

Second Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Social and Economic Development

Chairperson
Mr. Dennis Smook
Constituency of La Verendrye

Vol. LXX No. 4 - 6 p.m., Monday, April 10, 2017

ISSN 1708-6698

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
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FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
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ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
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LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
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WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Point Douglas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monday, April 10, 2017

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Dennis Smook
(La Verendrye)**

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli)

ATTENDANCE – 10 QUORUM – 6

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Messrs. Cullen, Pedersen

*Messrs. Allum, Bindle, Lindsey, Maloway,
Michaleski, Smook, Wharton, Wowchuk*

PUBLIC PRESENTERS:

*Bill 7–The New West Partnership Trade
Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts
Amended)*

*Mr. Jonathan Alward, Canadian Federation of
Independent Business*

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

*Bill 6–The Manitoba East Side Road Authority
Repeal Act*

*Bill 7–The New West Partnership Trade
Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts
Amended)*

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Mr. Chairperson: Good evening. Will the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development please come to order.

Our first item of business is the election of a Vice-Chair. Are there any nominations?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I'd like to nominate Mr. Wharton.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Wharton has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

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

This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 6, The Manitoba East Side Road

Authority Repeal Act; Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

We have one presenter registered to speak tonight, as noted on the list of presenters before you.

How long does the committee wish to sit this evening?

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): 'Til the work of the committee's done, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Agreed? [*Agreed*]

Before we proceed with presentations, we do have a number of other items, points of information to consider. First of all, if there is anyone else in the audience who would like to make a presentation this evening, please register with staff at the entrance of the room. Also, for the information of all presenters, while written versions of presentations are not required, if you are going to accompany your presentation with written materials, we ask that you provide 20 copies. If you need help with photocopying, please speak with our staff.

As well, in accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations, with another five minutes allowed for questions from committee members.

Prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in committee. The proceedings of our meetings are recorded in order to provide verbatim transcript. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA or a presenter, I have to say the person's name. This is the signal for Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

Thank you for your patience. We will now proceed with public presentations.

**Bill 7–The New West Partnership
Trade Agreement Implementation Act
(Various Acts Amended)**

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing as we only have a presenter for Bill 7, we will call Jonathan Alward, Canadian federation of 'indepesent'-independent business to come forward and make his presentation.

Mr. Alward, do you have any written materials for distribution to the committee?

Mr. Jonathan Alward (Canadian Federation of Independent Business): I do. They're being handed right now. Thanks.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, you may proceed with your presentation when you are ready.

Mr. Alward: Look, thank you, everyone, for having me tonight, and for those of you who don't—not know me, I'm here on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and certainly appreciate the opportunity to present tonight on Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

My name is Jonathan Alward. Again, for those who do not know me, and I'm the Manitoba director of provincial affairs at CFIB.

At CFIB we're passionate about small business because of their massive contributions to our economy, employment and communities. We believe the small-business owners deserve a strong a voice in government decisions. CFIB provides a reasonable and credible and effective way for small businesses to participate in the political process, just like big businesses and unions do.

Across the country, CFIB—excuse me—represents 109,000 independently owned and operated businesses, including 4,800 right here in Manitoba. We're a strictly non-partisan, non-for-profit organization, and our members are located in every region of the province and in sectors that very closely mirror our provincial economy.

CFIB's positions are set by direct feedback from our members through accurate and regular surveys which operate under a one-member, one-vote system. Our views are strictly based on the results from these surveys, and it is therefore with great confidence that I can present here on behalf of our 4,800 members and express their support for Bill 7.

CFIB commends the Manitoba government for bringing Bill 7 forward. As you know, the New West Partnership is a trade agreement between British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and, hopefully, Manitoba. Bill 7 will amend three acts, so Manitoba can join the agreement and take part in future domestic trade agreements.

CFIB has long been a vocal supporter of legislative changes to facilitate the easier movement of goods, services and labour across all provincial

boundaries, not just Manitoba's, and a strong majority of Manitoba's small-business owners have wanted premiers to commit to reducing barriers to the flow of goods and services across provinces and territories. Just 1 per cent—just 1 per cent—of all respondents did not wish for the premiers to do so.

For several years now, CFIB's prebudget recommendations to the Minister of Finance have included a call for the Manitoba government to join the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. About 40 per cent of Manitoba's interprovincial exports are going to British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and there is a huge potential for Manitoba firms to become more competitive and grow in these markets.

The New West Partnership Trade Agreement offers access to the four provinces' 11 million people and a GDP of an estimated \$750 billion. In fact, 73 per cent of Manitoba's small-business owners agree that the provincial government should join the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. Just 4 per cent of the respondents surveyed disagreed.

*(18:10)

Strong support for this trade agreement is not surprising as many small businesses have experienced difficulty with existing interprovincial trade barriers. This red tape costs businesses time and money and acts as a barrier to discourage investment and growth.

According to CFIB-surveyed data of Manitoba's small-business owners who do engage in trade with other provinces, 42 per cent having experienced challenges with complicated regulations, 35 per cent have experienced challenges with overly complex taxation rules, and 25 per cent believe that their paperwork is too burdensome to pursue.

The NWPTA agrees to mutually recognize existing differences in standards and regulations and employs a negative-list approach to clearly identify any exceptions to the current trade agreement. In doing so, the existing interprovincial trade barriers facing Manitobans when dealing with other western provinces are dramatically reduced.

It is important to note that these principles will not endanger Manitoba's businesses, consumers or the Manitoba environment as the NWPTA specifically calls on other provincial governments to work together to enhance sustainable development, consumer protection, environmental protection,

health and safety standards as well as labour standards.

While mutual recognition and the negative-list approach both help remove red tape facing small businesses, CFIB would like to point out three specific benefits of this trade agreement that will significantly help the province's small businesses, first of which being improved labour mobility, then easier business registration, and, lastly, increased procurement opportunities.

The provincial government needs to reduce trade barriers for Manitoba's small-business owners. Bill 7 and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement provide the comprehensiveness and transparency necessary to encourage business growth.

As a big voice for small business in Manitoba, CFIB will continue to advocate for reducing barriers to trade and will continue educating our 4,800 Manitoba members on the benefits of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement once Bill 7 receives royal assent. We've already begun educating small-business owners on the impacts of this trade agreement.

After meeting with Alan Barber, Manitoba's director of Policy, Planning and Co-ordination, and Tami Reynolds, Manitoba's internal trade representative and senior policy analyst, we applaud the government across Canada for agreeing to the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement last Friday, which was a major step towards resolving often conflicting rules and regulations across all provinces. However, while the CFTA is modern and ambitious and transparent, it will take time to be fully implemented. Therefore, CFIB urges the committee to proceed with the implementation of Bill 7.

I'd like to once again thank the government for introducing this legislation, and we're very confident that a strong majority of small-business owners in the province will as well.

Thank you.

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

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Thank you, Mr. Alward, for your presentation tonight and being with us tonight. I also want to thank you for your comments on Friday when we acknowledged the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and, hopefully, some positive framework there around that particular agreement.

With that agreement and this agreement, we certainly recognize this isn't the end. This is more the beginning than the end, so we certainly do have more work to do on that.

I do want to thank you for the work that you do and certainly your members' input into this as well.

Interesting to see figure 3 in your documentation here, and the question is around the challenges your business face selling and purchasing goods across provincial and territorial borders. And the No. 1 issue, as you comment, was 42 per cent, were the regulations, so too many rules—conflicting rules across jurisdictions and inspections. So I think we're obviously trying to address that particular situation. I would say that maybe you can just reiterate this. This is a step in the right direction in terms of addressing those particular regulations.

Mr. Alward: Yes, certainly if you look at figure 2, a strong majority of our business owners do believe that that is the case. For those that have engaged in trade, by and large, the most have experienced some difficulties, whether it be with regulation, specifically with tax rules. You know, in general, they have reiterated that the paperwork and understanding the paperwork in other jurisdictions, let alone their own, is very challenging.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Mr. Alward, welcome back. Glad to see you again. You're earning your pay there, my friend, by coming out and participating in these committees, and we're really glad that you do.

I found it interesting that the minister should look at any of the figures that you've put in your presentation. We went through this last time, but I feel obliged to do it again. All—figure 1 is dated May 2014; figure 2, July 2013; and figure 3 is 'delated'—dated May 2014. In each key—case, you say you represent 4,800 Manitoba members, and yet the response is: 184 in figure 3; 395 in figure 2; 250 in figure 1.

So my question is: Why would we find any of this reliable when the information seems so dated and the response is so low?

Mr. Alward: Certainly, it's my pleasure to join you whenever I can, whenever we have a relevant voice to give; if you all here have time to attend these committee hearings, I 'shertainly' would expect that I would, as well.

That said, in terms of the survey—again, very similar to last week, as we discussed with PRPPs, this was a response to the legislation when it was being developed, not only the New West Partnership Agreement after the fact but, as well, when the federal government and all provinces across the country began debating what was now just announced as the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, these surveys were taken. Certainly, there haven't been any steps to reduce any of the barriers in here.

And I'd also like to point out that our chief economist in Ottawa, who Statistics Canada often relies on—certainly the federal government recently recommended or validated his work in the recent federal budget—he certainly believes that there's a very statistical significance to the findings here.

Reference to figure 3 with only 184 respondents, those were specifically members that had been engaging in trade directly themselves.

Mr. Allum: Good. I appreciate that clarification. Thank you. And I'm glad it's on the record, as well.

Can you identify for the committee one positive thing that's happened out of this trade agreement prior to Manitoba's participation, like something tangible, something that actually happened that benefited working people anywhere?

Mr. Alward: I can't yet, because the deal, you know, many components of it are not realistically enforced yet. But I'll give you an example from my colleagues in other provinces.

If you look at Saskatchewan and Alberta, one practical piece, if you look at streamlining some of the regulations, in terms of respecting that every province's safety standard should be pretty consistent across that board, trucking standards, and width of trucks' mirrors, you have to change the width of your truck depending on which province you're in. And for business owners, I mean, many of these are very small businesses. An owner doesn't only have to run the business, they have to deal with all these different regulations which they're, realistically, not an expert in. To understand that, it's a huge burden for their employees, it's a huge burden and it's small but very significant pieces like that, when you look at them all across the board, that end up to be a real discouragement.

Mr. Chairperson: We'd like to thank you for your presentation, Mr. Alward. Time has expired for questions. So thank you very much, Mr. Alward, again.

And we will continue on. That concludes the list of presenters I have before me.

Are there any other persons in attendance who wish to make a presentation?

Seeing none, that concludes public presentations.

Bill 6—The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act

Mr. Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 6. During the consideration of a bill, the preamble, 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 questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

We will now proceed with Bill 6.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 6 have an opening statement?

* (18:20)

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Mr. Chairman, very briefly, this bill to repeal the East Side Road Authority will enable Manitoba Infrastructure to become the single source of delivery for highway infrastructure, and as a single source of delivery, that allows us, then, to eliminate administrative duplication, maximize efficiencies in staffing and operating costs, and ensure centralized co-ordination of all provincial infrastructure projects.

And we look forward to the passing of this bill just to reduce this duplication. And Manitoba Infrastructure is working very hard with the communities on the east side to—with the task of rebuilding the confidence in government, and we're working very hard to have this good working relationship which we have now established with them and will continue to work on.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the passage of this bill.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for his statement.

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

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I do.

As the minister indicated, the bill repeals the east side authority act and transfers the authority's property rights and liabilities to the government.

We, of course, are opposed to this legislation. We share the concern of First Nations and northern Manitobans that climate change is shortening the driving season on our winter roads and making them more dangerous. Manitoba's remote communities deserve reliable, all-year access to the rest of Manitoba. By building them a year-round economic corridor, we help them add to the Manitoba labour force and economy, creating new jobs and opportunities in the North.

ESRA's mandate was to involve indigenous communities directly to make substantial investments, and we are certainly concerned about this new government's lack of commitment to investing in the North or working with indigenous communities throughout—through these community benefit agreements.

We had announced the next phase of our 3 billion—1,000 kilometre road. We already moved over 600 kilometres of road on top of lakes and rivers to land in order to increase safety and save lives while allowing more trucks to travel over a longer period of time. And I note that the minister cites figures showing that it's not as cost effective as we say it is, because what he does with his figures is he does not calculate in the bridges and so on that have been replaced, so it's very easy for him to come up with the figures he comes up with when you don't present all of the facts in the case.

We also signed community benefit agreements with all of the local First Nations to ensure they were able to take advantage of good construction jobs that come from this project. We installed a bridge over Red Sucker River, and we have begun installing bridges over Mainland River and Stevenson River. These bridges will keep the winter road system open longer and fit into the all-weather road when it's ready.

The east side First Nations were seeing results. Chief Roland Hamilton of Bloodvein First Nation had good experience with ESRA. The community won a tendered contract to do work on their own land. Over 60 people were employed from his community. Eighteen were trained as heavy

equipment operators; one was trained as an environmental safety officer. Many participated in introduction to construction classes and received CPR and first-aid training, and the community gained equipment and knowledge.

The First Nations communities were seeking benefits of ESRA, and also Pauingassi First Nation saw 19 local residents get training, including 11 graduates from introduction to heavy construction, eight graduates from heavy equipment operator training. And of these 19 residents, 12 local residents, 63 per cent, have been provided employment opportunities in all of the—on the all-season roads.

Berens River First Nation saw 72 local residents receive training, including 15 graduates from introduction to heavy construction, five graduates from skilled labour training and 12 graduates from introduction to construction, 21 graduates from first-aid chainsaw-safety training, 19 graduates from heavy equipment training. Of these 72 residents, 33 local residents have been provided employment opportunities on the all-season road project.

We're continuing our work on the east-side network to connect these remote communities. In terms of investing in jobs for indigenous and northern Manitobans, we created the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund to support Manitoba First Nation business proposals that are economically viable. This provides opportunities for new entrepreneurs to create good jobs across Manitoba.

We also started a Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy to help keep indigenous organizations in Winnipeg focused on indigenous capacity building, and that helps train the next generation of workers for the good jobs of tomorrow.

The 200-megawatt Wuskwatim Generating Station was the first generating station to be built in Manitoba in nearly two decades. It's the first generating station to be built in North America in partnership with First Nations people, making Hydro a world leader in sustainable community economic development.

We ensured that indigenous communities, the local—and people benefit from our Hydro projects. Hydro has increased their Aboriginal employment rates to 18 per cent corporate-wide and 46 per cent in the North. We want northern Manitobans to have access to training and get the skills they need to take advantage of those economic opportunities. It makes

no sense to me, Mr. Chairman, to constantly be sending, you know, Winnipeg construction companies up there to do work that could—should be and rightly done by people in their local communities, right. That's the long-term advantage of doing what we were doing.

In terms of jobs in the North, investments in roads and bridges and building the economy with good jobs will make life better for northern Manitobans.

We also support keeping the Port of Churchill open—everyone knows that—working to provide jobs and hope to the people in the local communities. The port's strategically positioned to become an arctic gateway, a shipping hub to the world markets such as India.

I remember dealing with this issue now for quite a number of years, and we tried different approaches and so on, and some obviously haven't worked out as well as others, but it's not something that we should be giving up on anytime soon.

The—we provide training for hard-working northern Manitobans to upgrade their skills and adapt to new technologies.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister), of course, has a different view of this. He doesn't like the east-side road project. But he doesn't see the benefits of the East Side Road Authority beyond road and bridge building when, in fact, they helped to build these partnerships that we talk about between communities and develop skills for First Nations in the area.

And, finally, Mr. Chairman, the Premier eliminated the East Side Road Authority and the Conservatives' extreme position against hydro development will mean that they're going to be killing many, many viable jobs in this province, if, in fact, they follow through on what we think they may do in the long term.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member for his statement.

We will now proceed by clause by clause: clauses 1 and 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 7—The New West Partnership
Trade Agreement Implementation Act
(Various Acts Amended)**
(Continued)

Mr. Chairperson: We will now move on to clause by clause for Bill 7.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 7 have an opening statement?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Briefly, the New West Partnership, we believe, is a model for bringing meaningful interprovincial collaboration and reducing barriers in the west to attract new opportunities and international investment.

With the inclusion of Manitoba, the New West Partnership is the largest training force in the country representing a market of 30 per cent of the Canadian population and a combined GDP of about \$750 billion. With over 40 per cent of Manitoba's interprovincial exports destined for New West Partnership provinces, removing barriers across the west could result in benefits of up to \$272 million by 2025.

* (18:30)

The New West Partnership establishes a framework to further reduce red tape across provincial borders. We view this as an opportunity to move goods and services across our borders with our neighbours to the west. This will also provide opportunities for Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for his statement.

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

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I do, Mr. Chair.

Appreciate getting to put a few words on the record. We've had a chance to debate this legislation in the House on several occasions. We have yet to hear the minister articulate any one thing that has resulted from this trade agreement over three or four years that it's been in effect between Saskatchewan and Alberta and BC. And still we wait; I suppose, could wait for a long time before we actually hear any positive upside that's actually improved the lives of working people in this province.

We're also uncertain why Manitoba would want to be involved in a balkanized trade agreement at the very moment that the new government is getting on our shoulders and riding the wave of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. I think everyone would understand that the vast majority of that work was done by our government prior to last year's election. And so it makes no sense to us why you would have a balkanized trade agreement inside a Canadian Free Trade Agreement. I suppose that there are wiser people who would have some insight into that, but it certainly makes no sense to us.

Our record, when it comes to trade, actually is outstanding. CentrePort Canada Way, Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 75, Highway 10, Highway 6, Highway 9—these are all the improvements that were made for the purposes of trade. We know that we've made considerable trading agreements with Saskatchewan over time. In fact, Saskatchewan firms did \$63 million worth of contracts with our Crowns in the past five years. We also have a 100-megawatt deal and firm power sales with Saskatchewan, and, in fact, if the government actually believed in Manitoba Hydro, they could increase that, but it doesn't seem that that's on the path.

Our most serious concern, however, is that this continues to be a top priority of the government at the very time that they're slashing and making terrible cuts to health care. We saw closing of emergency rooms over the weekend, seen the

cancelling of any—\$1 billion worth of infrastructure, including a CancerCare facility, serious cuts to education in terms of overall funding, increases to tuition and a variety of other aspects of cuts to education, deregulation of the environment with respect to the health and safety of clean water and water in this province.

So our priority is about ensuring the long and prosperous life of Manitoba. If the government wants to make this a priority, I think the people of Manitoba would think quite differently. They're concerned about health care. They're concerned about education. They're concerned about child care. They're concerned about environmental regulation. This kind of legislation before us today does nothing on any of those key issues and, in fact, may prove as a deterrent in future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member for his statement.

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 through 4—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

The hour being 6:34, what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Committee rise.

Mr. Chairperson: Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 6:34 p.m.

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