

Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Social and Economic Development

Chairperson
Ms. Marilyn Brick
Constituency of St. Norbert

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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

Thursday, June 8, 2006

TIME – 8:30 a.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert)

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows)

ATTENDANCE – 11 QUORUM – 6

Members of the committee present:

Hon. Mr. Lathlin, Hon. Ms. McGifford, Hon. Messrs. Rondeau, Selinger

Ms. Brick, Messrs. Caldwell, Derkach, Goertzen, Hawranik, Martindale, Reimer

APPEARING:

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, MLA for Inkster
 Mr. David Faurschou, MLA for Portage la Prairie

WITNESSES:

Bill 25–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Payday Loans)

Mr. Michael Thompson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Payday Loan Association

Ms. Gloria Desorcy, Manitoba Branch of the Consumers' Association of Canada

Ms. Catharine Johannson, Private Citizen

Ms. Mary Lou Bourgeois, Private Citizen

Mr. David Love, Private Citizen

Bill 29–The Degree Granting Act

Ms. Catharine Johannson, Private Citizen

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Bill 25–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Payday Loans)

Bill 29–The Degree Granting Act

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

This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 25, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Payday Loans); Bill 29, The Degree Granting Act; and Bill 32, The Real Property Amendment Act.

I will note that this committee will be sitting until 10 a.m. this morning, and, if necessary, we will reconvene at twelve noon until 1 p.m. this afternoon to continue our business.

We have a number of presenters registered to speak this morning as follows: under Bill 25, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Payday Loans): Michael Thompson, President and CEO, Canadian Payday Loan Association; Warren Mills, private citizen; Gloria Desorcy, Manitoba Branch of Consumers' Association Canada; Catharine Johannson, private citizen.

For the information of the committee, we have two additional members registered for Bill 25: Mary Lou Bourgeois and David Love.

On Bill 29, The Degree Granting Act: Catharine Johannson, private citizen.

On Bill 32, The Real Property Amendment Act: Louis Harper from MKO, and Catharine Johannson, private citizen.

Before we proceed with presentations, we do have a few other items and points of information to consider.

First of all, if there is anyone else in the audience who would like to make a presentation this morning, 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, I would like to inform presenters that, 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.

Also, in accordance with our rules, if a presenter is not in attendance when their name is called, they will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they will be removed from the presenters' list.

On the topic of determining the order of public presentations, I will note that we do have an out-of-town presenter in attendance marked with an asterisk on the list. With this in consideration, what order does the committee wish to hear the presentations?

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Chairperson, I think we should follow the usual procedure in this committee, and that is to hear out-of-town presenters first.

Madam Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee? *[Agreed]*

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 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 mikes on and off. Thank you for your patience.

We will now proceed with public presentations.

**Bill 25—The Consumer Protection
Amendment Act (Payday Loans)**

Madam Chairperson: On Bill 25, the committee calls Michael Thompson, President and CEO of the Canadian Payday Loan Association.

Good morning, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Michael Thompson (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Payday Loan Association): Good morning. I should apologize for not having a written copy of my presentation; I ran into some technical difficulties at my hotel. I would like to thank Rick Yarish for being able to help us produce a copy of the technical amendments which we did submit to government officials. So my presentation is pretty short. I think that the written component will not push it over the edge, by any means.

I am Michael Thompson. I am president of the Canadian Payday Loan Association. I would like to thank you for inviting me to appear today. I would like to talk about three things this morning: first, the

association's mandate and how it relates to what Manitoba is doing on this legislation; some general recommendations about strengthening the bill; and, more specifically, the requirement that the federal government amend Section 347 of the Criminal Code.

By way of introduction, I would like to commend the Government of Manitoba for its leadership on this issue. Bill 25 represents the first really meaningful effort by a Canadian government to bring forward industry regulation. The bill represents the first public request from a province to the federal government to change the Criminal Code so that all provinces can fully regulate the payday loan industry.

The payday loan sector is one of the few segments of the financial services industry in Canada without some form of specific regulation. Both industry and consumers have a right to demand new rules. The Province has responded to this demand and has clearly set out a precedent that other jurisdictions feel comfortable with following. Notwithstanding any technical shortcomings that we see with the bill, we are generally very supportive of what the Province is doing.

CPLA and its mandate: We represent 850 of the 1,350 retail payday outlets in Canada. Our mandate is to work with government to achieve regulation that will allow for a viable industry and protect consumers. Atypically for an association, we are calling for regulation. We are not fighting it, and, atypically, in the absence of regulation, we have also taken meaningful steps to protect consumers.

I deliver this message very importantly because I think it is important for us to demonstrate how committed we are to getting consumer protection rules in place.

We have a Code of Best Business Practices. As a condition of membership, our members have to subscribe to this code. Further, our members have agreed to have their activities regularly monitored by an independent ethics and integrity commissioner. Further, they have agreed to pay steep penalties should the commissioner find that they are in non-compliance with the code. I should point out that our commissioner, Sid Peckford, is a former director-general of the Canadian ports police and has a long history in law enforcement.

Our code addresses some very specific consumer protection issues. For example, it includes a

prohibition on rollovers, which is included in Bill 25. A rollover is an extension of an existing loan for a fee. They are highly controversial because they rapidly drive up the overall cost of credit, and they are risky for consumers who are in truly vulnerable financial situations. The code's ban on rollovers is, incidentally, one of the most restrictive industry-imposed control measures in place for payday lenders anywhere in the world.

In Manitoba, there are presently 67 payday outlets that the association is aware of; 26 of them are not members of the CPLA. I have to specify that there is nothing that the CPLA can do to protect members who choose to use those non-member outlets. In some cases, non-member companies do grant rollovers, and they engage in substandard business practices.

We believe strongly that government action is required to protect consumers from the bad apples in the industry, and we think that Bill 25 is heading in that direction.

* (08:40)

On how to strengthen the bill, you guys have a copy of the technical amendments which we submitted to the government. I would just like to say, as an overall principle, that the bill should have, as its objective, to establish a viable and competitive industry. We really think that competition is the best way over time to protect consumers and drive down rates.

Finally, I would just like to make a couple of comments about federal action to support Bill 25. Since Manitoba introduced Bill 25, four other provinces have called on the federal government to grant them the authority to determine an appropriate rate structure for payday loans. We are in an era of asymmetrical federalism, and the central government should therefore respond to these requests.

There are some who believe that more study is required before governments can regulate, somehow more dialogue between the provinces and the federal government will lead to a single solution. One need only point out, as the Senate Banking Committee did earlier this week, that in 40 years the federal government and the provinces have failed to implement a single solution to security regulations. Agreement is not possible.

We need not have a repeat experience in respect to payday loans. There is a solution ready to go. The federal Minister of Justice needs only pull it off the

shelf and table it in Parliament. Study of how best to regulate payday lending has been ongoing for almost six years, and we believe that the time for study is over.

In the fall of 2005, the Minister of Justice rightly concluded that the most practicable means of achieving regulation would be to amend Section 347 of the Criminal Code so that provinces that wanted to regulate could go ahead. He clearly recognized that a harmonized approach would not be agreed to any time soon.

On the minister's instruction, and with approval of the federal Cabinet, the amendments were drafted but never tabled in Parliament because of an unexpected election caused by a minority government situation. The bottom line is that the federal amendments are ready to go and the policy work has been done. Consultations are complete.

Introduction of the amendment is now a matter of process than one of debate. The federal government should not allow us minority status to prevent the legislation from coming forward again. Consumers deserve better, as does the industry. I think Manitoba obviously has a very important role to play in this respect since the Minister of Justice is a Manitoba political minister.

So, in conclusion, I would encourage the committee, pending adoption of some of our technical amendments, to support Bill 25 and, more importantly, I encourage the Province to continue to push for changes to section 347 of the Criminal Code. It is clear that consumers across Canada will benefit from your success in this regard.

Those are my comments.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Thompson.

Madam Chairperson: Mr. Reimer, I will have to ask you to bring your microphone a little closer.

Mr. Reimer: Okay, I can do that.

Again, I will say thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Thompson.

I noticed this the first time I have seen your amendments that you are proposing today to the bill. Are there one or two that are really the ones that you would think you would like to see changed? I know you have quite a few here, but is there a hit list type of thing?

Mr. Thompson: Thank you.

Yes. We noted in our presentation on our hit list that a priority amendment for us would be in the direction that is given to the Public Utilities Board, that there is some type of preamble statement that says that the Public Utilities Board mandate in setting rates for the industry should be to ensure a viable and competitive industry.

The reason we say this is because the PUB traditionally has been mandated to set rates for regulated monopolies, and we have a general concern which would be reflected by anyone in private business. I think that maybe the approach or orientation of the utilities board would not be geared toward ensuring competition. So it is noted in our technical amendments that that is a priority amendment for us.

In a more general way, all of our amendments are geared toward fairness and the application of the rules and in a few areas not being too onerous, in terms of restraints that are placed on the business operations of payday lenders.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, I, too, appreciate the presentation that you had made, and a couple of questions come to mind. Over the last couple of years, we have seen that particular industry growing as more and more of these payday loans appear on our streets. What I thought was interesting, you had mentioned that Manitoba, I think it says 67 of these businesses, and 26 of them are not members of your group.

Mr. Thompson: That is correct.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is correct? *[interjection]*

Madam Chairperson: Mr. Thompson

Mr. Thompson: Sorry. Thank you.

That data is based on some research that we did last year, so it is current to about December of 2005. So my understanding of payday lenders, specifically, is that there are 67 in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: There are a number of concerns that I have in regard to this bill, but, given your presentation, the one that really interests me is that my understanding of rollover is if Johnny X goes to one of these outlets and gets a \$500 loan, your code of ethics would say that 30 days later, they are not able to extend that loan, and then charge additional fees? Is that is what you mean by a rollover?

Mr. Thompson: That means specifically that you would have to pay off your loan in its entirety before

you could get another one, and you could not get it extended for an additional fee. This is significant. It is something that distinguishes in the credit marketplace our association from other forms of credit granters.

For example, a major credit card company will have as its marketing strategy to keep consumers in a position of revolving credit, where they never actually pay off their debt. In the case of our members, we have clearly stipulated they have to pay it off in its entirety before they can get another loan.

Mr. Lamoureux: Now, you indicated there are 26 of these outlets that are not associated with your organization, so they are using their own code of ethics, whatever it might be. You implied that some of them would even be allowing for rollovers to take place.

Do you think that there is an opportunity here for the government to ban rollovers, period? By banning the rollovers, there is no longer a need for a code of ethics. My concern is those 26 that are not a part of your association, that do not have that same standard code of ethics. Do you think an amendment of that nature would be advisable?

Mr. Thompson: The minister or officials could correct me if I am wrong here, but I believe that, for the most part, the elements of the bill in many ways closely reflect our code of ethics. So our members would retain their code. They would continue to act by it, but the legislation would, in effect, impose the same standards on non-member associations. I do not think there is a need for an amendment to the legislation.

If you are asking if there is a need for an amendment to the legislation that would require all payday lenders to subscribe to a certain code, I cannot see that that would be a bad thing. If you are asking for an amendment to eliminate any requirement for a code, to some extent it would not really matter once the legislation is fully implemented, because all of the code requirements would be essentially reflected in the law.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. At this point, we do not have any more time unless we have leave from the committee.

Is there leave for Mr. Hawranik, who has been waiting, to ask a question? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Yes, thanks very much. I note in your presentation you

have a couple of pages of your presentation with one page of principally the concerns, seven concerns listed, and then seven additional pages of proposed amendments.

You state in your first page that you are in favour of the principle of the bill, and that you presented those amendments to the government. How receptive was government to those amendments, first of all? If there were no amendments that were to take place on this bill, would you still be in favour of the bill? If the bill does go forward without amendments, do you have a strategy with respect to having amendments take place at some time in the future, giving some regard, of course, to the fact that being, maybe, the first province in Canada to enact such a bill, that other provinces may, in fact, duplicate this kind of legislation without those amendments.

Mr. Thompson: Well, I will explain to you the process that we went through in the preparation of the technical amendments, and the response that we got back from the government and our feelings about that response.

When the bill was tabled, we met with officials in the Department of Finance and consumer affairs to discuss our areas of concern. As I mentioned in response to some earlier questions, Madam Chair, we have a general concern that the legislation be appropriately structured to allow for a proper competitive environment in the industry.

* (08:50)

So, like any other industry, we have concerns that the rules might be unduly onerous or restrictive to business, or that there may be some unfair application of the rules. So, for example, in the area of licensing, we think that the director has quite a lot of discretion to impose different requirements on different lenders, which we think is unfair and does not allow for a fairly applied set of rules. So, Madam Chair, we raised this with officials who were very accommodating in their discussions and provided us with assurances that the Province has a good history of being fair in its application of licensing requirements, and so on. So we restated our concerns in the technical amendments, and we restate them now. We will be watching that very closely.

The experience of the industry in other provinces, and we raise this for a very real reason, the experience of the industry in other provinces has been that, because the industry is relatively new and

not well-known, in trying to bring in some types of rules or regulatory frameworks, my members report to me that they have had experiences where directors in those provinces have kind of changed the rules of the game halfway along the way, and that has had an impact on their ability to conduct their business. It has also led to legal disputes between the Province and the industry. So we would be concerned that this type of flexibility of discretion by the director, in terms of approval of licensing and so on, could lead to problems down the road. We will watch it very carefully, and, if it is being unfairly applied, we will certainly raise those issues with the government. So that would be one example.

So I think that, in general, the government has listened to our concerns. I do not think that they have been particularly responsive in terms changing any of those or amending the legislation, but maybe they are planning on doing that in the House, I do not know. But, you know, the general direction of the bill is good. Our concerns at this point are cautionary. They are not something that we feel a need to put the hammer down on, so to speak. We will watch and see what happens.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Thompson. *[interjection]* Just a moment. Is there leave for one final question from the minister? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I just want to get your views. It is our opinion that right now the industry under the Criminal Code, the current Criminal Code provisions, is actually operating outside of the Criminal Code and is, in fact, illegally charging interest rates which go beyond the 60 percent maximum prescribed by the Criminal Code. Would you care to make a comment on that? Is the industry, as presently operating, illegal under the Criminal Code?

Mr. Thompson: I would not care to make a direct comment on that. What I would say is that, in its dealings with most provinces, the industry has structured its loans in such a fashion as to accommodate the Criminal Code. The industry has had good relations with most provinces in this respect.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Thompson: Thanks.

Madam Chairperson: The committee calls Warren Mills, private citizen. Mr. Mills's name will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

The committee calls Gloria Desorcy, Manitoba Branch of the Consumers' Association of Canada.

You can proceed, Ms. Desorcy.

Ms. Gloria Desorcy (Manitoba Branch of the Consumers' Association of Canada): Good morning. On behalf of the Manitoba Branch of the Consumers' Association of Canada, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to offer comments on Bill 25.

CAC Manitoba is a non-profit, volunteer, independent organization, working to inform and empower consumers and represent the consumer interest in Manitoba.

CAC Manitoba has become acutely aware of the issues facing consumers who use alternative lenders. Some consumers use these services because they feel disenfranchised from mainstream banking institutions. Others choose these services for convenience or because they have difficult credit histories. Regardless of whether consumers choose to use alternative lenders or feel they have no choice but to use them, they have the right to be protected and informed in that transaction.

We congratulate the government for recognizing this gap in consumer protection legislation and taking strong steps to fill it. We recognize that part of this legislation depends on the co-operation of the federal government, and we urge the provincial government to be persistent in its pursuit of federal government sanction to address the total cost of credit for short-term, payday-type loans.

Of course, legislation is only as effective as the regulation that flows from it, and the monitoring and enforcement of that regulation. We agree that the Consumers' Bureau is the best body to administer the legislation, and we urge the government to ensure that the Consumers' Bureau has sufficient resources to carry out this work efficiently and effectively.

Also, consumer education will be crucial to ensure consumers' awareness of the new legislation. CAC Manitoba is concerned that some consumers who use alternative lending services are less likely to lodge formal complaints or call government offices to request information. It will be important for these consumers to know what the new legislation entitles them to expect from this industry.

We are pleased to see the Public Utilities Board as the body chosen to set limits for total cost of credit. We are also pleased to note that limits must be

set and reviewed on a regular basis and with public input. Bill 25 reflects the government's recognition that the financial marketplace evolves, and legislation and regulation must evolve with it. We are concerned, however, that three years between reviews is too long, given the fast-paced nature of change in the credit market. We ask the government to consider shortening the period between reviews to one year.

In conclusion, CAC Manitoba recommends the following: that the government amend Bill 25 to reflect yearly reviews by the PUB of the total cost of credit limit, that the government ensure that the Consumers' Bureau has sufficient resources to administer the legislation effectively and efficiently, and that the government enact Bill 25 as soon as possible and make plans for consumer education to accompany its implementation.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much. Are there questions for Ms. Desorcy?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, thank you. I did have a couple of questions.

First of all, I appreciate the fact that you not only came this morning, that you were here the other evening to make a presentation on other pieces of consumer legislation. I think that is wonderful to see.

The legislation, from what I understand, is exempting payday loan companies, if, in fact, a loan is in excess of \$1,500, I believe is what it is, if a payday loan company does that. Are you familiar with that at all?

Ms. Desorcy: I did note that in the legislation.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am sorry, you did?

Ms. Desorcy: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes?

Do you think that, again, if I go back just to the growth of the industry and the types of people that are using these facilities, it just, when I saw the \$1,500, or when I was told about the \$1,500 exemptions, do you feel that that is protecting the consumer by putting in such a low floor that would allow them to be exempt from issuing it as a loan?

Ms. Desorcy: I think that—two things.

If you heard me the other day, you heard me say that I believe these pieces of legislation, this one included, are good first steps. That does not mean there are not more things to do. The second thing I

would say is that a large number the consumers who call us do begin with a small loan. The amount may grow over time because they have difficulty repaying it, et cetera, but they do begin with a small loan.

So, while I do not consider this the whole problem solved, I think this is a good start. Does that answer your—

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, it does.

I guess when I look at it, and I look at it from the point of view of a simple amendment could actually address that. Based on your experiences, would you say that there are people, then, that are using these types of facilities and getting more than a \$1,500 loan, to the best of your knowledge?

Ms. Desorcy: You know, I am not sure if I can. Would I say that anybody is? You know, probably some people are. Could I give you numbers? I do not feel confident to give you numbers on that.

* (09:00)

Mr. Lamoureux: Another part of the legislation then deals with, again, an exemption. If you give a loan for 62 days, then the pay loans company can do that. If it goes beyond 62 days, again, my understanding or interpretation is then they would be exempt from that. Is the presenter familiar with that issue?

Ms. Desorcy: My understanding is that most payday loans are required to be paid at payday, which is usually less than 62 days, right?

Mr. Lamoureux: The presenter before you talked about the rollovers. He had made reference to the fact that there was a number, and the number that I noted was 26 that were not a part of the organization that, in essence, has a code of ethics. It does cause a great deal of concern when you have individuals who will go out and get a loan based on their paycheque that they are going to be receiving. The possibility of having it rolled over causes further problems for that family or that individual.

I would ask for your thoughts on the rollovers, in particular, if you have any sense in terms of the frequency that that would actually be occurring. Are you even aware of it?

Ms. Desorcy: I am definitely aware of it. I think it happens a lot. I understood and I could be wrong. If I am misinterpreting, maybe you will correct me. My understanding was that the PUB is also going to set a limit for penalties, and that there are regulations with

regard to taking out a second loan and having two loans consecutively. So I believe that that is going to resolve that. If I have misunderstood, then I apologize, but that is my understanding.

Madam Chairperson: Mr. Lamoureux, one short, short question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Oh, that means the time is running out, so I have to be really quick.

I guess just to re-emphasize. Your understanding of the consumer market out there is that the rollover occurs on a frequent basis?

Ms. Desorcy: I would say that the rollover is frequently a problem. I cannot give you a percentage on how many people who take a payday loan end up getting a rollover because, like I said, we have not done that type of numerical research. But for folks who call us, the rollover has often been a problem. That is often why we end up hearing about it. That is what I would say.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation.

The committee calls Catharine Johannson. Did you have a written presentation you wanted to circulate?

Ms. Catharine Johannson (Private Citizen): No, I do not.

Madam Chairperson: Okay, please proceed.

Ms. Johannson: Well, I am here as a private citizen. I was very happy to hear that the Province was bringing in legislation on payday loans. I had also heard that Québec had made some significant moves in actually banning payday loans. I know that our Premier (Mr. Doer) has a good record of following Québec's lead on things like electoral reform, and so I was very much looking forward to the legislation. I thought it would be quite progressive.

What actually came forward, one of the things it reminded me of is a famous poet named Frank Scott. He wrote a poem about a Canadian Prime Minister called William Lyon Mackenzie King, and the famous couplet from that poem is: Do nothing by halves that can be done by quarters.

So, when we look at legislation in other jurisdictions, New York, New Jersey or Québec, I think there is a lot more that Manitoba can do, especially in terms of when I spoke about election reform. I understand Sid Green made some comments on what the Province is doing now on

election reform, and I think his comments are similar to the comments I would have on this legislation.

New York, New Jersey and Québec are all moving forward on legislation of this type. There is a movement in Pennsylvania to ban payday loans. The research that they have done suggests that, in borrowing a \$325 loan, people actually end up paying back \$800. So we can see that it is quite a serious problem.

The question of usury is actually a very interesting question that people have been grappling with for many years, and it is an interesting question that specifically people of faith have grappled with for a long time. Some of you may be familiar with the Jubilee Movement which looks at usury in a macro sense in terms of cancelling the debts of poorer countries. The Jubilee Movement is a call by the worldwide church community to cancel the debts.

I happened to meet last week the United Methodist representative to the United Nations. I did not even know that churches had representatives to the United Nations, but, apparently, most of the mainline denominations do. This fellow had a very interesting critique of the Jubilee Movement, where he talked about in Scripture the Jubilee Movement actually had three sections to it. There is the cancellation of debt, the release of captives and return of land.

I will not get into release of captives and land reform because I do not expect any provincial legislation coming forward on those issues any time soon, but I certainly think when we are looking at debt and we are looking at issues of usury, the Province can go further, and I would encourage you to do so.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. Are there questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you, Catharine, for your presentation on this bill. I do have a few questions that I would not mind to pose to you. First of all, when you said the word "usury," the first thing that came to my mind is the types of people that actually most frequently use these types of facilities. What I have found is it is individuals that—actually broader than what most people might think. I think the assumption is that it is just purely welfare recipients that would be using these types of facilities.

The question I have for you is: Are you familiar to the degree in which you have a sense of what sorts

of people in your community in which you live that might be using facilities of this nature? Any sense of that?

Ms. Johannson: Actually, the only person that I know that has actually used—that I know of; I am sure other people I know have used payday loans—but the people that I know who have used these types of establishments actually were a couple that both had good jobs, but they had expenses that were piling up, and they saw this as a way to sort of try to get things under control. So it was not welfare recipients. It was people who had a good-paying job and then ended up in a cycle of debt.

It is a problem because the reason we have payday loans is because there is a need, because, you know, banks and credit unions are abandoning the inner city, and so you have people that live downtown that do not have access to a bank, so payday loan crops up and it fills a need. It is like a food bank, right? It is not the answer to the problem. It is a short-term answer. When you are thinking in the long term, what is a way that we can deal with the need while reducing the aspects of usury while reducing the parasitical aspects of the industry?

Mr. Lamoureux: Would you then say—because you are right. I do not know how many bank closures over the last number of years that I have witnessed in the north end of Winnipeg. *[interjection]* The Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says 10, and it likely is right around that 10.

* (09:10)

I am wondering if you feel that that has given lead to these money-lending institutions, or payday loans and cheque cashing, the whole money mart industry from growing. Is it because you feel that the banks, which would normally, I would assume, have been providing the service in the past, in terms of cashing cheques, as an example, and definitely processing some loans—is it the disappearance of these banks and credit unions that you think is fueling the rise of these Money Marts?

Ms. Johannson: Well, yes. I think one of the other problems is also, with all of the new anti-terrorism legislation, it is harder for people to get a bank account.

For example, I know of a poet who, unfortunately, passed away this spring, who was an award-winning poet, and whom I was trying to help open a bank account. He lived downtown, and he lived right near the new Assiniboine Credit Union

branch that opened up on Broadway. He wanted to open an account there, but he could not because he did not have the proper identification. So, because the credit union would not allow him to open the account, as their rules are much more stringent now after September 11, and because of all the rules around opening accounts, people are forced to go to payday loans. We tried to get him a driver's licence and that did not work out. He did not have a social insurance number so he had to apply for that, to get a copy of it, because he had lost the other one. Then we went to get him a liquor commission control card, and they would not take the social insurance number because it was the new one that does not have the signature on it. It took weeks just to get everything together to get it so that he could finally open an account at the credit union that was across the street from his house.

I mean, this is another piece of the puzzle that is forcing people who are not able to open a credit union account, who are not able to open a bank account because they do not have the proper identification, and they are not necessarily able to go all the way out to the south end of the city to get a liquor control commission card, then, you know, that is what we are left with. So these people, by necessity, are driven to doing this.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much for your questions, Ms. Johannson.

The committee calls Mary Lou Bourgeois. You can proceed, Ms. Bourgeois.

Ms. Mary Lou Bourgeois (Private Citizen): I am here to speak on Bill 25, referring to payday loans. After examining the bill, I have concerns on how effective it is in protecting the poor and the vulnerable.

I will use Point Douglas as an example. Presently, there are no major banks in the area. There are two credit unions and one pay bank outlet, which are set up not far from the Merchants Hotel. There are three senior blocks in the vicinity. Now, if a senior is not able to walk far, or uses a wheelchair, their choices are very limited. For some, the closest money institute they have to use is the payday loans outlet. Otherwise, they either have to depend on someone or pay a cab to drive them to a bank that is not in their neighbourhood. What is protecting the senior who has no choices but to use this facility?

You may have a senior who forgets, or may not understand the terms. There is also the person who

falls under the vulnerable persons act, who lives independently and is responsible for making his or her own decisions. There is a deadline in the bill for anyone who wants to back out of the contract under normal conditions, but none for people who are vulnerable. A person who can make their own decisions and realize the contract they just signed can recognize that they are unable to follow through with the terms, can make a judgment call and end the contract within so many days. The problem with a vulnerable person, it usually takes another person to recognize that there is a problem, and that the person may not be able to honour the contract. This usually does not happen until it is too late to do anything.

I am recommending that Bill 25 be amended to protect those who fall under the vulnerable persons act, and seniors who may not recognize that they have signed a contract that they cannot honour.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. Are there questions for the presenter?

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the presentation, Mary Lou.

The previous presenter made reference to the number of bank closures. I think that we overlook far too easily the people who use these banking facilities. Quite often, the most vulnerable are seniors, and so forth, who require these services. It would surprise me, you indicate that there are no major banks in that Point Douglas area. When you say Point Douglas, can you just help us in terms of how large of an area we are really talking about?

Ms. Bourgeois: You are talking about from McKenzie to the river, and then from Mountain to downtown Winnipeg, Portage. There is no major bank in that area except for the TD bank down here on the corner. Somebody on Selkirk Avenue is not going to come running down here to the TD bank over here on the corner.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the closest bank would be the banking corner where you have the Royal Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia, and so forth.

When was the last bank closure in your area? Can you recall offhand?

Ms. Bourgeois: Madam Chair, 2003, I think it was.

Mr. Lamoureux: Now, do you find, as a result, that we are actually seeing seniors opting to use the Money Mart outlets as opposed to travelling to Portage and Main? Where do you believe they are primarily getting their banking services?

Ms. Bourgeois: I would have to say they are using the two credit unions, which they would probably have to, depending on which senior home, but the one that is on, is it McGregor, they would probably have to cab it down there or take a bus. Now, if you are a senior citizen with a walker, you are not going to be taking a bus down there. You are either going to have to cab it down there, or else just take your walk down to this payday loan thing down the street.

Mr. Lamoureux: Being somewhat familiar with the area that you have described, there is a fairly significant percentage of that area which, I suspect, is very close to that poverty line or below the poverty line. Would you say that those individuals would have actually some sort of a bank account or accounts at the local credit union, or are they forgoing these types of accounts because you have the Money Marts that are there?

Ms. Bourgeois: They would probably be forgoing going to the credit unions, okay, because it is just easier to go and cash your cheque at the Money Mart.

My main concern is if anybody needs a loan. I was just speaking with somebody last night who surprised me and said she had to use one of these payday loan facilities. It was just one week, and she borrowed \$200. Then she ended up having to pay back \$300. She said \$75 of that were service charges. I mean, that is a lot of money to pay back.

Mr. Lamoureux: This was recently?

Ms. Bourgeois: It was about a year ago.

Mr. Lamoureux: So it is more, so the fees as opposed to the interest rates have really cost this individual the extras.

Ms. Bourgeois: Yes.

Madam Chairperson: Seeing no other questions, we thank you very much for your presentation.

The committee calls David Love. Did you have a written submission?

Mr. David Love (Private Citizen): No, I do not.

Madam Chairperson: Okay. You can proceed, Mr. Love.

* (09:20)

Mr. Love: Ministers, members of the Legislative Assembly, fellow citizens, I come before you very concerned about a blight upon our community. As we look at the payday loan industry, it is a sign that

we are going backwards in our society. I am a counsellor. I work with people who are addicted, people who suffer from alcohol, cocaine and gambling addictions, and with the families of those people who are affected by those addictions within our society. As I look at the number of payday loan establishments in our community, I can tell you that we as a society are losing the battle, that more and more people will become poor and affected by the drugs, the alcohol and the gambling in our society, and are turning to these institutions to supplement money for them to be able to pay bills to live on.

I am going to speak to you briefly on the profiles of three individuals whom I am counselling and have counselled most recently.

One, this person was affected by gambling. This person was divorced and has children. The reason that they were using the payday loan establishments was because of their addiction. Payday would come along. They would find themselves going to the gambling institutions, and they would lose a great portion of their paycheque. They would then turn around and go to these payday loan places for an interim loan so that they could pay their rent or buy groceries.

An alcoholic. This person was divorced as well and had children. This person's income was in excess of \$50,000 a year, by the way. As a result, this person was having to use the payday loan establishments to meet the demands of her bills because she was spending money on alcohol and having trouble controlling that.

A gambler. Income in the mid-thirties. Again, divorced, with children, looking for some way to pay bills. Gambling is a problem for her, so she would go and she would gamble.

All three of these people have considered bankruptcy. They have exhausted their friends and their families for money, and still they continue in their addictions. If I look at the areas they live in, in the community, they come from Transcona, St. James and mid-downtown. People who use these types of establishments are people who are working hard to support their families and the needs of their families. As a result of their addiction, these institutions of finance, if we wish to call them that, help them to be in a position of continuing their addiction. They need to be able to be aware—maybe we need to educate them in the ways of being able to handle money. All of them have great needs to be able to deal with money, and that is a problem with

them. It is a common problem. It does not matter how much money they make. It seems there is just not enough because of their addiction, and their addiction comes from the pain of their lives.

I believe we as citizens have to be aware of that, for the value of any society is not how we treat the best in society, but how we treat the worst, the people who are suffering, the people who are in need. To me, these institutions of lending that charge 60 percent and up are a blight on our society. They cause great pain and anguish to many people.

I just ask you to look back a few years ago when there was not one in our community. Now we have many in the area of Elmwood where my office is located. I look and I see many of these institutions being there. In fact, one has closed its doors because there are too many, but when is enough, enough? When do we put people before profit? When do we put their pain before profit?

I look at it and I say to you, gentlemen and ladies who are seated here today, that this is a social problem that needs to be dealt with in many ways. There needs to be funding to address it. I do look at the legislation that is put forth, and I applaud you for that legislation, but the question is, if this is illegal under the Criminal Code of Canada, and, having been a policeman for 15 years, why are charges not being laid? Why are these places not being closed down? Why are people able to flaunt the law in the face of society?

I beg of you to look at these things when you consider this legislation and consider the pain and anguish of those people who come to my office. Rollovers, that is one thing. Some of them work three different of these institutions at the same time. How do you stop that? I am concerned for their lives and for the lives of the city of Winnipeg, people in the city of Winnipeg and the quality of our business here. Is this a good place to raise children? For what? Payday loans? Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. Are there questions for the presenter?

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): David, you talk with authority and passion, I must say. One of the presenters earlier indicated, I believe it was the province of Québec; I think it was New York and, possibly, New Jersey where she had indicated that there is—actually, they have banned the payday loans. When I look at it and I reflect on the comments that you made, just a few years ago, I cannot really recall

seeing them. These are somewhat new. It is a new industry that has really been growing for the last, I guess, maybe half a dozen, seven or eight years. Given your background, I would be interested in knowing if you feel that we should be looking at maybe emulating what the province of Québec is doing.

Again, I do not really, other than what was indicated through a presenter, where they are looking at banning payday loans, is that something that we should be looking at here in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Love: The answer to that question in a very simple form would be yes. I cannot see of any useful purpose for payday loans.

Mr. Lamoureux: You made reference in terms of enforcement, previous police officer, and so forth. What do you think the problem is? Why is the current legislation that is there, are they not necessarily being enforced? I would have thought that it would be enforced.

* (09:30)

Mr. Love: To answer that question, I must look to the people who are seated around this table. The enforcement of law, even a speeding law, is important when citizens are affected and they complain in a certain area. At one time, if you drove through the Bronx Park community on Henderson Highway, you drove through at 15 miles per hour. You did not go over it because you were afraid of getting a ticket from the East Kildonan police department. They were known for that. Today, you can charge 60 percent interest on a loan and charge those people who cannot afford it, and it is against the Criminal Code.

I guess I look at that as having been a policeman in the East Kildonan area for 12 years, and also serving in other police departments for a short period of time, I know about the enforcement of law. Many of you may even have experienced some of that enforcement with getting a radar ticket for going 11 kilometres over the speed limit. But I just cannot justify in any way these payday loan places, other than pure profit and greed by some individuals.

Mr. Lamoureux: You talked about addiction, alcohol, gamblers as your clients. You made reference that, in one household income, there was in excess of \$50,000.

Mr. Love: That is correct.

Mr. Lamoureux: I understand that the legislation exempts individuals who would get a loan in excess of \$1,500. Do you see that as a problem or a flaw in the legislation? Should that be changed?

Mr. Love: Yes, I do see that as a flaw in the legislation. I think there should be no cap on this. There should be no \$1,500. It should be any loan that comes out of that institution.

Mr. Lamoureux: The other new item that you had brought in your presentation, and it was a very quick reference, was that you have a number of Money Marts in the area in which you live. You implied that there could be clients, or just the public as a whole, who would use more than one facility. We heard some discussion about rollovers earlier. Am I safe to assume that what we are seeing, maybe, is someone would go for a \$500 loan at one institution, and, maybe two weeks later, go and get another loan from another financial institution just to help finance the first one in terms of meeting that particular obligation? Do you believe that is—

Madam Chairperson: Mr. Love. Mr. Lamoureux, I will have to let him answer the question, because we are—

Mr. Lamoureux: Do you believe that is the case?

Mr. Love: In the cases of the people whom I have been counselling, these three people whom I have mentioned, they have done that. They take a loan to pay the loan so that they can make another loan. This is how they get themselves in difficult situations. It is at a point where people—two of these clients have thought of taking their own lives. They have discussed that with me because of the desperation they feel. If we look at that, these are parents of children. So who is looking after these children when these people are feeling so desperate?

I might add that it is not just the payday loans, but it is part of it. I think that it is very important that we look at doing something that is going to limit the amount of interest that can be charged, if we are going to have them, the amounts of the loans, so that there are no loopholes in the loans as far as amounts, and that there is no period of time. If the loan comes from a payday institution, then we should be looking at it as being covered; the legislation should cover that institution or that type of loan.

Madam Chairperson: I thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Love.

Mr. Love: Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Before we proceed to the next bill, are there any other individuals in the audience who would like to make a presentation to Bill 25?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I am wondering if I might be able to ask committee members to give serious consideration as to why it is that, by having the committee meeting this early in the morning, and knowing full well that, in the past, we would quite often have committee meetings in the evening which would afford members of the public the opportunity to speak on critical legislation, we are really limiting the ability for Manitobans to be able to provide some input on this legislation.

It is a concern, primarily because, Madam Chairperson, in the evening, it is just a whole lot more convenient for people to be able to come. It just seems to me that we would be promoting more participation. We have heard from speakers on this bill, and I am wondering if there might be the leave of the committee, because we witness that there are no presenters for this morning, but I am wondering if it were, in fact, in the evening, a committee, when we normally have committees, if, in fact, there would have been more interest to make presentation—

Madam Chairperson: Okay, just prior to entertaining other people's comments, I just wanted to mention that we still do have one presenter that will be called again once we go through the rest of the bills, and three on the other bills.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I can hardly believe that this member is raising this issue at this time. This is the member who was partly responsible for ringing the bells and getting no work done in this Legislature for about six weeks earlier in this session, with the result that a lot of bills are going to committee close to the date which all parties agreed would be the date of rising, namely, next Tuesday. Had this been a more normal session, almost all bills would be going to committee for public presentation in the evening, which is the normal procedure in this Legislature, but, because this member chose to ring the bells for his own political reasons, which are understandable, now he is grandstanding and is faced with a situation of having bills go to committee morning, afternoon and evening so that we can get the work of the Legislature done, something that this member did not want to do for six weeks at the beginning of the session. Now, he is complaining that, because of his tactics and his stalling and his filibustering, we do not have time to hear from the

public only in the evening. So he has no one to blame but himself.

Madam Chairperson: At this point, did you have a comment you wanted to make, Mr. Derkach?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Thank you, Madam Chair. I do not know what purpose any of this is serving, but government does have a responsibility in all of this, and that is to ensure that, in fact, citizens of Manitoba are given an opportunity to bring forward their concerns at the committee. Therefore, traditionally, we have always used the evenings as times for committee, because that is when Manitobans can come forward. It is unfortunate that the government cannot organize its agenda, even with a majority.

Madam Chair, the member opposite knows very well that, had they done what Manitobans are demanding of them, and that was to call a public inquiry, all of this legislation could have been dealt with in an appropriate time. But, because of the way that they have mismanaged the House, mismanaged their affairs, we are now stuck with curtailing the time Manitobans have to come forward. I think that needs to be put on the record, because it is clearly the government's responsibility.

Madam Chairperson: At this point, I am going to discontinue this discussion, feeling that this should be entertained with House leaders, and it already has been discussed previously. So I am now going to move on to consideration of Bill 29. I would like to call—

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairperson: Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Chair, on a point of order.

I raise the issue in terms of the practices of this committee. I was encouraged by hearing your comments, Madam Chair, that there is yet one more presenter that is going to be entitled to call, and I am pleased with that. I was somewhat thrown off by the Member for Burrows, who decided to attempt to make it a little bit more personal, but my understanding is, then, that we are going to continue to go through these names. After we have gone through these names—for example, the presenter, I think, was Warren Mills. I am not too sure if he is going to be showing up this morning, but if he is not able to be here this morning, would he, in fact, be able to speak

this afternoon or possibly this evening, just in keeping with the traditions of the Chamber?

* (09:40)

Madam Chairperson: Just to clarify for the member, first of all, I do not believe it is a point of order. I would just like to clarify that our normal practice is to call individuals who are presenting. To give them an opportunity, we would go through the entire list. We do have a couple of other bills to consider with a couple of other presenters on it. Once we have gone through that, we will go back to the original list and call them. If the individual is here at that point, then they would be able to come forward and present. If they are not here at that point, then their name would be dropped from the list. So that is our normal practice.

Bill 29—The Degree Granting Act

Madam Chairperson: At this point, I would like to call presenters on Bill 29, The Degree Granting Act. Catharine Johannson, private citizen.

Did you have a written submission for the committee? No. You can proceed, Ms. Johannson.

Ms. Catharine Johannson (Private Citizen): Well, I figured since I was already here for Bill 25, I have an opinion on this as well, and so I might as well share it with you. You will be happy to know that I will be brief.

I was a bit surprised that this is one of the bills that the government is trying to get through before the end of session because it seems a bit of a strange bill to me. My concern is just that I believe we should be cautious when the government is looking at intruding into academia and looking at being the one to decide who is accredited and who is not, because it is the beginning of a slippery slope, in my mind, for the government to start deciding that this university is valid and this institution, maybe, is not.

I think we already have a lot of ways in society. I mean, when you are graduating from high school, you know the universities that you want to go to and, unfortunately, a lot of people look at *Maclean's* that ranks our universities towards the bottom. I think that it is not really necessary for the government to be looking at who is allowed to use different words when they are describing themselves in this sense. I just think we really need to be cautious when we are dealing with issues like academia, and the government making rules around things like this.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. Questions for the presenter?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Madam Chair. It is interesting that you would raise the issue in terms of priorities and importance. Yesterday, in regard to this particular bill, it was raised in terms of here you have the government wanting to say who can use the word "degree" when, in fact, there are so many Manitobans that are looking to get their degrees actually acknowledged. What I am referring to, of course, are the many people that we have that immigrate to our province, who bring in a great deal of credentials. Even though they have been able to establish their credentials, in most part, it is very challenging to get those degrees recognized so that they are actually able to do something with it.

The issue that you bring up in terms of academic independence is important to recognize. I look at the primary reason for this bill, from what I understand, being brought forward at this time. It is because of concern of a candidate in a provincial election who made reference to a degree that she had, and the government called into question its qualifications, or why it is that this degree or how it is that this person can use the word "degree." For what I believe, political reasons, the government has brought in this legislation in order to address that specific issue of a candidate in the last election, or it could have been even the '99 election, I am not 100 percent sure. It was one of those two elections, where, on a brochure, it said that she had a degree from some institution. *[interjection]* Well, the Member for Brandon says Linda West. I will not use Linda West's name, but the point is, Madam Chair, that that, in essence, was the motivating factor behind this legislation coming before us today.

In your opinion as a presenter, do you feel that that is the proper motivation for bringing in legislation?

Ms. Johannson: Well, Mr. Lamoureux, I do not think that either you or I can speak to the government's motivation. Only they know what is in their hearts. If we are going to talk about who is a university and who is allowed to grant a degree, I mean, we have a proliferation now of universities offering what they call Executive MBAs, which are, basically, that you want to have an MBA, but that you do not have time to do the real work and you do not have time to actually do the study that is involved in obtaining a I will not say a real MBA, but a standard MBA. So now you have, as an

opportunity to make money. So universities are offering the opportunity for businesspeople to get an Executive MBA. So you get an Executive MBA, and you can put that on your résumé when you apply for jobs. You can say, well, I have an Executive MBA. Anyone in academia realizes that, you know, it is really not worth the paper it is printed on to a lot of people.

So, when we are talking about legislating things like that, we already have examples of people saying, you know, well, I have this or I have that, and then people who are actually in the industry recognize that no, that is a load of whatever. We know that this is a good university to take that. I took math at Waterloo, so I should probably get a job before someone who went to, you know—well, I do not want to say anything bad about Canadian universities—but, you know, it is already recognized within the industry. Everyone gets spam e-mails all the time, that you can have your Ph.D. for \$1,200. Well, if I click reply on that and I pay \$1,200, and now I am a Ph.D. from, I am a doctor from the university of who knows where in Kansas, or in San Diego. *[interjection]* Exactly, exactly. People are smart enough to know that that is ridiculous.

You do not need government legislation to tell people what universities are significant.

Madam Chairperson: Ms. Johannson, I will just have to ask you to conclude your remarks.

Ms. Johannson: So that is what I have to say about that.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation.

An Honourable Member: I do not think I could have said it any better.

Madam Chairperson: Did you want to ask for leave?

An Honourable Member: Well, may I have leave for a question of the presenter, Madam Chair?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Chairperson: Leave has been granted.

Ms. Johannson, would you like to come back up to the mike for a moment, please?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Thank you very much for your presentation, first of all, Ms. Johannson. The question I have is with regard to the granting of degrees. Across the country, we have

seen that, in fact, governments have moved in some jurisdictions to control those institutions who are allowed to grant degrees. It is probably done for a good reason so that we do not have the proliferation of fly-by-night operations that come in and put themselves up as a degree-granting institution and then disappear, leaving those who are attending those institutions without any valid, if you like, diploma or certificate of any kind.

However, I do see a bit of a problem in sort of vesting this in the hands of the government alone through Order-in-Council. If, in fact, there is going to be some control on this, in your mind, where should the control be? You have obviously given this some consideration.

* (09:50)

Ms. Johannson: Well, you have got two issues, right? You have the universities, which you can put in terms of, if someone is going to be a university, you can put it in their hands. Then you have got the whole issue of colleges and technical training, where there have been a lot of instances of abuse, where people have paid expecting to receive skills or whatever, and they do not get the skills that they offered. I do not know if there is an industry body that is already constituted that would be able to deal with that. In the terms of universities, yes, I think it would be very easy to say, okay, the universities can decide; you know, get together and decide who is going to grant degrees.

I mean, your problem, when you get into that, any time you move forward on one thing, you are going to be hit with something else. So an example would be in British Columbia where they have moved to, for example, in Kamloops, you used to have a college that then became a university college, University College of the Cariboo, and is now becoming a full university. You have a certain bias from the people from the larger cities who are not interested in seeing a university of Prince George or a university in Kamloops or a university in Kelowna. That would be your problem in turning it over to the academic community to control. You have a bias

where they might want to say, well, how can Thompson have a university? Because you have an example of where, you know, if you would have people from Queens and U of T and McGill saying, we do not think that the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops should necessarily be granting degrees.

You could turn it over to academia. That is certainly an option, but then you might have another problem on your hands where smaller universities in more remote areas are receiving bias from the larger universities who, quite frankly, tend to have an inflated image of themselves and do not necessarily want to let more people in on the game, as it were.

The more universities, I mean, if I can go to the University of Winnipeg and get a degree that is as good anywhere in the country, as if I go to Queens or if I go to Waterloo or U of T or whatever, it is not in their interest to have multiple universities in Winnipeg. So that is an option, but—

Madam Chairperson: Ms. Johannson, I will just have to get you to conclude, too.

Ms. Johannson: That is an option, but then you are going to be looking at other problems.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much.

The time is now 9:54. We do not have enough time to consider the next presenter unless it is the will of the committee to begin the presentation, although the bells will start ringing in one minute. So what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Rise.

Madam Chairperson: Committee rise. The hour being 9:54, as previously determined by this committee, we will sit again this afternoon from twelve noon until one to continue consideration of these bills. I would like to ask committee members to leave behind their copies of these bills, if possible, so that we may have them for reference when we meet again. Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 9:54 a.m.

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