallmann: Thanks everyone for speaking today.

Today I actually am going to follow in Jim's footsteps and speak against Bill 15's intention to destroy The Adult Literacy Act. This commitment to abolishing illiterate Manitobans' ease of access to effective and meaningful re-education is a part of the cyclical perpetuation of the violence of poverty that has been disgracing our province and our citizens. By this I mean illiteracy in childhood is caused by poverty and poverty in adulthood is caused by illiteracy.

So I'm here to ask the question, what is the solution?

Now, if the intention of this government is to target and abolish all Manitobans' right to proper education, no matter what their age, then there needs to be a safety net that ensures that currently under-educated or illiterate Manitobans, who are such by absolute no fault of their own, and possibly, but completely avoidably, illiterate young Manitobans have the functioning stability that they deserve, just by way of being born to this potentially magnificent land.

If by chance you're hearing that and your initial reaction to that statement isn't—is one that makes you question the inherent worth of any single person just because of their class, which is determined by Manitoba's pitiful minimum wage, which is a governmental decision, I encourage you to seek employment where our lives are not dependant on every single action and decision that is made here.

I'm not going to give you guys a bunch of scientific data because Jim actually did a really great job with that, and there has been decades worth of professional research here in Manitoba and across the world that shows that allowing Manitobans to stay below the poverty line has led to a complete reduction in societal participation. As individuals in your line of work, you've heard endless arguments in favour of abolishing poverty rather than abolishing access to education.

It's super simple. Child poverty leads to adult illiteracy. With adulthood illiteracy comes less confidence in socialization. There comes a—less willingness to and comfortability in volunteering and participating in community-orientated activities and, in my opinion most detrimental, comes a lack of participation in the political realm.

And then, knowing this, a question comes to my mind, where, if we look at these long-proven facts and statistics, I wonder, is it possible that this government taking away The Adult Literacy Act is actually targeting our more and most impoverished communities here in Winnipeg and across Manitoba intentionally?

There is endless amounts of evidence showing that adult poverty perpetuates into childhood illiteracy. Less-educated adults who have children are not able to participate in their own children's education, further passing on the generational trauma of the violence of poverty.

The solution to this is: if you are not going to fund and support the people who are suffering from the violence of poverty and the violence of under-education because of poverty and underfunding, then in good—then you—sorry—then you can't eliminate the literacy act, unless you want to, in which case you can just give everyone a liveable wage of, like, 15 bucks.

And that's it. That's all I have to say on Bill 55, taking away the act.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Dallmann. Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lindsey: First off, thank you for your presentation. Clearly, you have some passion around the subject of adult literacy.

Earlier tonight we heard Mr. Goertzen talk about other jurisdictions that just have a policy as opposed to legislation.

In your opinion, are we further ahead to have legislation that mandates what a government must do or a policy that makes the suggestion that maybe they should do something?

Ms. Dallmann: I would say that it doesn't matter either way if there's no actual follow-through, right? So if we are not taking care of our people, if we're not taking care of the citizens who literally gave you all your jobs, if we're not ensuring that there's a safety net for everyone, that we are stable, that we are supported beyond anything, then whether or not there's a policy in place or a law, a mandate, there's just no follow-through, and then you have left our citizens to fall through the cracks.

I think it's important that we have this act in place so that we can hold the government accountable—

hopefully—for the actions that they take in whether or not they fulfill their duty to protecting citizens who are undereducated.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you for your presentation.

And I know that you mentioned that, you know, whether it's a policy or legislation, ultimately it's the actions of the government that really make a difference and I think that you're right in saying that.

And I know for many years Manitoba was the child poverty capital of Canada—not a distinction anybody on this committee would want to have again. And I'm glad that we no longer have that distinction. And about 31,000 Manitobans have been moved off of poverty—out of the poverty definition over the last few years, and that's an important thing to note.

And so I think that the intention of this repealing of the act isn't to change the direction of removing people from poverty but to give more flexibility in the work that needs to be done to ensure that there can be new policies put in place more quickly, not to be tied up either in the Legislature or in regulation and continue that work of moving Manitoba far away from ever being again declared the child poverty capital of Canada.

So your presentation was important and well heard tonight, and I thank you for taking the time to make it this evening.

Ms. Dallmann: Thanks.

The fact that anyone is in poverty in all of Manitoba is disgusting. It's absolutely unacceptable and it is completely avoidable. There's not one reason why the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Pallister) has not decided that \$15, a liveable wage, is doable. It is completely acceptable. You sign a paper, you make it so.

Ensure that Manitobans—no child—doesn't matter how many you've brought out of poverty—not one child should be impoverished right now. Not one family should be suffering because the government decides that under \$12 is an acceptable amount to pay anyone for selling their body and their label—labour to ensure that you get fed, you get your groceries, you get your food at the restaurants. It's unfair. It's repulsive.

* (19:20)

Thank you for feeling like intention is enough, but it's absolutely not. Actions must be taken.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Dallmann.

That concludes the list of presenters I have before me.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: In what order does the committee wish to proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of these bills? Committee may suggest—*[interjection]*—Okay, sorry.

Again, I say: In what order does committee wish to proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of these bills?

Some Honourable Members: Numerical.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been proposed to proceed in numerical order. Is it the will of the committee to proceed in numerical order? *[Agreed]*

Bill 14—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020

Mr. Chairperson: Does the minister responsible for Bill 14 have an opening statement?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): Mr. Chairperson, very briefly: I know that this bill is a routine bill that comes before the Legislature largely to correct typographical errors and other things that are caught by legislative drafters.

There is one part of the bill I'd like to note, and that is the replacing of the term private school with independent school. As the former minister of Education, I can tell you that the parlance that is used—the wording that is used—when it comes to independent schools is exactly that, both in the department and more generally within the community: independent schools.

It's an outdated term—private schools—and so that's why that change is being made among with—of—other number of small changes. That change is, I think, important for the community, but it really just reflects how the terminology is currently being used.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): No.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 and 3—pass; clauses 4 and 5—pass; clauses 6 and 7—pass; clauses 8 and 9—pass; clauses 10 through 12—pass; clauses 13 and 14—pass; clauses 15 and 16—pass; clause 17—pass; clause 18 through 20—pass; clauses 21 and 22—pass; clauses 23 and 24—pass; clauses 25 through 27—pass; clause 28—pass; clause 29—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 19—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2) (Continued)

Mr. Chairperson: We will now proceed, clause by clause, by Bill 19.

Does the minister responsible for the Bill 19 have an opening statement?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I do. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm just pleased to speak a little bit about Bill 19, the minor amendments and corrections act, 2020.

So, part 1 of this bill is primarily concerned with correcting typographical, numbering and minor drafting and translation errors, and it also contains minor amendments to several acts and repeals several statutes that no longer serve a useful purpose.

I would like to bring a few matters in this bill to the attention of the members. Additionally, in our continued effort to modernize legislation, Bill 19 updates the Domestic Violence and Stalking Act terminology to make it gender neutral and update the definition of domestic violence.

In—this bill would also repeal the legislated requirement to indicate the sex of individuals on birth certificates, death certificates and certificates of birth registration search forms. Going forward, this information can be collected in a way that does not discriminate against any Manitoban who does not identify with the male or female gender.

This bill also repeals several statutes that formed new government agencies that were announced but never established by the previous NDP government, and it also removes specific references to defunct ministerial titles.

And that is my opening statement.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Yes.

Bill 19 makes amendments to several acts and corrects drafting errors.

Bill 19 also repeals La Communauté des Soeurs de Notre-Dame de la Croix Incorporation Act, and three unproclaimed acts: The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, The Crime Prevention Foundation Act, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act.

The Churchill Arctic Port Act established Churchill Arctic Port Canada Inc., a non-government agency with a mandate to facilitate the long-term development and viability of the Churchill gateway system and to promote it.

The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act required Vale Canada Limited to make a payment of \$6.25 million to the local government district of Mystery Lake. It required those payments to be apportioned amongst the City of Thompson, the school district of Mystery Lake and the local government district.

This bill also established the Thompson Nickel Belt economic development fund. The fund was to promote and stimulate the economic development and stability of the Thompson Nickel Belt area. We want to ensure that with these acts being repealed, that economic opportunity and development continues to grow in the North to maintain stable, good paying jobs for Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 through 4—pass; clauses 5 and 6—pass; clauses 7—pass; clauses 8 through 10—pass; clauses 11 through 13—pass; clause 14—pass; clauses 15 through 17—pass; clauses 18 and 19—pass; clauses 20 through 22—pass.

Shall clauses 23 through 25 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 23—pass.

Shall clause 24 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I just have some questions about this Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act and the Mystery Lake and local government district economic development fund.

If we're doing away with these particular pieces of legislation, what's going to take their place to ensure that the viability of Thompson remains and that there will actually be some kind of—something to promote and stimulate economic development in the North, not just in Thompson.

* (19:30)

Ms. Squires: Thank you for the question. And I do share the member's concern about the viability of northern communities and the sustainability of our northern communities.

These were—The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act was not proclaimed and wasn't effective as an effective tool when it was brought in, and our government had recognized when we formed office in 2016 that not just these unproclaimed pieces of legislation, but other things were hampering sustainability of the North.

And that is why we commenced a Look North strategy, as well as developed mineral protocols in conjunction with Indigenous partners to ensure that we've got economic viability and sustainability of northern communities. And that work continues amongst myriad other initiatives that our government has undertaken to promote and maintain economic activity in northern Manitoba.

And so, repealing this unproclaimed act that I'm sure the previous government brought in and thought it would make a great news announcement, but didn't really accomplish any of the goals and therefore they never bothered to proclaim it was—is just a unnecessary burden on our legislative itinerary, and so repealing it is inconsequential.

But the work that our government is doing to stimulate economic activity in the North is certainly consequential and will continue.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, you've talked a little bit about the Look North—I'm not sure I'd call it a strategy at this point.

But could you maybe give us some ideas or suggestions as to what all has been accomplished through this Look North strategy, because—

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable minister.

Ms. Squires: I do appreciate the member's interest in our government's initiatives to stimulate the economic activity in Manitoba and particularly in the North. And we know that that is an area that has largely—was—the initiatives brought in by the former NDP government, including this unproclaimed legislation that named a strategy but had absolutely nothing behind it, was nothing more than a public-relations exercise, if you will.

Our government brought forward a Look North strategy that is intent on working with partners in northern Manitoba to not only create protocols and a plan and a strategy to work with partners and community for economic viability, it is also ensuring the sustainability of our minerals now and well into the future, so that we can ensure that the natural resources that exist here in this province will be available for future generations to benefit from.

And we know that our northern communities are rich with several resources, and they need to have a good strategy behind them for ensuring that they are developed, that the resources are utilized for the betterment of Manitobans. And that is what we are doing.

Mr. Lindsey: Not so much a question, I guess, as just a final comment that the minister's answer to my previous question really summed up what the Look North initiative, plan, whatever we're calling it—really summed up what it's accomplished, which is absolutely nothing. Because when I asked for specifics about

what had been done, the minister failed to give any specifics because there really aren't any to give.

So I thank the minister for that answer.

Ms. Squires: So, I certainly don't want to repeat my answer, because it is apparent that the member wasn't listening.

However, our government does have a strategy and our government is committed to a strategy. And it's so much more than just bringing about a piece of legislation that we have no intentions of ever proclaiming just to say that we've done something, an exercise in hanging up a mission accomplished banner and perhaps putting out a press release and maybe trying to get a few headlines.

Our government is more about action and delivering results, and that is exactly what we do on behalf of all Manitobans in the province.

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing that there are no further questions.

Clause 24—pass; clause 25—pass; clause 26—pass; clause 27—pass; clauses 28 and 29—pass; clauses 30 through 32—pass; clauses 33 and 34—pass; clauses 35 and 36—pass; clause 37—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 14—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 *(Continued)*

Mr. Chairperson: I would ask the committee for leave to revert to Bill 14 to consider the schedule. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Schedule—pass.

Bill 55—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021 *(Continued)*

Mr. Chairperson: Now we will proceed by clause-by-clause for Bill 55.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 55 have an opening statement?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson, relatively briefly: I know there was lots of discussion on this bill—not so much on the substance of the bill, but on the process by which the bill came to the Legislature. And while, obviously, I think it would have been our intention—along with, probably, the intention of the NDP, in fairness—to allow these bills to be distributed back last year, late last year, that was

not allowed for as a result of the Liberal caucus denying that leave request for the bills to be distributed.

But, be that as it may, even without the leave of the Liberal Party to allow bills to be seen, back at that point, there has been more time for the suite of bills this spring to be examined—and then also going into November of this year—than I think has historically been the case in the Legislature, certainly in my time, but I think prior to that as well. And that's from a process perspective, of course.

More specifically to the bill, there are other issues within the bill that were not raised and I won't go into those, because there weren't questions on them. But there were two particular presenters—and I want to thank them, our presenters—who raised two particular issues: one on the issue of literacy. And the repeal of the act, it was pointed out, is not itself an indicator, either of success or intention.

We are the only province in Canada that has a literacy act, and yet, one would say that, historically, our literacy rates have not been what anybody, I think, on this committee would say is acceptable.

And so, the existence of an act in and of itself, does not guarantee any sort of success. It is the good work and hard work of government and the framework and policies that are put around that work that result in outcomes.

And I know that our new minister responsible for literacy, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), is well dedicated and well qualified to ensure that those things take place.

On the issue of apprenticeship, which I also know was brought up in the presentation, I think all of us value the work that those who are in apprenticeship fields and trades do—the great work that they do, and ultimately, that the careers that they have that provide Manitobans with so much and ensure that so many things that we rely upon continue to happen and function.

But, the reality is, in this particular legislation, there are so many exemptions granted under the legislation over the years that it became problematic. And not just, of course, in the last five years, but under the NDP as well. Hundreds of exemptions were granted because the act simply wasn't functional for businesses.

* (19:40)

And so there are unintended consequences to legislation when things pass, and I would say it was an unintended consequence that there had to be so many exemptions granted under that act. I don't think it was the intention of the NDP any more that it was the intention of our government, but that does not undermine in any way the commitment to apprenticeships or the trades.

And so with those few comments on the presentations that were made, I want to thank those who made the presentations and I look forward to any comments or questions on the bill.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again and again, we see this government put forward these omnibus red tape bills that are designed to hide several shameful changes. Bill 55 is another such bill and is the fifth of its kind in five years.

Unfortunately, Manitobans have come to learn that these red tape omnibus bills have very little to do with reducing red tape. In fact, many of the amendments or repealed acts proposed in this bill have absolutely nothing to do with red tape, nor are they related to one another.

For example, how does repealing The Adult Literacy Act reduce red tape? How does removing the requirement that apprentices are hired on public works projects reduce red tape? In fact, these changes do the exact opposite: they hide adult literacy outcomes and make it harder for apprentices to find work.

The government needs to be investing more than ever in adult literacy, given the declining outcomes in our province. And there is a strong correlation between literacy and poverty, and the worse poverty outcomes are, the more literacy outcomes decline. And these worse literacy outcomes translate into less income over time, perpetuating this cycle.

The changes to the public works apprenticeship requirement is just another change this government has made that hurts workers. Their spending on training for apprentices has declined by \$5 million since they came to office.

This government has also reduced the apprenticeship ratio, putting young workers at great risk of

injury. They've also removed the requirement for binding arbitration, frozen workers' wages and continuously interfered in labour disputes, to highlight a few of the harmful changes they've made.

The reality is that this bill lumps together various smaller changes into one bill so that they avoid individual scrutiny.

Many of the changes in this bill will hurt everyday Manitobans. For example, this bill allows creditors to seize farmers' equipment without the oversight of the Manitoba Farm Industry Board, which is just another step in the wrong direction. This change is unfortunately unsurprising, given their previous harmful changes to Crown leases and its negative impact on Manitoba farmers.

This bill fails to address rural Manitobans' drainage and Crown lands concerns. This bill undermines a shared water stewardship approach and a shared wildlife management approach. For every action in a watershed, there is a result on the other end, and this bill undermines that; it will no doubt end in conflict on the landscape. Drainage has been chronically underfunded by the Pallister government and this government is looking for anything else besides themselves to blame.

This bill also reduces the time period that municipalities have to examine development permits from 125 to 90 days, and this change along with the changes that they propose to Bill 37, The Planning Amendment and City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act represent an attack on local democracy and municipalities.

This bill jams municipalities at the front end and Bill 37 takes away their power at the back end, as appeals now go through the provincially appointed planning board. This is just another example of this government taking power away from local voices.

Bill 55 demonstrates that this government seems to care more about reducing red tape than it does about improving the quality of life for Manitobans. We know, and that Manitobans have come to learn, that red tape is simply a guise for more cuts, the removal of important regulations that protect consumers and more erasures of important legislation.

So, I'd like to thank all the presenters that spoke on today's bill for their valuable input, for participating in this democratic process. I hope that the minister listens to the suggestions and to the feedback provided tonight by all the presenters and removes all of the harmful changes laid out in this bill.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is an agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clause where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Shall clauses 1 and 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall clause 1 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no. The floor is open for questions.

Ms. Marcelino: Since it makes so much good sense to invest in adult literacy programming, will you commit to not repealing The Adult Literacy Act, and instead investing in adult literacy programming across the city and the province?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes. Of course, our government will continue to invest in adult literacy in Winnipeg and across the province.

I would reject the issue about the repealing of the act again. If an act itself was the simplest solution to increasing the literacy rates in Manitoba, then it would have already happened.

That is not the case. It has not been the silver bullet. There isn't a silver bullet. It will take hard work and investment, and our government has continued to do that and will continue to do that.

Mr. Chairperson: Are there any other questions?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. Marcelino. And please address your questions through the Chair. Thank you.

Ms. Marcelino: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I will do so.

Mr. Chair, in the previous question period, the minister said—in the second reading question period,

the minister said that repealing this act was to allow for changes to happen more quickly.

Could the minister please explain how repealing this act would allow for changes to happen more quickly? And what are the planned changes?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, in fact this act itself is the demonstration of that. It is difficult, sometimes, to change acts in the Manitoba Legislature, sometimes in any legislature. We saw, because of the blockade that was participated in by the member who asked this question, that some bills were hung up for two years.

Can you imagine if there needed to be changes made to literacy to ensure that some important initiative was taken and the NDP, for some reason, decided to block that bill for two years? That would be unacceptable, and certainly wouldn't help those who are trying to advance themselves through greater literacy.

Ms. Marcelino: Would the minister, you know, please comment on the story that I raised today with Professor Silver, regarding the principal of a Winnipeg adult learning centre here, who said that in the past three years they've had to dramatically turn students away because of the lack of supportive wrap-around services, like boarding and lodging, that adult students require in order to register for school?

Is that part of the supposed investments that you continue to make in adult literacy—that you're planning to—that you're saying that you're making?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, if the member has specific, you know, constituency work and cases that she wants to bring to the minister, I know that he would welcome her and her input and be happy to look at individual circumstances, Mr. Chairperson. It doesn't change the general point that legislation in and of itself does not ensure that there's going to be improvement to literacy rates, and that is evidenced by what's happening around Canada and Manitoba's comparison to those rates around Canada.

So there will continue to be investments and efforts made by this government and the current minister, and if she has specific situations that she wants to bring to the minister, I know that he has both an open door and a welcoming ear.

Ms. Marcelino: Who did the minister consult with before he decided to proceed with the repeal of this bill?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, the member will know that there's on-going consultation when it comes to issues

of literacy, and in trying to get the best results when it comes to ensuring that we're improving. We know that over the many years of the NDP was in government, Manitoba did not improve its literacy rates. In fact, it continued to fall behind, whether that's adult literacy or K-to-12 literacy, where we continue to rank last in the country.

Those failed strategies—and not from ill intention; I don't want to say to the member opposite, or to any members of the former government, that they didn't hope to improve literacy. That isn't the case and I don't believe that that was what their intention was. I think that we all have the best intentions when it comes to improving literacy outcomes, but intentions aren't good enough. You actually need to ensure that there are strategies in place and ensuring a more flexible option when it comes to literacy programs.

* (19:50)

Doing that through government programming as opposed to legislation is the way that we believe we can improve outcomes.

Ms. Marcelino: I would like to repeat the question because I didn't hear the answer.

Who did the minister consult with before he decided to proceed with the repeal of this bill? Which people? Which organizations? I would, please, like to know that.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and again, I've already indicated that the minister responsible for adult literacy is always in consultation with those within the field about how to get better results and how to ensure that they can improve upon Manitoba's literacy rates, Mr. Chairperson.

That ultimately is what all of us are looking to do. The member opposite can have disagreement, in terms of how the strategy is going to be laid, and she's welcome to voice those concerns, either in the Legislature or in other forms that she is afforded as an elected official, and I would encourage her to do that.

But she also has to recognize—and I hope that she would admit—that while the NDP had 14 years in government to improve upon the literacy rates in Manitoba, they failed. Not from poor intentions—because I would not put that upon them, that they had bad intentions—but they certainly had bad outcomes.

Ms. Marcelino: Mr. Chair, those are all my questions for this clause, but I would like to request a recorded vote, when it's time to vote for this clause.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

For the information of all members of the committee, recorded votes will take place in a similar way to those in the Chamber.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 3, Nays 2.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 1 is accordingly passed.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no.

If there are any questions—do any committee members have questions? Are there any questions?

There are no questions.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 2—all those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Clause 2 is accordingly passed.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Shall clauses 3 and 4 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall clause 3 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Is—a recorded vote has been requested.

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, a—well, I—Mr. Chair, I would—I do have questions for this clause.

Mr. Chairperson: We are just going to proceed with a recorded vote. A recorded vote has been requested. For the information of all members of the committee, recorded votes will take place in a similar way to those in the Chamber.

All those in favour in the committee room, please raise their hands. *[interjection]*

Just to be clear, did the critic from the official opposition request to ask any questions?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Go ahead, Ms. Marcelino.

Ms. Marcelino: Does the minister agree that repealing The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts) will reduce opportunities for apprentices?

Mr. Goertzen: No.

I thank the member for question, and I recognize that she's asking the question with the best intentions. All of us want more opportunities for those who are doing apprenticeship training.

But the reality is, in this act, that there were hundreds of exemptions that were asked for under the NDP government more recently because the act simply wasn't working for industry. So this isn't an issue of intention, this is an issue of function, and how the act was actually functioning.

So, I know the member has asked the question with all the right intentions, but she also has to recognize that under her former government—a government I know she wasn't a part of, but the legacy government from her party—this act simply wasn't working.

Ms. Marcelino: Did the minister consult with building trades or any other labour group in regards to repealing this bill? Did they speak to Apprenticeship Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: So, the minister responsible is always having discussions with those in the trades, those in apprenticeships. There are councils that are regularly met with, there are others who are stakeholders who are regularly met with, Mr. Chairperson, and they have put forward—his department has put forward this recommendation because the act simply wasn't working as it was intended—not just recently, but also under the former NDP government.

Ms. Marcelino: Those are all the questions, Mr. Chair.

I would request a recorded vote on this clause.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Just one quick question.

We've heard the minister say any number of times that there were hundreds of exemptions. So, we had a piece of legislation that required employers on public works projects to employ apprentices, but there were exemptions made so that not all projects had to do that.

So, can the minister tell us how many contracts proceeded that didn't have exemptions?

Mr. Goertzen: The member will know that I—while I wouldn't have that information in front of me, we can certainly provide it for him, but it doesn't take away from the fact that these exemptions were now becoming routine, were becoming time consuming and were ultimately taking away from the intention of the act.

And I think the member opposite, that while he may not agree with this—and that's fine; it's a democratic process, he needn't agree—but he should agree that the act wasn't functioning the way it should.

And if he has suggestions in terms of how it could be improved, that could have been done, obviously, under the former government—I know he wasn't a part of that government—but he has the opportunity at other stages within this bill to make those suggestions. And I would encourage him to avail himself of the democratic ability and perhaps responsibility that he has.

Mr. Lindsey: So, we know that there were apprentices that we employed through this act, although the minister has pointed out that there was problems with the act. But now, there's nothing in place that will require any contract that actually employ apprentices.

So, does the minister not agree that it would make more sense to fix what was wrong with the legislation—if there was, in fact, something wrong with it—as opposed to throwing it away and now there's a guarantee that no apprentices will be employed, because there's nothing that mandates that they have to be.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I mean, I would disagree that there will be no apprentices employed. I mean, I think that he has a very negative view of industry and those who employ apprentices and why they do it, and that there isn't any value unless you're forced to do it. And perhaps that's a different philosophical perspective that the member and I have.

And while I appreciate him as an individual—and I say that sincerely; I mean, this may be a philosophical divide—I think that industry not only does

things because it benefits them, but I think they have a broader perspective, as well.

* (20:00)

And to suggest that there'll be no one who's employed or even significantly less simply because individuals aren't or companies aren't forced to do it, I think is a disservice to the great companies and employers we have in Manitoba.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

For the information of all members of the committee, recorded votes will take place in a similar way to those in the Chamber.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 3, Nays 2.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 3 is accordingly passed.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; clause 7—pass; clause 8—pass; clauses 9 through 11—pass; clause 12—pass; clause 13—pass; clauses 14 through 16—pass; clauses 17 and 18—pass; clauses 19 and 20—pass.

Shall clause 21 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no. The floor is open for questions.

Ms. Marcelino: Will any type of proof be required before destroying beaver dams?

Mr. Goertzen: There will be regulations that are put into place regarding this particular act. So, there will be prescriptive ways in which dams can be disassembled to ensure that there's not unintended consequences, damage to other landowners who might be downstream. So those provisions will be provided in regulation.

Ms. Marcelino: Will any type of monitoring take place to account for the number of wildlife killed by people defending their property?

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for the question.

While there aren't specific reporting requirements under their act, clearly landowners will, you know, ensure, I think, that they do these things responsibly

by virtue of the regulations that'll be put into place so that they have to do it in a responsible way, mindful of the unintended effects that they might have downstream for other landowners and also recognizing this is a long-standing concern and problem for a number of landowners. And its cost—you know, I wouldn't want to put a dollar figure on it, but it would be a significant amount of financial harm to many landowners.

And while, clearly, things have to be done in a responsible way, the current situation simply wasn't acceptable as it was.

Ms. Marcelino: No further questions, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall clause 21 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass. [*interjection*]

Mr. Chairperson: My apologies.

Clause 20—pass; clause 21—pass; clause 22—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 68—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: Does the minister responsible for Bill 68 have an opening statement?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): Very briefly, this bill puts the right things into the right place, and so, currently, now it is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) to report and to table the annual amounts paid to members of the Assembly, even though the Speaker is the one who actually approves those expenditures. So it will now be the Speaker who tables that report.

So the appropriate person will now be tabling the report. Still be transparent, still be open in the way they were before, but tabled by the right person.

When it comes to severance paid to MLAs, it is currently being included in Members' Allowances report, and yet Members' Allowances has nothing to do with severance.

Once a member is severed from the Legislature, both metaphorically and otherwise, they receive a severance pay, but it's not paid through Members' Allowances, and yet the Members' Allowances is reporting it.

So now these will be reported through the Speaker because they are already reported through the Speaker. So it is putting the right reporting in the right

place. No less transparency, no less openness, but the right people will now be reporting these financial payments.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): No.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is an agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; clauses 4 and 5—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 55—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021 (Continued)

Mr. Chairperson: So we're going to revert back to clause 3 for Bill 55 because the question wasn't asked.

Shall clause 3 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 3 is accordingly passed—[*interjection*—I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of clause 3, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Clause 3 is accordingly passed.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. Marcelino.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Sorry, is this bill—I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, is this for Bill 55?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes. This was with respect to clause 3 for Bill 55 because the question wasn't asked for clause 3.

Ms. Marcelino: But we did do the recorded vote on this?

Mr. Chairperson: We could redo the recorded vote if you request. Would you request that? *[interjection]*

* (20:10)

We're going to redo the recorded vote again.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

For the information of all members in the committee, recorded votes will take place in a similar way to those in the Chamber.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 3, Nays 2.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 3 is accordingly passed.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 8:11, what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Committee rise.

Mr. Chairperson: Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 8:11 p.m.

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