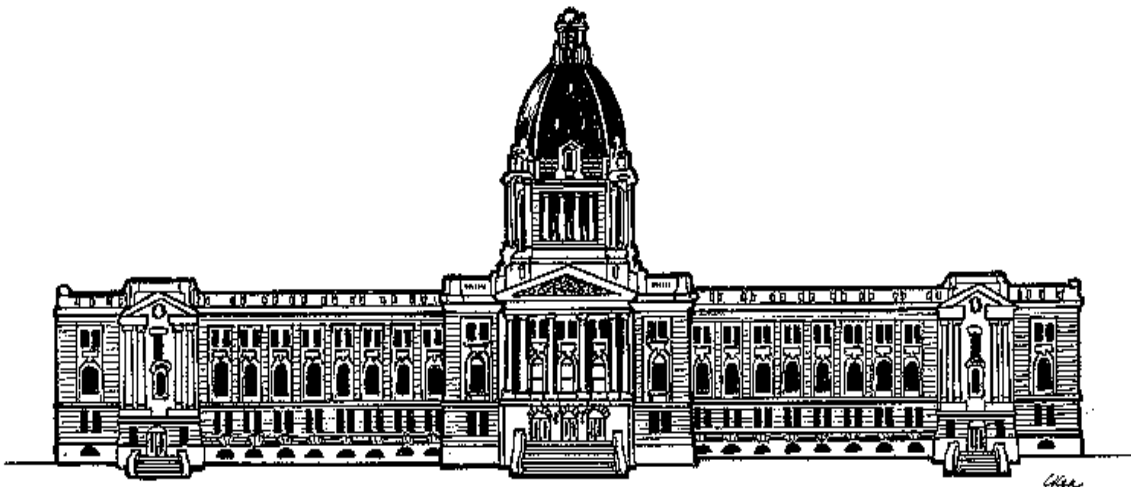




STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BILLS

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Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Nadine Wilson, Chair
Saskatchewan Rivers

Mr. Buckley Belanger, Deputy Chair
Athabasca

Hon. Wayne Elhard
Cypress Hills

Mr. Glen Hart
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Mr. Roger Parent
Saskatoon Meewasin

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Corey Tochor
Saskatoon Eastview

[The committee met at 10:46.]

The Chair: — All right. Welcome. Welcome to the Private Bills Committee. First of all I'd like to introduce the members on the government side. We have Mr. Roger Parent, Mr. Corey Tochor, Mr. Warren Steinley, Mr. Glen Hart, and Mr. Wayne Elhard. And on the opposition side, we have Mr. Buckley Belanger. So good morning to everyone and thank you for coming. And we have Mr. Paul Merriman who is the sponsoring member. And our guests today from St. Thomas More College are Mr. Terrence Downey and Mr. Dan Perrins, who is Chair of the board. Welcome, gentlemen. I hope you had a good trip down here.

**Bill No. 903 — *St. Thomas More College
Amendment Act, 2013***

Clause 1

The Chair: — So first of all, before the committee is Bill No. 903, *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013*. We will now consider clause 1, short title for Bill No. 903. So we do welcome you, Mr. Merriman, who is sponsoring the bill, and would you like to just introduce the gentlemen. On which side is which, please?

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I very much appreciate the committee getting together to move this bill forward. I have on my right Mr. Terrence Downey who is the president of St. Thomas More, and on my left I have Mr. Dan Perrins who is the Chair of the board. And I very much appreciate them travelling down from Saskatoon to be able to attend this meeting today.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Merriman. So first of all we will have the Law Clerk, Mr. Ring, present his report on the bill to the committee and then I'll ask Mr. Merriman to make any comments and we'll have questions that committee members may have. Then we will proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

So the Law Clerk, Mr. Ring, will present his report which will be tabled. Please go ahead.

Mr. Ring: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, committee members and guests. I've examined this private bill, and I'm pleased to report that it is drawn in accordance with the rules of the Legislative Assembly respecting private bills. I'm also pleased to report that, in my opinion, it contains no provisions that are at variance with the usual provisions of private Acts on similar subjects or that are deserving of special attention. Thank you very much. I have been working with the college over the last year and a half bringing this piece of legislation forward. Thank you.

The Chair: — Any comments from the members? Seeing none, Mr. Downey, do you have comments on the bill, please?

Mr. Downey: — Just a brief comment. First of all I want to thank the committee for considering this, for the timely considering of this matter.

What's happening here in principle is that, like a lot of other Catholic institutions in the country, post-secondary institutions, St. Thomas More College was started by a religious order called the Basilian Fathers, headquartered in Toronto. And as is true with all religious orders these days, the number of people who are in the orders is declining very rapidly, and those that remain in the orders are . . . They're going back to Toronto because they have a home there for elderly priests. This is really what's happening with this order.

So this allows us to formally move beyond that, that this ends the historic relationship that the Basilian Fathers have had with St. Thomas More College. And the responsibility has now been turned over to a new sponsor. The Basilian order was the sponsor. There's now a new sponsor called the St. Thomas More College Society, which is composed of the bishop of the Diocese of Saskatoon; the Chair of the board of the college, whoever that happens to be; and the president of the college, whoever that happens to be. And these are now the sponsors, the canonical sponsors. It's under the terms of the canon law of the Catholic church that there has to be a sponsor. So the religious order is moving out, and the sponsorship now turns to those three individuals that I mentioned. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Downey. Does the committee have any questions, any comments? Yes. Mr. Buckley Belanger.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just a couple of questions. Obviously it makes sense from the perspective of operating St. Thomas More College, given the trends and the transition as you've indicated as the primary reasons. But what are some of the assets, if you will, of the college itself? Like do you have a description of that for the committee? I'm just curious as to what the asset base is of the St. Thomas.

Mr. Downey: — The physical assets?

Mr. Belanger: — Right.

Mr. Downey: — We have a board of governors which is responsible for that, and legally the board of governors is responsible for the physical assets. Under the sponsorship of the Basilian Fathers, canonically speaking, the assets were vested in that order. The assets are now vested in the St. Thomas More College Society, but it's under the control of the board of governors. So they remain . . . We can't dispose of these things. It has to remain there for a Catholic education institution. We can't sell it off, so to speak.

Mr. Belanger: — Is there a value of the assets? Like is there a book value on some of the assets? And I'm assuming some of the assets is the actual physical college facility. Is that correct?

Mr. Downey: — Yes.

Mr. Belanger: — Okay.

Mr. Downey: — We're building a new \$8 million complex. That's the fourth wing of the place. You know, there's a number of millions of dollars of assets that are there. And when

this transfer was made from the Basilian order to the St. Thomas More College Society, that transfer of assets actually had to be approved by the Vatican because these are canonical assets as well as legal assets in the sense that we understand them here.

But the board of governor obviously is responsible for that. And I as president obviously is responsible as well for those, but this has to remain as a Catholic post-secondary institution. So they're permanent in that sense, in that sense.

Mr. Belanger: — So I just want to make sure I follow this correctly just for my own purposes. So the bill itself is simply, primarily asking for a transfer from the current board of directors to the society. And some of the provisions on the transfer is that (a) that no assets be disposed, and that the primary focus continue being the education as dictated under the previous board of governors.

Mr. Downey: — That's correct.

Mr. Belanger: — And this is primarily . . . and only the reason we're doing this is because of the — I hate to use the word but — rapid response to some of the issues facing the college as opposed to having people that are leaving back to Toronto and the transition and so on and so forth. This makes it a bit more reactive to the current situation if it's under this new chapter, so to speak.

Mr. Downey: — That's correct. That's correct. The religious order is no longer responsible. It's moving on to a different . . .

Mr. Belanger: — The society.

Mr. Downey: — Yes.

Mr. Belanger: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — No further questions, Mr. Belanger?

Mr. Belanger: — No.

The Chair: — No. Yes, Mr. Wayne Elhard.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just looking through the preamble here, and I noticed that in the whereas section it talks about consent having been received by three-quarters of the members of the corporation to make this change. Does that mean that there was opposition or was that the minimum benchmark you had to achieve?

Mr. Downey: — That's the benchmark. Actually it went through unanimously, I think. Mr. Perrins chairs the meeting so he would know that. It went through unanimously. I know that. Under the terms of our bylaws, it has to be three-quarters of the people present, so we're meeting that benchmark, yes.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Well if the support for this was unanimous, I think far be it from us to challenge the decision.

The Chair: — If there's no other questions, I think we'll continue. We'll begin clause by clause. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.]

[Preamble agreed to.]

The Chair: — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Could I have a member move the following motion:

That the committee report Bill No. 903, *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013* without amendment.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I'd like another member to move:

That the fees respecting Bill No. 903, *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013* be waived.

Mr. Tochor.

Mr. Tochor: — Madam Chair, I make a motion:

That the fees respecting Bill No. 903 be waived.

The Chair: — Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you, gentlemen, and thank you, Mr. Merriman, Mr. Downey, and Mr. Perrins.

There's a draft copy of the fourth report in front of you, and I'd like a member to move the following motion, please:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Mr. Parent.

Mr. Parent: — Madam Chair, I'd like:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

The Chair: — Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Congratulations, gentlemen. That will conclude today's agenda. So thank you, everyone, for attending. And I'd like to have a member move an adjournment motion.

Mr. Steinley: — So moved.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Steinley. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — The meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 10:59.]