



ISSN 1180-4319

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 38th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 16 June 2004

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 16 juin 2004

**Standing committee on
regulations and private bills**

**Comité permanent des
règlements et des projets
de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair: Tony C. Wong
Clerk: Trevor Day

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON REGULATIONS
AND PRIVATE BILLS**

Wednesday 16 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
RÈGLEMENTS ET DES PROJETS DE LOI
D'INTÉRÊT PRIVÉ**

Mercredi 16 juin 2004

The committee met at 1005 in committee room 1.

CONRAD GREBEL
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACT, 2004

Consideration of Bill Pr5, An Act respecting Conrad Grebel University College.

The Chair (Mr Tony Wong): This is the standing committee on regulations and private bills, and I call the meeting to order. The first order of business is Bill Pr5, An Act respecting Conrad Grebel University College. Mr Ted Arnott is the sponsor. I would now like to invite Mr Arnott and the applicant to come forward.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Good morning, committee members. We are very pleased to be here this morning to bring forward our private bill. This has been introduced on behalf of Conrad Grebel University College, which is affiliated with the University of Waterloo. With me today to speak about the bill are Mr Russel Snyder-Penner, who is the secretary of Conrad Grebel University College, and Kenneth Friesen, who is acting as legal counsel in support of this bill.

At this time, I'd like to turn it over to the applicant. They've got a short presentation to make about the bill.

Mr Russel Snyder-Penner: Thank you, Mr Arnott. I'm on the board of directors of Conrad Grebel University College and am the secretary.

The purpose of this bill has to do with a desire on the part of the board to improve our ability to exploit the accrued institutional experience that board members build up as they serve on the board. Under the current legislation, existing board members can be appointed to the board for a maximum of two three-year terms.

What we've been finding is that it can take one or two terms for a board member to build up the kind of experience they need in order to continue to make strong contributions to the board work, especially in responsible positions such as chairperson of the board. For that reason, it was considered to be a good idea to obtain an amendment to the legislation so that we can continue to have board members serving for up to three three-year terms. Plus, there's a provision in the new legislation which permits the board, by bylaw, to make further internal changes as far as practice is concerned relating to the length of term. We're hoping that what this will permit us to do is take advantage in the future of the

experience board members have gained during service on the board when we're looking for candidates to fill the position, particularly of chair of the board.

By way of a bit of background as far as what Conrad Grebel University College is, it describes itself as a college of the Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada, which is essentially a conference of Mennonite churches in Ontario and Quebec. The college is affiliated with and is on the campus of the University of Waterloo. Its academic programs have strong emphases in areas of peace and conflict studies of Mennonite history and Mennonite theology and also has a very strong music program.

That's all I have to say by way of introducing this change, but of course I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you. Any questions or comments from the parliamentary assistant?

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): At this time, I would just like to say that the practice of three consecutive three-year terms is fairly common among boards. Having been on a board myself, I quite understand the learning curve that takes place. By the time someone comes to the point where they're ready to be the chair, one term of three years is not quite adequate.

In terms of the government's position on this, we are in favour and will be voting in favour of this.

1010

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Conrad Grebel University College is known to us because of the Mennonite Conference. I'm looking especially here at the support of Mr Ted Arnott, who is sitting right next to you. Since he's the local MPP and has studied this very thoroughly, I've got no hesitation in supporting this bill.

The Chair: Any further questions or comments? Are members ready to vote?

Shall section 1 carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

We can actually deal with more than one section at a time. So shall sections 2 through 5 carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Shall the preamble carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Shall the title carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That's carried.

Shall the bill carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That's also carried. Congratulations.

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE ACT, 2004

Consideration of Bill Pr6, An Act respecting Redeemer University College.

The Chair: The next bill is Bill Pr6, An Act respecting Redeemer University College. Mr Ted McMeekin, MPP, is the sponsor. Will the sponsor and the applicant please come forward.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'm pleased to be here with my good friends from Redeemer University College to simply clean up a couple of things that we need to attend to, given some other legislative changes. I'd like to introduce Dr Justin Cooper, president of Redeemer University College, a great institution in my riding. He'll introduce his assistants, and hopefully we can go from there.

Dr Justin Cooper: Thank you very much. Let me also introduce, to my left, Bert Bakker, our legal counsel, and Ineke VanBruinessen, our senior director of administration and finance. I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to be here today to make some introductory remarks on behalf of Redeemer University College and Bill Pr6.

Let me say that Redeemer is an undergraduate Christian liberal arts and science university. We offer degree programs in 32 areas, leading to bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees, and we now have over 800 students taught by over 50 full-time equivalent faculty, of whom 41 are full-time. It may be of interest to know that we are currently adding a \$6.2-million library-classroom expansion and planning an additional student residence to accommodate anticipated growth to 1,000 students.

Relevant to today, last June, on the recommendation of this committee, the Legislature granted Redeemer the power to offer a bachelor of education degree. In December 2003—this past December—this BEd degree program was granted initial accreditation by the Ontario College of Teachers. The program is ready to be launched in September.

We're before you today to satisfy a condition of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, namely, that student protection measures required by ministry regulations for our new BEd degree program will be embedded in our provincial charter. These requirements serve to ensure student access to transcripts and to provide guarantees for student tuition so that students receive the educational programs for which they pay. We've worked with ministry officials and we have all the requirements in place, so that everything is in order to launch this new program in September. Approval of this charter amendment would be the final step in this process.

We appreciate very much the cooperation we've received from officials of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, in particular Jackie Creber and also Fiona Deller, who are here this morning. We appreciate the support of the minister, the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, and also our sponsor, Ted McMeekin. We look forward to serving students in this new program.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr Cooper. Any comments or questions from the parliamentary assistant?

Mrs Van Bommel: Again, thank you very much for your presentation. I just need to enter into the record a statement by the minister, the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, in which she states, "I am prepared to support the bill on the condition that the college has submitted proof to me that the relevant student protection measures are in place to my satisfaction by July 31, 2004."

I'm sure that you will do that, so from the government's perspective we will support this.

Dr Cooper: Thank you very much. As of today, we have all of the requirements in place. We simply need the final audit by Ernst and Young and we will have that in the minister's hands next week.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): That just piqued my interest. What do you mean by "student protection"? Explain that a bit.

Dr Cooper: I can certainly speak to that. There are three aspects which come out of ministry regulations. One is that students must have access to their transcripts even if Redeemer would cease to exist. So we have an agreement with McMaster University that they would back up the transcripts. Secondly, another provision is a trust fund, if you accumulate tuition, so that these are available to students if we cease to exist. The third is a letter of credit. For up to two years, if they can't complete the program at Redeemer, they could draw their tuition back, take it somewhere else, and they are guaranteed the ability to complete the program. It's really to make sure that our students receive the education they deserve and the record of it.

Mr Bisson: I've sat on this committee before and it seems to me I remember Redeemer College coming before us for a similar piece of legislation. What happened?

Dr Cooper: What happened was the legislation passed and we were able to launch the program, but we were not, for a variety of reasons—I think the regulations were not yet firmed up as to exactly how student protection measures would be met. So between the time the degree was approved and we planned the program and had it accredited, the regulations, since January, have come into effect. So we're simply back to put the last period behind this whole process which began a year ago.

Mr Bisson: So not to redo what we did the last time, because that's been done.

Dr Cooper: Yes, to supplement.

Mr Ruprecht: Just a couple of questions, Dr Cooper. First of all, thanks for the presentation. How long has the new Redeemer University College been in existence?

Dr Cooper: We opened in 1982, so this is our 22nd year.

Mr Ruprecht: Are you affiliated with any conference? You are a Christian university, right?

Dr Cooper: We are a free-standing university and we don't have a formal relationship with any church or denomination. There are many people from the Reform Christian tradition that support Redeemer and helped to launch it. Today we serve a broad range of students from probably over 40 different denominational backgrounds. Many of them come from Ontario, but they come from across Canada, from 12 US states and from eight other countries.

Mr Ruprecht: So in case there's a Reformed Baptist in my riding and he'd like to join Redeemer University College, there should be no problem at all? In fact, you would invite him with open arms, right?

Mr McMeekin: We'd throw a barbecue for him.

Dr Cooper: That's right, open arms. We have a great number of folks like that at Redeemer and we're enriched to have them.

Mr Ruprecht: What really convinces me, though, I must tell you, is Mr Ted McMeekin, who is sitting right next to you. That's his riding. He knows you well.

Mr McMeekin: It's a wonderful institution, very diverse. The students are graduating and making a real difference in our community and around the world, and I'm really pleased with the leadership Dr Cooper and his board and folks have been providing.

Mr Ruprecht: Thank you very much for this very convincing statement.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I just want to make a simple point to you and the people who were here before. Our official member is not here this morning and we didn't put in a substitution slip, so if you don't see our hands go up, we'll be nodding. We're in support. I just don't think that we can officially vote this morning. I just wanted to explain what's happening here.

The Chair: Any further questions or comments from committee members? I guess we're ready to vote. Shall we collapse the three sections?

Shall sections 1 through 3 carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Shall the preamble carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That's also carried.

Shall the title carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Shall the bill carry? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? All in favour? Opposed, if any? That's carried.

Thank you all for the application.

Mr McMeekin: I know there's some precedent for waiving the printing costs associated with this, if that were something the committee wanted to do.

Mr Ruprecht: I'll move that.

The Chair: So you move that, Mr Ruprecht—

Mr Ruprecht: Yes.

The Chair: —that the application fees and printing costs be waived. All in favour? Opposed, if any? That is carried.

Meeting adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1021.

CONTENTS

Wednesday 16 June 2004

Conrad Grebel University College Act, 2004 , Bill Pr5, <i>Mr Arnott</i>	T-35
Mr Ted Arnott, MPP	
Mr Russel Snyder-Penner	
Redeemer University College Act, 2004 , Bill Pr6, <i>Mr McMeekin</i>	T-36
Ms Ted McMeekin, MPP	
Dr Justin Cooper	

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