

Third Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 16, 2005

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Bev Lacasse from Transcona Scout Group and KateLynn McManus, the youth representative for Scouts Canada. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Would you canvass the House to see if there is leave for a committee to sit concurrently with the House this afternoon? That will be the Rules Committee.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for a committee to sit concurrently with the House this afternoon? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you also ask if there is leave for there to be no quorum counts while that committee and LAMC meet this afternoon?

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for no quorum counts while LAMC and the Rules Committee meet this afternoon? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Rules of the House will meet at 1:35 this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Rules of the House Committee will meet at 1:35 in Room 255.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, today is third readings day. If you would call concurrence and third readings in the following order: 8, 22, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39—

Mr. Speaker: Slow down, 37. You lost me at 37.

Mr. Mackintosh: —37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 5, 33, 48, 51, 16 and 50.

Mr. Speaker: Concurrence and third reading, Bill 8, The Manitoba Council on Aging Act—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, yes. I do not know whether to raise this as a point of order or perhaps some additional House business, but I was wondering whether there would be leave of the House to allow members who have petitions today to simply table them rather than to have them read in the House.

That would, I think, Mr. Speaker, allow us to spend more time on the other business of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the members that have petitions to just table them for today? *[Agreed]*

An Honourable Member: And consider it read.

Mr. Speaker: And it will be considered read. Okay. That has been agreed to.

We will table the petitions when we get to Routine Proceedings.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 8—The Manitoba Council on Aging Act

Mr. Speaker: Right now we are dealing with Bill 8, The Manitoba Council on Aging Act, concurrence and third reading.

* (13:35)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 8, The Manitoba Council on Aging Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few short words on the record in regard to this bill. We are in favour of this bill. It was brought to committee. There were presentations made at the committee in regard to some of the concerns that were brought forth. In essence what it is, it is a bill that is putting into legislation the Council on Aging that has been in place for many years through, not only the present government's term, but when we were in office also.

It is a very fundamental and a very necessary part of getting feedback and involvement from the seniors organizations here in Manitoba. The representation on the board has always been from various parts, not only here in Winnipeg but throughout Manitoba, which is very commendable. I think the minister has indicated it and made that commitment that it will continue to be that way so that it gives the perspective of getting the views, the expressions, from various seniors organizations here in Manitoba.

I think it has been pointed out a few times, Mr. Speaker, that here in Manitoba we have a very vibrant and very active seniors groups throughout all of Manitoba. I have had the opportunity to visit quite a few of them when I had the opportunity to be the Minister responsible for Seniors, so I was always impressed with the amount of involvement, their commitment and their sense of community that is still part of the volunteer sector that Manitoba is so very, very proud of and that we celebrate from time to time with a lot of awards and achievements and recognitions throughout the year.

So the Council on Aging, in drawing upon the expertise and the experience of many of the older seniors in our community and the groups that they support, is something that I think that the government is very, very aware of in looking at legislation, in looking at procedures, in looking

at amendments that come through with various bills and the introduction of other bills and how they affect seniors is very, very important. Having that conduit through a Cabinet position and a Cabinet minister is very important. That way they can bring that perspective to the Cabinet when they are doing their final analysis and evaluations of directions.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

It has been pointed out here in Manitoba that the amount of seniors in Manitoba is a growing sector. In fact, I believe indications are that within the next short little while Manitoba will have one of the highest proportions of seniors of any other province in Canada, so it is something that Manitoba is well aware of. It is something that we in our party have been very, very aware of in our pursuit of being in contact with seniors organizations, meetings, in phone calls and in personal visitations with a lot of seniors associations and groups so that there is a feedback as to which type of direction we feel that the government should be going.

I believe that a lot of times the government has listened to a very active portion of our population in trying to get meaningful changes through legislation and directions that they feel they should be going. There is always room for improvement. We have always indicated that there should be more awareness for seniors groups and some of the hardships that they endure, and I think that with the Council on Aging and the representations that they bring forth to the minister is something that they should heed.

So, with those short words, Mr. Acting Speaker, I recommend this bill go on for passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Other speakers to Bill 8? Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is shall Bill 8 pass.

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): It is agreed. Thank you. Bill 8 is passed.

* (13:40)

Bill 22—The Water Protection Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for consideration is Bill 22, The Water Protection Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 22, The Water Protection Act; Loi sur la protection des eaux, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 22, The Water Protection Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Any speakers to Bill 22?

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I want to start off by saying congratulations to and thank you to the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) for the co-operation that he has demonstrated in bringing this Bill 22, a very difficult bill, I believe on his perspective, to a point where there was actually agreement between the minister and the opposition members to ensure that what we would finally come out with at the end was a better bill to put before the people of Manitoba to deal with an issue that is important to all of us, and that is clean water.

All of us are dependent on clear, clean and safe water. We all know that. I think all citizens of Manitoba accept that responsibility to ensure that will happen. I think some of the amendments put forward today and previously during the debate on this bill will clearly indicate that some of the processes that have been established now to achieve those goals will be better achievable with the bill the way it is drafted today.

I want to, however, say also to the minister and the government that not only do individual members of society have the responsibility, it is my view that governments have a significant responsibility that, if and when we start talking about them, the cleaning up of water bodies such as Lake Winnipeg, or our

ivers, our lakes and our streams, if we are serious about cleaning them up, then government must take the responsibility serious and ensure that programs and incentives are put in place that will achieve those goals.

I found, and I have said this once before in this House, I found it very interesting that during the process that we had initiated, the Legislators' Forum with our American friends from south of the border and Manitoba, legislators from all those three jurisdictions south in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, that we came to one conclusion, and that was the interjurisdictional responsibility of ensuring those waters. However, Minnesota also made a presentation at that forum, and they clearly indicated the difference between us and them. They used the incentive program, and we used a stick in our legislation.

I want to specifically give significance to one of the clauses in this bill that the minister has brought forward that indicates exactly that. That is in clause 7(2) of this bill, it says, "If a serious water shortage is declared, the minister may take any action, make any regulation or issue any order," and I think that is the key word, "any' order that in his or her opinion is necessary."

*(13:45)

I think therein lies some of the problems with the mentality that we as legislators bring, and I include myself, sometimes to this place. This is a place that can be used as a very authoritative place. However, this can also be a place where we put our arms around the members of our society, work co-operatively in conjunction with them to achieve the final goal. That is in large part done by adequate consultation, by proper negotiations and discussions on a broad, broad basis.

I believe that this government has demonstrated time and time again that their real objective is not to embrace but in fact to lord over, as this clause in this bill says. I think that is unfortunate because I believe that the process that the previous Conservative administration had was, in my view, far more effective when we set out the initial initiative on land and water strategy. The negotiated or the consultative process that was established then by doing numerous discussions and meetings across the province to achieve a policy paper, first of all, then, later on,

programs and directives and suggestions that were made to achieve a final goal were far, far more supported and I believe acceptable to the general public.

I want to say to the minister that we do have a task in front of us. Many of our urban communities have a very difficult process that lies ahead. We now allow them to dump their waste into lagoons. Mr. Speaker, 90 percent of them or maybe even all of them are earthen lagoons that we have really not spent a great deal of time monitoring, and those that need monitoring maybe we should spend a bit more time at.

I want to also suggest to the minister that those urban communities that do not have the capacity to even store in earthen lagoons must find different ways and have found different ways to get rid of their sewage, and then very often we see that float directly into rivers and streams and be disposed of that way. I think it is high time that, if we as government members, and the minister and his government are serious of achieving the final end to cleaning up Lake Winnipeg, the minister must engage discussions with those urban communities to find ways to put in place programs that can be supported from a broad-based social perspective.

I believe that we must sit down with our federal government and impress upon them that they also have a responsibility to contribute substantially to those ends and to ensure that none of our raw sewage will enter any lakes, rivers or streams. In order to achieve that, I challenge this government to work closely with their urban counterparts to ensure that programs can be developed and that support mechanisms can be put in place to finally get us to a point where we as human beings will keep our effluent out of the system.

I want to say a little bit about the livestock industry because this has been a significant impediment to some areas of the province. I have been accused from time to time as being very supportive of the hog industry. I have always said this to whatever public forum I have spoken at. I recognize one thing. We are the farthest away from any port, deep water port, to get us into an export position of any province in Canada. We have only one alternative when you cannot afford to ship the grain, the feed grains into exportable positions. The only option we have then is to try and feed it at home, utilize it at home.

* (13:50)

I think there is a tremendous opportunity here. That opportunity is here because we can, if we try hard enough, develop mechanisms that we have already largely put in place, but further develop them to encourage livestock production in this province in an economically friendly and environmentally safe manner. It will take ourselves and other legislators to develop those kinds of programs in co-operation with those members of society.

I believe that today there is not one livestock operation that has an earthen lagoon that would ever be allowed to dump any of its material into a stream or river. We would be appalled if that ever happened, yet we do not hesitate to allow that to happen to our own effluent, our human excrement. I think it is time we took a look at both and maybe utilize the process, one from another, to find a better way of doing things.

I think this legislation is a step in the right direction. I think we should ask the minister today, before he gives Royal Assent to this legislation, to table in this House the regulations that are required to go with this in order to make this functional. So I ask the minister today, give serious consideration and take those regulations out for public consultation, that you co-opt those who are going to have to enact these, co-opt those communities, those individuals and all of society to bring this into an operable piece of legislation that will serve us well in the long term.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few words on the record with regard to Bill 22. First of all, this is an important bill. Looking after our water and maintaining the quality of water in Manitoba is an extraordinarily important area. We in the Liberal caucus will support this bill, but I want to make several points.

First of all, some of the measures here, I believe, will be quite important in improving the water quality. I have been calling personally for water quality standards for quite some time and we are finally going to have them in place. It is past time and it is good that this is happening. One of the amendments that I put forward, which was to include a farmer on the water council, has been accepted in the final version of this bill. We are going to make sure that that happens. I am pleased that the minister,

after a lot of back and forth, did actually listen to some of the things that were said from this side of the House, so I would like to compliment that. But I would say, on the other hand, that the process by which this got here was one of the most cumbersome that we have seen in recent times with an extraordinary number of report stage amendments.

However, that being said, I think there were a few missed opportunities. I put forward another amendment to have no net loss of wetlands as a goal and clearly the government and the minister have rejected the goal of no net loss of wetlands. In not accepting the amendment, we are going to have, I suspect, continued loss of wetlands as we have had in the last number of years under this administration and the previous administrations. Here was an opportunity to at least send a clear signal in terms of no net loss of wetlands province-wide, and this government has decided that it was not ready to send this important signal.

* (13:55)

I am concerned about certain elements of the approach that is taken here, which, I believe, will likely turn out to be overly bureaucratic in the way that they are put together. I think that the elements of the bill which set up the extent of bureaucracies which we are likely to have and the number of committee meetings and all these sorts of things as a result of this may well delay important actions instead of actually getting on with the job quickly. I think that there could have been better ways that a number of these elements were actually handled.

Clearly, in today's world, there are limits to growth in many areas, and this is certainly one of them, when we are talking about the hog industry, our environmental limits, limits to growth of municipalities and cities, and it is very important that we are paying a lot of attention to and making sure we are absolutely on top of the environment. I think that when it comes to hog operations there is clearly an ongoing debate in this area. I personally think that we need a lot more data right now before we can actually assign what level the problems with the water are due to hog operations compared with other areas.

Certainly, areas like municipal effluent have to be cleaned up, as the member from Emerson has said. The sources of phosphorus, as an example, are

multiple and studies over the last several years in the Deerwood project on South Tobacco Creek, they are not quite as simple as we have sometimes described. But, that being said, the goal here clearly has to be to reduce the phosphorus concentrations going into Lake Winnipeg, which means reducing the amount of phosphorus getting into the waterways, and what we have to do irrespective of the sources. We have to be in a better position from understanding where the sources are coming from. It may be that there are not hog lagoons which have emptied into watersheds or into waterways, but on the other hand there certainly have been allegations and, particularly when there has been wet weather or floods, there have been concerns that there may have been some hog lagoons which have overflowed.

But the point here is not to cast blame on what has happened, but to make sure that, from here forward, we are really on top of making sure that we have very high quality water in our rivers and streams and in Lake Winnipeg. In that sense, setting the targets and making sure that there are adequate measurement and monitoring of those standards is clearly very, very important and something that we support strongly.

Mr. Speaker, we support this legislation. We will wait to see how it works. We think that there are some problem areas, but we do think that there is a significant step forward here and so that is why we support it.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Deputy Chair, I just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 22 as deputy critic for water in the province. The critic, the member from Emerson and the minister, have done yeoman's work, I believe, in bringing this act a little more clearly, as a number of amendments that have been brought forward over the time is probably historic in regard to those issues but, hopefully, this bill will do what the minister and the government have brought it forward to do, and that is provide clean water and opportunities for Manitobans as well as industries in this province.

I just want to say that bringing watershed management zones together and bringing people together, if that is exactly what happens in watershed planning, to help bring people together, I hope that is what this bill accomplishes is bringing people together to work together in regional areas to provide a more responsible use of water and a more

responsible control of water, if that is the proper terminology. But I want to say that the timing of the regulations around a bill like this is most important, because I think the regulations that come about because of a bill like this are what the minister heard loud and clear from many farm organizations and individual organizations, not necessarily all farm organizations, when the committee hearings were held on this bill way back in September last fall.

* (14:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the minister needs to take heed in regard to the regulations coming forward. I know there are a number of persons involved in developments across the province of Manitoba, and I know later today we will be dealing with The Planning Act, Bill 33. There are a number of persons wanting to develop projects in Manitoba. I think we need to make sure that we give them a better direction if they knew what kind of signals were going to be there from the regulations that the government has in mind, the minister has in mind, in regard to the use of water and the other areas of management around water in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this bill can be used to enhance urban-rural relationships. There is no doubt about that. I have worked all my life in regard to trying to make a more public accountability process so that urban and rural citizens understand the issues that each other has over the last couple of decades that I have been involved as an elected politician here in the Legislature as well as a farm leader in other areas of Manitoba issues on the Prairies.

I think that, at a time when we have got record numbers of boil water orders in many of our rural communities in Manitoba, a bill like this has to be used at an opportunity to fix some of those concerns. One of the concerns that I have is with a \$7-billion to \$8-billion shortfall in infrastructure in the province right now, about half of that only being in the areas of roads and highways, that the other sector of it falls a great deal into the area that this minister is responsible for, and that is in regard to how he can effectively bring forward a plan to work with developing a good deal of the infrastructure that is required to do away with those well water orders.

I know that the minister has been dealing with many municipalities in regard to waterfication

programs in the province, and I encourage him to continue to do that. In fact, I will speak to him privately about one that I will say publicly now, in Wallace Municipality, that has been going forward. I encourage him to be able to use with the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program to move forward on that, but it is just one of those in the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I would encourage, I guess, the minister to bring forward those regulations so that we can more clearly see and be able to respond in making sure that water is protected and that the young people that were in the gallery here earlier today, the young students that are the future of Manitoba, will not have to worry about these kinds of concerns in regard to the use of water because we have a real opportunity in developing this province to do it right the first time, as I have said many times in this Legislature. With those few remarks, I would like to just put those on the record and close my comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Are there any other speakers to Bill 22? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Water Protection Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 29—The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Next bill is Bill 29, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Acting Speaker, I know that these trains are moving on time today, the express train version.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 29, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to put a few words in regard to Bill 29, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act, that has been brought forward by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith) in regard to the process of elections across the province of Manitoba. Of course, this bill is modernizing the terminology of the act that was there before, and as I have stated before, this bill has been dealt with in 2000-2001 in the local Elections Amendment Act that came forward at that time around the ratepayers and the ability to vote and a number of those areas.

This particular bill, I think, has a couple of areas that were noted by people in the committees that came forward and that is in the balloting. Apart from having ballots, candidates listed in rotating order and random order, they were concerned that we were eliminating the ability of the senior election officer, in this particular case, who was appointed by the jurisdiction where the vote will take place, to no longer be listed alphabetically. That is a concern that people in Manitoba have that would have been another good amendment to have had in the bill, and I think that that one not being there is a concern. It simplifies the situation with regard to senior executive officers being appointed by the authority that is going to hold the election, whether it is school board or municipal council. Of course, those duties are just to supervise and give direction to the election process and ensure fairness of the election officials. The senior executive officer has the ability, once appointed and hired, to go ahead and appoint the rest of the staff that they feel necessary in regard to clarifying the vote. That person, as well, is supposed to maintain a voters list between elections and be responsible for that area.

There are some areas, death of candidates, clarifying the fact that they do not have to redo the ballots of someone if someone is taken and is not able to be on the ballot. The name does not have to be taken off. It can be posted in the voting locations that that individual is no longer eligible for the ballot, and the ballot is allowed to uphold and the election go forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I would speak to this bill and urge that we go forward. I will leave my comments at that and listen to others if there are any other comments on this particular bill at this time.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, after reviewing this legislation and seeing it through committee, we are ready to support this legislation. There were some concerns raised by my colleague from Inkster with regard to the possibility that the bill might provide unnecessary difficulties for people who were school trustees and running provincially, but my understanding is that that has been clarified and that it should not propose problems in the way that it was initially a concern. I am pleased to see that, and with those comments we are ready to see this move forward and be passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any other speakers to Bill 29? Seeing no speakers, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 29, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Bill 31—The Condominium Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 31, The Condominium Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (14:10)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any speakers to Bill 31?

Seeing no speakers, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 31, The Condominium Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Bill 34—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for consideration is Bill 34, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 34, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Agreed? Any speakers to Bill 34?

Seeing no speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House in concurrence and third reading of Bill 34, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Bill 35—The Capital Region Partnership Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for consideration is Bill 35, The Capital Region Partnership Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that The Capital Region Partnership Act, as amended and reported from the

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any speakers?

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 35, The Capital Region Partnership Act. I would just like to say as well that, while this bill is a piece of legislation that is coming forward that puts it under regulation, the 13 municipalities, the town of Stonewall, Selkirk and the City of Winnipeg are all being put into one particular, into this bill, in an effort to, I guess, more clearly define in the government's view how these jurisdictions will interact with one another. I have to say that there has been a whole host of studies done on the Capital Region program before, and this government has started all over again with some of that process instead of implementing what has been done. They have tried to reinvent the wheel with it.

One of the positives that has come out of the interactions between these groups in the past is that they have voluntarily been working together over the last six to eight years in an effort to come to a consensus on sharing municipal infrastructure that they have, on sharing more of those areas. My colleague from Emerson says even as far as 15 years, and he is very right on that.

I have certainly had the opportunity since I was elected in '99 to be at some of the presentations that have been held by these municipal jurisdictions. I have not been at one where they have not asked for a clearer definition on behalf of the province as to how they are going to play a role in this as well. The reason I say that is because the circumstances around the city of Winnipeg with being some 60 percent of Manitoba's population in itself, never mind the 13 municipalities, the city of Selkirk and Stonewall takes in a huge part of the population of Manitoba. Therefore, it is very important that these regions be able to co-operate and work together. They have been able to do that voluntarily in the last number of years, as I said, maybe a decade and a half, since there was more infrastructure sharing and work in those areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that as this bill has come forward to basically provide power for these people to have some jurisdictional responsibility and perhaps, if you will, make it a more formal process. The part that is lacking in this bill is the fact that the municipal jurisdictions are not getting any clear direction from the minister in regard to how the Government of Manitoba is going to be involved with them.

Mr. Speaker, the bill talks about how all of these jurisdictions must do things with the Province and how the minister, or rather, pardon me, how the jurisdictions may do things with the Province, but the Province does not have an onus, I guess, if you will, to go the other way and work more closely with them. The thing that is lacking on behalf of the jurisdictions that are involved in this bill is that the Province has not given any clear direction as to how they will co-operate with the jurisdiction when issues of infrastructure, particularly in the sharing of costs and other areas, come forward. So all of the information can go, if you will, toward the Province, but the minister still does not have to act, if he feels so inclined, in regard to a number of those areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, we brought forward a number of amendments on this bill right in the committee meeting. The government did not pass any of them. I felt that they were not listening to the municipalities that brought forward the concerns that day. Of course, Mr. Forfar, the chairman of the municipal jurisdiction area, Capital Region group, made a good presentation in regard to some of these jurisdictions. We brought forward many of the amendments that he had talked about at that time, and I am somewhat surprised and shocked that the minister did not take more heed in regard to what was being said at that time.

Given the fact that a bill like this is coming forward to deal with issues like land-use planning, like infrastructure development, like environmental protection, like water quality and supply, and we just passed Bill 22, Mr. Speaker, dealing with water quality, those are important issues, this is most important because of the decision that the minister made to not take the Waverley West development to a municipal board, which is a land use infrastructure development project to be slated for southwest Manitoba. You know, in many cases, I have to be fair, you would not normally take those, perhaps, to a municipal board. But, when you are the largest

proponent and have the most to gain from the sale of the land that you own, you would take that forward to a municipal board hearing just to provide clear optics that there was no conflict of interest in this kind of a project. It could have been dealt with very quickly at that level, I am sure, and moved forward because, as I understand it, there are still concerns, even though that hearing was not held around this particular bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I would urge, because of course this is looking at co-operation amongst these areas, that we move this bill forward and deal with it. Hopefully, the councils and the Province of Manitoba will be able to work very closely together with this bill. That would certainly, hopefully, be the intent and the outcome of it. Once the bill is passed by this government, we look very much forward to the actions of the minister and his government in regard to how they do co-operate with this Capital Region area. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): I might just take a moment, for members' information here, we have with us this afternoon in my loge to my right the former Minister of Labour, Ms. Rebecca Barrett, and we would like to welcome the former minister here.

* * *

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, having a better working partnership in the Capital Region is certainly a desirable and very important objective. We have seen all too often in the past that the relationship has been adversarial or one-sided. Clearly, the goal of a Capital Region partnership is where the problems are in the details of how this is handled.

*(14:20)

I would like to salute Don Forfar, who is the chair of the Mayors and Reeves of the Capital Region, for his presentation at the committee stage, his thoughtful insights into some of the changes that should be made. I think it is too bad that the government did not listen more carefully to the wise words of Mr. Forfar, who has had a lot of experience back and forth in working in the Capital Region area. I suspect that, had his words been listened to a little bit more carefully and more of what he said had been

incorporated into this legislation, it is likely that it would have worked better.

I would like to pay tribute to the other reeves and their councils in the Capital Region. I know they have been working very hard on behalf of their respective people, and I think that what we would hope could emerge from this effort is a situation where people, in whatever municipality in the Capital Region, feel that they are being fairly treated. It is, certainly, all too often in the past, people in the area of Springfield, for example, have felt that they have not been fairly treated by the way things have been approached. The objective here must be to have a better balance and a fairer approach. Certainly, the provincial government has not adequately addressed many of the issues and concerns in the past. We can only hope that this will provide a venue to start to do that in a better way.

I think that it is too bad that Reeve Forfar was not listened to a little bit better, and I think that there are some areas here which are, in fact, somewhat problematic, and that is, for example, that for this Capital Region Partnership to be effective there must be a significant role and some leadership from the provincial government. The provincial government, through the use of incentives, providing opportunities and working together with all the people in the region, can play a very important role in making sure that people are treated fairly. There is not, in this legislation, a commitment, I would suggest, that is adequate to make sure that people are treated fairly by the provincial government. There is an assumption by this government that they seem to know what is best for people instead of having a more grass-roots responsiveness and understanding of how you can promote the people to work together in productive ways that will contribute to the benefit of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to support this legislation, but we certainly have some reservations as to whether it will function as well as it might, given that the changes were not incorporated. We have some reservations that, unless there is a little bit better and more leadership from the provincial government than we have seen to date from this government, the results will not be as positive as we would hope.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I just want to put a few comments on the record regarding The

Capital Region Partnership Act. I just want to say that I believe it was back in 1990 when the Honourable Mr. Jim Ernst was the Minister of Urban Affairs and I had the privilege of serving as Minister of Rural Development, which was Municipal Affairs at that time rolled into it, of having, I believe, one of the first co-ordinated efforts to bring the City of Winnipeg administration together with the surrounding municipalities.

It was really an encouraging event that we had. We spent a day on discussing various issues that affected the urban community, the City of Winnipeg, and the rural municipalities surrounding the city of Winnipeg. We even discussed the establishment of a green belt around the city of Winnipeg. I think many of us that have been here a while recognize the importance of those kinds of discussions. That is how the Capital Region Partnership was really established. I think there is a great opportunity to recognize and compliment those leaders that were there. One of them was Bill Norrie, the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, and he was always a great supporter of meeting with the rural counterparts and having those kinds of discussions and debates.

One thing I want to say is that until now this has always been a sort of a voluntary kind of attempt and not a legislated, mandated kind of process, but something that the City of Winnipeg administration and the rural administrations thought was necessary to get them to come to a realization of each other's difficulties, supports and infrastructure kind of mechanisms that were required to achieve what all of them really wanted to do, and that was to better their communities. So I want to say that this is a departure from where the previous government was. This is more of a formalization that we have seen from before, and I think sometimes voluntary efforts have a lot to do with the betterment of communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any other speakers on Bill 35?

Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Capital Region Partnership Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 36—The Courts Administration Improvement Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for consideration before the House is Bill 36, The Courts Administration Improvement Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 36, The Courts Administration Improvement Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any speakers to the bill?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put just a very few words on the record regarding this particular legislation. We have had the opportunity in second reading and in committee to put comments on the record regarding it. Certainly, I think it is important just to leave on the record concerns about the operation in the courts in terms of how this government has put resources or the lack of resources that are in the court system and the resulting facts that we have, accused criminals who are released on bail, who are released on recognizance, who go forward and commit other crimes in our communities.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Those are the concerns, I think, that I echo on behalf of all Manitobans. I would implore the government when it looks at changes to the court system that it also ensures the resources to ensure that those people who need to be brought to justice have justice put upon them. With those few words, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to debating of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before us is concurrence and third reading of Bill 36, The Courts Administration Improvement Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 37—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 37, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (14:30)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It is my pleasure just to put a few words in regard to Bill 37, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act. This bill simply allows all of the other municipalities to vary the percentage of assessed value for prescribed classes of assessable property for the purposes of determining portion value, the same as the City of Winnipeg can do with the bill that the government passed last December, Mr. Speaker. So thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 37, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, the hour being 2:30, we will now move on to Routine Proceedings.

Now would honourable members wish to table their petitions? Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if we could have agreement in the House to recess for a few minutes. The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) is on his way back from a funeral, and if we could allow for five minutes or so to allow him to get back from the funeral.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for—the honourable Deputy Government House Leader?

Mr. Ashton: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if we could continue to deal with the bills by agreement, by leave, and then at a time that is appropriate then we can go—well, speak of the devil.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the co-operation of the House, and thank members for that, but I guess now that the Opposition Leader is here we can withdraw that request.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The request has been withdrawn.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Now we will move on to Routine Proceedings, and this is an opportunity for members to table their petitions, as previously agreed.

PETITIONS

Ambulance Service

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I table my petition as read.

I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In May 2004, 46-year-old Peter Krahn suffered a heart attack while exercising in East St. Paul

and was pronounced dead just under an hour later after being transported to the Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg. Reports show that it took nearly 18 minutes for an ambulance to arrive for Mr. Krahn.

The Interlake Regional Health Authority claims that 21 minutes is an acceptable emergency response time, whereas the City of Winnipeg uses a benchmark of 4 minutes.

Ambulance coverage for East St. Paul is provided from Selkirk, which is almost 25 kilometres away.

The municipalities of East St. Paul and West St. Paul combined have over 12 000 residents.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider providing East St. Paul with local ambulance service which would service both East and West St. Paul.

To request the provincial government to consider improving the way that ambulance service is supplied to all Manitobans by utilizing technologies such as GPS in conjunction with a Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre (MTCC) which will ensure that patients receive the nearest ambulance in the least amount of time.

To request the provincial government to consider ensuring that appropriate funding is provided to maintain superior response times and sustainable services.

Signed by Patti Hammond, Tom Hammond, Bob Hammond and others.

Coverage of Insulin Pumps

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I would like to table my petition as read as well.

I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Insulin pumps cost over \$6,500.

The cost of diabetes to the Manitoba government in 2005 will be approximately \$214.4 million. Each day

16 Manitobans are diagnosed with the disease compared to the national average of 11 new cases daily.

Good blood sugar control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50 percent, blindness by 76 percent, nerve damage by 60 percent, cardiac disease by 35 percent and even amputations.

Diabetes is an epidemic in our province and will become an unprecedented drain on our struggling health care system if we do not take action now.

The benefit of having an insulin pump is it allows the person living with this life-altering disease to obtain good control of their blood sugar and become much healthier, complication-free individuals.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba to consider covering the cost of insulin pumps that are prescribed by an endocrinologist or medical doctor under the Manitoba Health Insurance Plan.

Signed by Shirley Fehr, Candace Klassen, Jake Wiebe and others.

Teachers' Pension Plan Pension Adjustment Account

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I would like to table my petition as read as well.

I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

After contributing to the Teachers' Pension Plan Adjustment Account (PAA) which funds the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) since 1977 until the year of our retirement from the profession of teaching, we find ourselves facing the future with little hope of a meaningful COLA, and with the resulting severe loss of purchasing power.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider funding the PAA to ensure that we receive a

reasonable COLA, and that any loss of purchasing power we will face will be minor.

Signed by Joyce Cawston, Alice Olive, Walter Cheslock and others.

Crocus Investment Fund

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to table my petition as read.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Government was made aware of serious problems involving the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

As a direct result of the government ignoring the red flags back in 2001, over 33 000 Crocus investors lost over \$60 million.

Manitoba's provincial auditor stated "We believe the department was aware of the red flags at Crocus and failed to follow up on those in a timely fashion."

The relationship between some union leaders, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP seems to be the primary reason as for why the government ignored the red flags.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider the need to seek clarification on why the government did not act on fixing the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

Signed by Bihana Contreras, Jermane Sarinas, Roslina Bulingot and others.

Fort Garry Hotel

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table my petition as read.

I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

In 1987 the City of Winnipeg seized the Fort Garry Hotel from its owner, Harvard Investments Limited, a family-owned Manitoba corporation, in what has been characterized as a miscarriage of justice.

Due to deliberate actions of the City of Winnipeg, errors by the Municipal Board of Manitoba and a lack of clarity in provincial legislation, Harvard was denied the due process and natural justice that are fundamental to the property tax assessment and appeal process in Manitoba.

As a result, the company was unfairly burdened with a grossly excessive assessment and tax bill that in turn precipitated a tax sale and mortgage foreclosure, effectively bankrupted the company and caused Harvard's shareholders to be dispossessed of their business and property.

The background to this petition was outlined more fully in a grievance presented to this Assembly by the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) on May 18, 2005.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade (Mr. Smith) to consider conducting a review of the circumstances outlined and to consider making a recommendation for redress to the Government of Manitoba.

Signed by Lawrence Prout, Anne Duncan and Alec Macaulay.

Mr. Speaker: All petitions that have been tabled are deemed to have been read.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I would like to table the following: the Report Pursuant to section 63(4) of The Financial Administration Act Relating to Supplementary Loan and Guarantee Authority for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2005, as well as The Civil Service Superannuation Board Annual Report of 2004.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to table the Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us Joel Simard from Lorette, who is the guest of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, The Manitoba Evidence Act provides, and I will read this out: Where the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council deems it expedient to cause inquiry to be made into and concerning any matter within the jurisdiction of the Legislature connecting with or affecting the good government of the province or the conduct of any part of the public business thereof, the conduct of any provincial institution, any matter which in his opinion is of sufficient public importance to justify an inquiry, he may appoint one or more commissioners to make the inquiry and to report thereon.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said yesterday, "I am not opposed to inquiries when it is in the public interest." Well, 34 000 Manitobans have lost over half of their retirement investment in this Crocus scandal and they want and deserve to know the truth and what happened, yet this NDP government is intent on doing all it can to avoid the truth and cover up the facts.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally live up to his words and call for an independent public inquiry into this Crocus scandal? Will he do that today?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, members opposite, you know, when they talk about the public interest, if ever there was an issue in the public interest that was worthy of a public inquiry and consistent with the criteria stated by the member opposite, it was the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System after the '95 provincial election. You want to talk about fleecing. Selling the telephone system through Wellington West corporation at \$13 a share has fleeced the Manitoba taxpayers of \$2 billion.

That is the fleecing that has taken place, and the only winners were the brokers and friends of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Murray: This Premier can try to avoid the fact that under his watch 34 000 Manitobans were fleeced of over \$60 million. He might try and hide from it, but they will not allow it, Manitobans will not allow it. Mr. Speaker, this NDP Premier is the self-described ethics commissioner for the NDP party and the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask him to recognize the critical importance of maintaining honesty, integrity and respect for the office of the Premier. Not only do the 34 000 Crocus shareholders and all Manitobans deserve to know the truth, the whole truth about this Crocus scandal, but it is also fundamentally important that the position of Premier, the office of Premier, be beyond reproach.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again. Will this self-described NDP ethics commissioner do the right thing and call for a public independent inquiry today?

Mr. Doer: Maybe the member is not aware of the fact and maybe he did not pay attention when we voted on the issue, but we do have an ethics commissioner. His name is Mr. Bill Norrie. The events have long passed the quote, Mr. Speaker, because this government has brought in an ethics commissioner. His name is Mr. Norrie. He was agreed to by all parties, and if the member opposite has forgotten about it, I would remind him. He agreed to Mr. Norrie.

* (14:40)

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, if anybody needs to be reminded, it is this Premier who stood in front of Manitobans and said, "I am the ethics commissioner for my party. I am the ethics commissioner for the government."

The point simply is that Crocus unitholders were told that a class action lawsuit will be held within a few weeks, a lawsuit that, according to the lawyers, will be hundreds of pages and demand an enormous amount of money. It is expected that this NDP government will be named as defendants in the lawsuit.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba taxpayers need to know why this NDP government ignored all of the red

flags, internal, external. Manitoba taxpayers want and deserve answers to the numerous questions that this NDP government refuses to answer.

I ask the Premier, the self-described ethics commissioner for his party, and holding the highest office in this province, if he has nothing to hide will he do the right thing and call for an independent public inquiry on this Crocus scandal.

Mr. Doer: Well, it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Auditor General's report has a number of concerns that it has raised that go right back to the original date of the creation of the Crocus Investment Fund. It identifies the fact that all the staff was hired from the inception of the fund. Do you see members opposite concerned about the five former Cabinet ministers that hired James Umlah? Do you see them raising any questions about that? No, you do not. You know—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have taken responsibility for the e-mail between the officials, but have members opposite taken responsibility for the fact that Wellington West was hired as the lead brokerage firm, that it testified to the valuations of all the stocks on the Crocus file and had a fiduciary responsibility? Why have you not asked about the conflict of interest about Wellington West, or did David Filmon phone you again?

Crocus Investment Fund Information Tabling Request

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier asks questions he should call a public inquiry and get the answers.

Mr. Speaker, this government has proved that they are incapable of providing any credible answers that explain their inaction on the collapse of the Crocus Fund. Public servants raised flags years ago that should have led to a thorough review of Crocus by this government. Because of the government's close ties to the labour movement, they turned a blind eye to the warnings that were given to them.

I would ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) today if he will do the right thing, if he will

table the memos that were referred to in the Auditor General's report. Will he start to clear the air today?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again we have taken responsibility for the e-mail between officials, but why have members opposite not taken, on the one hand they criticize the issue of the management of Crocus Fund and on the other hand they know that there is a memorandum of agreement signed between Eric Stefanson and the former government and the Manitoba Federation of Labour giving complete control to the Manitoba Federation of Labour, signed in 1992.

In fact, the members opposite, the five former Cabinet ministers over there brag that no NDP government had ever brought that in. Look back at the legislation. We are fixing it up. We are taking responsibility.

Public Inquiry Request

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Well, thank you, Minister. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I guess now we know who the higher authority is that is trying to whitewash this. If the Premier was interested in fixing this problem, he should have been interested in 2001 when the red flags were raised. He should have been monitoring the fund there.

The Auditor General clearly indicates that his report leaves many questions that are unanswered. The Auditor General does not have the authority to force this Premier or this government to explain to the public how it could be that they failed to act, how it could be the legislation that was started by Ms. Mihychuk vanished overnight. The Auditor General does not have the authority to force government to indicate why they ignored the red flags. A public inquiry would be a benefit to the unitholders. It would help them understand what went so terribly wrong. Does anybody on that side of the House have the courage to call one?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): As I say, Mr. Speaker, if I was going to call a public inquiry in the public interest, I would take a look at the \$75 million within

two months the brokers got for the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System. I would take a look at the \$2-billion asset sale that was given away by members opposite. I would take a look at the fact the Manitoba Telephone rates went up 68 percent. That is in the public interest.

But when we came into office, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: But, Mr. Speaker, we certainly—
[interjection] Well, the member opposite hired James Umlah. I guess she is very proud of herself.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for River East.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and it is interesting that the Premier—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is this the question or—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If members are rising on a point of order, could they please identify that because sometimes rotations of questions is one question, one sup. Sometimes it is one question, two sups. So if anybody was up on points of order, please identify that to me so that I can deal with it appropriately.

The honourable Member for River East, you were up on a point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was up on a point of order, and I made a significantly important point.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order?

Mr. Doer: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

You will know a dispute over the facts is not a point of order, but I think the minister confirms that she was on duty when James Umlah was hired, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for River East, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister had the floor.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would point out that then-Finance Minister Clayton Manness said, and I quote, "Let us take our best business minds and heads within our community and rather than entrust somebody within the civil service and rather than entrust the political interference that sometimes can squirrel around decisions made, let us have some trust in community leaders, business leaders, to make the right decisions. They are the people who are skilled." Hansard, March 18, 1993.

Mr. Loewen: Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier who has his feet so firmly grounded in the past that he cannot see the present and has no vision for the future. This is a Premier who has no empathy for the individuals who have lost their retirement savings, who have lost over \$60 million. He has no empathy for the taxpayers who have lost over \$100 million.

If he or any of the members opposite had been at the shareholders' meeting last night they would have heard clearly the pleas from the unitholders, one who said, and I quote, "We need a public inquiry to turn over every rock until we find all the evildoers."

I would ask this Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) if he has the courage to admit to the need for a public inquiry to turn over all rocks to find all the evildoers.

*(14:50)

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly have taken responsibility for the e-mail between officials. What has not happened in this Legislature is the number of criticisms that were made prior to 1999, none of the five Cabinet ministers sitting on the other side have taken responsibility. The

difference between that side and this side is we have taken responsibility. Nobody over there has taken responsibility.

I would point out on page 99—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It is my understanding that, in Question Period, the opposition is allowed to ask the government about matters that are under that government's responsibility. Unfortunately, the Premier cannot answer questions that he is asked about his incompetence and his government's incompetence and, so, therefore, he deflects those issues onto a past administration. All we are asking for is for him to answer for the actions of his government. That is what Question Period is about, and if, in fact, he wants to bring in the past administration that could be done through a public inquiry which he has every opportunity to call.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, that is simply a dispute on the facts. I just do not think the opposition likes to hear the answers.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, you have 18 seconds left for your comment.

Mr. Doer: I refer the member opposite to page 99 of the report.

Crocus Investment Fund Manitoba Securities Commission Review

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, in his last response the Premier has

accepted responsibility. I ask the Premier now to accept the blame.

The Premier and the Finance Minister have both stated that the Manitoba Securities Commission will investigate the Crocus scandal. The Securities Commission knew that Crocus broke Securities' rules three times over the last four years and they handled all three infractions internally and never disclosed them to the public.

I ask the Minister of Finance how can you expect the Securities Commission to investigate the Crocus scandal when it knew about the red flags but it did not do its job.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor's report did a section on the Securities Commission. They commended them for their continuous disclosure, practices that they have entered into. They identified the three occasions when the commission told the fund that they should not do certain things. They told them they cannot do spot checks, that they have to do suitability checks on every trade. They told them that with respect to envelope stuffers that that was no longer allowed even though the previous government permitted it and facilitated it with letters from the minister. They told them they could not do that and they also warned them about saying the fund cannot say, "make a difference or earn a profit when there is no guarantee of a profit." Members opposite know that and they are distorting the facts as they do every single day in this Legislature.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has stated that the Securities Commission was a critical control feature of the Crocus Fund, yet it dropped the ball three times over the last four years. It did not deal with the red flags in an appropriate manner. It cannot be trusted to deal with the investigation into the Crocus scandal.

So I ask the Minister of Finance why is the Securities Commission investigating the Crocus scandal when in fact it should be investigating itself and it should be investigating this Minister of Finance, his role in this mess.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General reviewed the Securities Commission's behaviour and practices and made comments on how those can be improved while at the same time commending them for their continuous disclosure process. The member

opposite knows full well that the Manitoba Securities Commission is a quasi-judicial body that operates at arm's length from the government and has the powers of the Court of Queen's Bench with respect to their investigations. They have stated those allegations on the Web site. They have posted them. They are going to do public hearings on them. They are going to investigate into them and they can investigate anybody they want with respect to the allegations they have posted. The member opposite knows that. Once again, he is twisting the facts.

Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, in 2002 the Securities Commission was placed under the watch of this Finance Minister. The role of the Securities Commission is now to investigate the directors of Crocus. The only one who is not being investigated is the Minister of Finance.

I ask the Minister of Finance how can the Securities Commission get to the bottom of this Crocus scandal when it is the minister who should be investigated, the very person who is responsible for the Securities Commission. Call a public inquiry.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member likes to make allegations. He knows full well that the Auditor General had complete discretion, unfettered discretion to investigate anything they wished to. He knows that the police investigation is completely independent and has the ability to investigate anything they wish to. Members opposite should co-operate with all the investigations that are underway and table the secret agreements they themselves have entered into.

Crocus Investment Fund Protection for Unitholders

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, Crocus unitholders have been left hanging out to dry and pay and pay and pay; pay bills, pay legal fees, pay severance packages. They are asking questions and getting no answers. The old board ignored the best interests of the unitholders. What assurance can this government give us that the new board is putting the unitholders first?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is well established during the last few weeks that the members opposite tried to enhance

their status by ripping down the status of others. This new board is a group of respected individuals in the community that have taken their time and a certain degree of risk by volunteering to be members of this board. They are acting in the interests of shareholders as well as the public interest by managing the affairs of this labour-sponsored venture capital fund. They deserve the respect and the support of all members of this Legislature for the duties they have undertaken.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I recognize the honourable member, I just want to inform all honourable members that the rules of Question Period are any electronic devices should be turned off and not be used during Question Period.

Political Involvement of Board Members

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I guess the Minister of Finance should have been at the unitholders' meeting last night. He would have realized that it is not the opposition that is raising the issues, it was the unitholders themselves that feel betrayed by this government.

Mr. Speaker, the new chair of the Crocus board, Mr. Van Hall, is an NDP political appointment as vice-chair to the Manitoba Lotteries Commission, and he has contributed over \$2,000 to the NDP party. Independent—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The new vice-chair of the Crocus board, Darlene Dzewit, has been a key player in the NDP central campaign team and is president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour who sends two automatic delegates to the annual convention of this NDP party. She has also contributed over \$11,000 to this NDP party.

How can the unitholders trust this new board? Who are they beholden to, their political masters or the unitholders? Stand up and indicate to them who they report to.

* (15:00)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is an astounding story. The members opposite when they were government put in place an independent organization that was under the

sponsorship of the Manitoba Federation of Labour. They are the ones that appoint the board members under the rules the members opposite established. They have done that for many years. They have done that again, and members opposite are now complaining about the power they gave the Manitoba Federation of Labour to appoint these members.

There is only one board member that this government has appointed currently sitting on that board and that is Mr. Harold Buchwald, a man with great respect in this community, great competence, and a great ability to contribute to the solutions of this problem.

Appointment of a Receiver Manager

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, the vice-chair and the chair of the new Crocus board have a direct pipeline to the Premier's office.

Mr. Speaker, will the government today indicate clearly that they will not indemnify the board at the end of June and that they will allow someone without a conflict of interest, an independent experienced investment team, to manage the affairs of Crocus on behalf of the unitholders? Will they stand up today and ensure that the board, the chair and the vice-chair, who have a direct pipeline to the Premier's office, are not the ones that are managing the affairs on behalf of the unitholders? The unitholders feel betrayed.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the original government legislation signed into the memorandum of agreement that was reached by the former minister when she was in Cabinet, signed by former Finance Minister Eric Stefanson, gave those same individuals the authority under the sponsorship, under the federal government act that the member opposite is now complaining about. The only—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the members that we have appointed to the board have never contributed to our party. The three members that the Tories appointed all had contributed as civil servants to the Conservative Party of Manitoba. I would point out while the Tories were giving an alleged conflict-

of-interest position to Wellington West, documented on page 99 of the report, that the Tories received \$41,000 from Wellington West, a point documented in this report.

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry Request

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, if the Premier had any concern about the views of the unitholders and the fact that they want nothing to do with the current board, he or one of his ministers would have been at the shareholders' meeting last night. It is too bad they were not.

Mr. Speaker, an important issue is that, as a result of the Crocus scandal, much-needed venture capital markets are in serious danger of drying up in Manitoba. Capital moves freely to markets that are stable and well regulated. As a result of the Crocus scandal, which is attracting national media attention, Manitoba does not give the appearance of having a capital market that is well regulated, not something this Premier should take any pride in.

A public inquiry is needed to clear the air. It is needed to clear the air quickly and to determine where the fault lies so that we can get things back to normal here so we can attract capital once again. I would ask the Finance Minister if he does not agree that we need to clear the air with a public inquiry and clear it quickly.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, private capital investment has increased by 8.1 percent in 2004. Private investment in Manitoba has increased by more than \$1 billion in the last five years. We have seen a \$10-billion growth in this economy since we have come to office, a growth of more than 31 percent. We have more jobs. We have more disposable income. We have higher salaries. We have higher business profits than at any time in the nineties when the members opposite were in government. If you look at the evidence, this government has been better for the economy of Manitoba than the previous government ever was.

Mr. Loewen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I bet the unitholders in the Crocus Fund wish they could hand off their losses as easily as this minister stands in this House and hands off questions. If he was wanting to tell the whole truth, he would tell us how Saskatchewan's GDP has grown by \$11 billion.

We are only \$1 billion behind, but the issue is the Crocus Fund.

As a result of this Crocus scandal, not only will capital dry up if the air is not cleared, entrepreneurs in this province are going to have a great deal of difficulty finding competent individuals to sit on their boards as a result of the lawsuits that are going to arise out of this government's mismanagement and failure to monitor the Crocus Fund. For the sake of future entrepreneurs who will rely on this type of advice to build jobs, to help this province grow and to create opportunity, I would ask the Minister of Finance if he would not agree that the best thing to do is to call a public inquiry and clear the air.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is I am delighted he has identified the growth in the economy in Saskatchewan. It is its fourth term as an NDP government. The government of Manitoba, the government of Saskatchewan are growing their economies. The Conservative members of the government of Saskatchewan, most of them are still trying to get out of jail.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, only a cold-hearted minister, someone so callous as not to concern himself with the fact that 34 000 Manitobans have lost a good deal of their retirement savings, only a cold-hearted government would treat this situation with such disdain. This is a scandal.

Manitobans have lost over \$100 million. The Auditor General has indicated that questions remain unanswered. The Securities Commission has let shareholders down. Capital markets are drying up. Entrepreneurs are going to be unable to attract advice for fear of lawsuits. All this adds up to the need for a public inquiry to clear the air. It adds up for the need to clear the air and clear it quickly.

The Finance Minister has turned a blind eye to this Crocus scandal for the last four years. He could have monitored. He could have done his job. He could have prevented it. I would ask him now to do the last thing possible. Call a public inquiry. Make sure it happens quickly. Clear the air and let us get business back to normal.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): As I have said before, we have taken responsibility for the e-mail that officials exchanged, Mr. Speaker. We have taken responsibility for the conflict in the legislation

between monitoring and promotion in the Industry Department.

I want to ask will members opposite take responsibility for the fact that Crocus investors lost up to \$35 million in a co-investment with the Conservative government in Winnipeg, Westsun and Isobord. Why are they not asking about those issues, Mr. Speaker?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I think you were not that long ago cautioning the First Minister that this is Question Period where he is supposed to be providing answers, not asking questions. Now, I know he is backed into a corner on this issue, and he is finding it difficult to respond to the questions that are posed on a very, very serious matter. This is a serious issue. We have been trying to get answers from the government and, backed into a corner, the only thing the Premier can do is try to ask us to answer questions for him. It is for him to answer the questions that have been posed by members of this opposition.

* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Again, Mr. Speaker, it appears to be an argument about the facts. He says it is a point of order. I think it is a point of discomfort for the opposition, the content of the answer.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I was listening very, very carefully, and what I heard the First Minister comment was, "Why are they not." He never asked a question. He said, "Why are they not." I heard that very, very clearly. On the point of order raised, the honourable Official Opposition House

Leader does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear, as we watch what is happening with this Crocus scandal that, when we as the opposition bring questions into the Legislature, we know that this issue rests very closely with this Premier because of the close relationship that the labour leaders in this province have: Mr. Olfert, Mr. Hilliard, Mr. Kostyra and the Premier, who was one of the most recognized labour leaders in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, as we get closer to trying to get this Premier to do the right thing, it is very clear that his approach is when in doubt, shout. That is what he is trying to do with this process.

Mr. Speaker, it is very, very clear that there were red flags that were brought forward under this Premier's watch in 2001 and 2002. Those red flags, we have asked them to be tabled in this House. They are trying to cover it up. They will not bring it forward.

My question to the Premier, who holds the highest political office in the province of Manitoba, if he has nothing to hide, if he is afraid of nothing, then he should do the right thing and call for a public inquiry unless he is trying to hide something and cover something up.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I want to quote back from the Hansard in 1992. Now we have again taken responsibility for the e-mail between officials. We have taken responsibility for the legislation that was amended in '97 to deal with the conflict between monitoring and the conflict of promotion in the Industry Department, but I would point out, Mr. Speaker, then-Premier Gary Filmon, no New Democratic government, brought it in. We brought it in because it made good sense to work cooperatively with labour. And then we go on to say Minister Stefanson signed a memo of agreement with the fund, requiring, quote, labour control of the board of directors. It stated control of the fund shall always, always be vested in the Manitoba Federation of Labour. We have taken responsibility where we have

been pointed out in the report. Why do we not have some collective responsibility in this Legislature?

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the issue about this Crocus scandal clearly is all about what the Auditor General has pointed out that this government has tried to cover up. Clearly, in 2001 and 2002, there were memos that the Auditor General identified that were brought forward to this government. We know the relationship about the labour leaders in the province of Manitoba: Mr. Olfert, Mr. Hilliard, Mr. Kostyra and the former Premier, who is well known as a labour organizer in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, that relationship allowed for spending to go on at Crocus that nobody was paying attention to because of that cozy relationship. The tacit approval of Crocus was approved by a higher authority in this government, and I ask the Premier, who has the ability to do the right thing, he holds the highest office in the province of Manitoba. It should be above reproach, and it should have all of the integrity. I believe that, unless he has something to hide, he would do the right thing, stand today, clear the air and call for a public independent inquiry, or is he trying to hide something?

Mr. Doer: The member raises two points in his question, Mr. Speaker. One is the issue of the board representatives, and I would point out that in 1992, the fund requiring labour control, it stated control of the fund shall always be vested in the Manitoba Federation of Labour. Point No. 2, the member opposite talks about management. The Auditor General clearly documents that the senior officers of the fund were hired at the inception of the fund which was in '92 and '93.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken responsibility for an e-mail between an official in one department and an official in another department. The members opposite should take responsibility for the fact that five of them were in Cabinet when Mr. Umlah was hired and when Mr. Umlah was promoted.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, Point No. 1 is in 2001 this government had a red flag that they ignored, and they are trying to cover it up. Point No. 2, in 2002 another red flag was raised with this NDP government, and they are trying to cover that up. Point No. 3, this Premier's former NDP Cabinet minister, Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk, has asked to go before a public inquiry so the truth will come out. Point No. 4, 34 000 Manitobans have been fleeced

by \$60 million under this Premier's watch. If he has nothing to hide, he should stand today and call for a public inquiry. Do the right thing.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General, in his 200-page report, on page 138 identifies the Manitoba Science and Technology Fund was capitalized in 1999 utilizing various funds in the provincial government. I have the press release for the former members of Cabinet on that criticism that was made by the Auditor General. June 29, 1999, Mr. Merv Tweed announces a new Crocus Investment Fund of \$10 million. Not only that, this will be led, and the new president of this fund is none other than, CEO of this fund will be Mr. James Umlah. Five former Cabinet ministers promoted Mr. Umlah.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River East, on a point of order.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but the Premier should put factual information on the record. It was the board of Crocus, controlled by the Manitoba Federation of Labour, that hired James Umlah. So they had control over management of James Umlah, and they failed.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order? Order.

Points of order are very serious matters. I need to hear every word that is spoken.

The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order?

Mr. Doer: Yes, of course, Mr. Speaker. You know that disputes over the facts are not a point of order, but I would point out in the June 29, 1999, press release, it was one Merv Tweed who promoted Mr. Umlah to CEO of the new Manitoba Science and Technology venture capital fund. I believe the member opposite was in Cabinet on that date.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for River East, she does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Before I ask my question, just on a point of order. I would ask for leave because—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (15:20)

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River Heights, on a point of order? On a point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: I would ask for leave that I can ask both my question and the two supplementaries if we are a couple of minutes short of time.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the honourable member to complete his question if we run out of time for Question Period? *[Agreed]*

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry Request

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, for many years there has been a lot of concern about the shortage of venture capital for Manitoba firms, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses. This, of course, was one of the reasons why Crocus was established in the first place, but thanks to poor oversight by the NDP government the Crocus option has turned to a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we learn from the bad mistakes made and we ensure we have a much better approach to venture capital for Manitoba firms in the future. I, for one, want to build the businesses in this province, and it is vital that we have a public inquiry in order to find out everything that went wrong and to build for the future.

Will the Premier call a public inquiry?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite was involved in the press conferences, a federal minister, when both he and Mr. Filmon claimed that they were going to turn straw into gold at the Isobord plant. So he certainly knows of what he speaks.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there have been new initiatives on venture capital and capital in Manitoba. In fact, in the fall of 2004, the Manitoba Superannuation Fund, the Manitoba Public Insurance

Corporation, Workers Compensation, I think Teachers' Pension Plan, if I am not mistaken, all put money into the new Richardson Capital fund which is located in Manitoba. This actually predated the Auditor General's report and the suspension of trade on the shares. It is quite a bit different than the announcement that was made in June of 1999.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, let me correct the Premier. It was Gary Filmon who was spinning then straw into gold. It was his quote. It was never my quote. He was almost as good at spinning as this Premier, but this Premier certainly developed it into an art.

Look, we need to learn from the big mistakes that were made in the past. If nothing is done, we are going to have problems with venture capital having a bad name in Manitoba. It will hurt Manitoba businesses. It is difficult to understand why this Premier is hesitating to call a public inquiry. Is he stonewalling? Is he trying to cover something up? Is the Premier trying to cover things up? Why does he not call a public inquiry now and make sure that Manitobans have the truth, can get at what happened and build for the future?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, it appears the member is correct. It was the former Premier that said that this is like a modern-day Rumpelstiltskin at the new Isobord plant that will spin wheat straw into a wealth of jobs in Manitoba. I believe this was part of the \$35-million loss that took place. But then, of course, Dr. Jon Gerrard went on to announce a \$12 million—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind all honourable members when making reference to other members in the House to please do it by ministers by their portfolios, other members by their constituency.

Mr. Doer: The Member for River Heights. I was just quoting from the press release, the \$12-million investment.

I remember the member opposite criticized us on September 7, 2000, for putting too much emphasis on rate of return and asked us to interfere directly into the management of the Crocus Fund. If we had taken his advice this government would be before the Securities Commission.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier had been watching more closely, all these problems would not have happened with the severity that they have had

at Crocus. The reality is that the Premier is hesitating to call a public inquiry. Is the Premier reluctant to learn from his mistakes? Is the Premier against having advice on a better way to support business in this province? Is the Premier against growing Manitoba businesses? Is the Premier against growing Manitoba? As long as the Premier stalls on a public inquiry, so long will the Premier delay on learning from our mistakes and building for the future. Is the Premier against exposing government negligence? We need to have the best practices in this province. We need to build for the future.

When will the Premier call a public inquiry?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that the member opposite said that we should interfere in Crocus Investment Fund decisions for VAW Systems which he criticized us for having too much emphasis on rate of return. Now he speaks with a different view.

I want to apologize to the member opposite from River Heights. He did say that the Crocus Investment and federal investment in 1996 and 1997 in the Isobord plant was a real value-added investment. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have taken responsibility for e-mails, I wonder whether he will take responsibility for Isobord.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to members' statements, I just want to introduce a couple of guests we have in the public gallery. We have Bev Lacasse and KateLynn McManus who are from the 10th Transcona Scout group and their Scout leaders. They are the guests of the honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would also like to advise the House that today's Order Paper is in error. There are three bills that are missing from the Order Paper that should be listed on the Order Paper for concurrence and third reading. Those bills are Bill 17, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act; Bill 21, The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act; and Bill 30, The

Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act. I want to bring this to the attention of members to ensure that they are aware of this error and to be advised that these bills are eligible for concurrence and third reading today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Scouting Activities

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues in this House to join me in recognizing the outstanding efforts of Scouts and Scout leaders throughout Manitoba. Though many years have passed since I had the pleasure of being a Scout myself, I know the excitement and the thrill of the young people who today take part in organized scouting activities.

This past Tuesday, June 14, I had the opportunity to attend the 10th Transcona Scout group barbeque. I want to thank all my young hosts and their leader, Bev Lacasse, for their warm hospitality.

Over the years, scouting has changed and will continue to change and evolve. Still, though, members of the scouting movement, regardless of age, regardless of gender, regardless of their location, recognize and live up to the ethos of service and giving that makes them better citizens and leads them into opportunities for lifelong learning and lifelong friendships.

Today I wish to recognize those young people who have committed themselves to exploring and learning and serving their community through their participation as scouts. I ask that my colleagues in this Chamber join me in congratulating scouts across this province and in particular those in the 10th Transcona Scout group. Let us wish them all a scouting experience filled with excitement and with wonder.

Mr. Speaker, I also invite you and all the honourable members to join in thanking those individuals, past and present, who have made the time and taken the challenge to become scouting leaders. Time invested in the community, especially working with the young, is never wasted.

* (15:30)

Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of the imminent end of this session, I will take the opportunity to

wish you and all honourable colleagues safe travels and a wonderful summer and joyous holiday and hard work. Thank you.

Village of Glenboro

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): It does give me great pleasure to rise in the House today, both as MLA for Turtle Mountain and as a citizen of Glenboro, to recognize the village of Glenboro's 125th birthday celebration coming up on the July long weekend.

The first settlers to the Glenboro area were Jonas Christie and James Duncan in 1879. The enactment of the homestead act by the federal government in 1880 attracted many more settlers who claimed and homesteaded the land in the area.

News that the Canadian Pacific Railway was coming in 1886 prompted Christie and Duncan to offer sections of their land to form a townsite. Duncan named the village Glenboro, which is derived from the Scottish term "Borough of the Glen." The Queens Hotel, the first building established in Glenboro, dates back to 1881 and still stands today.

This time of celebration will allow us to reflect on our past and make plans for the future. Birthday celebrations include fireworks, a parade, social evenings, a fair and rodeo and much more. Please feel free to visit the Web site, glenboro.mb.ca, for more details of the festivities.

I extend a warm welcome to everyone to attend the events planned to celebrate Glenboro's 125th birthday.

Mr. Dennis Lloyd

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of Winnipeg's finest firefighters, a St. James constituent and a man I am privileged to call friend, Mr. Dennis Lloyd.

Today, I wish to recognize Dennis as an esteemed leader and a legend among Canada's firefighters. Six years ago, after 41 years of service, Dennis retired as a Winnipeg Fire Department battalion chief having served along the way as firefighter, lieutenant, captain, district chief and finally to battalion chief.

Early on, Dennis recognized he had a contribution to make to his union. To stay true to his convictions and his passion, he turned down countless promotions above the rank of battalion chief. His dedication and passion earned Dennis the devoted respect of his peers. He has served as trustee of IAFF Winnipeg Local 867, vice-president of the Winnipeg local, president of the United Firefighters of Winnipeg, IAFF Canadian trustee and trustee emeritus of the International Association of Firefighters.

His was a remarkable career. He was instrumental in consolidating many smaller departments into Winnipeg's one merged department of 900 firefighters. He was the driving force behind today's City of Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service.

Well before being elected, I had an abiding respect for Dennis Lloyd. In the year since, that respect has only deepened. I am proud to be part of a government that has led the way in acknowledging and responding to the special demands firefighters face, and I am proud to be a friend of Dennis Lloyd.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and all honourable members to join me in thanking the heroic and determined firefighters across Manitoba. Moreover, I ask you to join me in recognizing Dennis Lloyd and his peers for their part in making us better legislators.

Thank you.

Loewen Corporation

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I rise today to pay tribute to the Loewen corporation, who this weekend will be celebrating their 100th anniversary in the community of Steinbach.

In 1905, led by C.T. Loewen, a first-generation Canadian who had learned his sawyer skills from his immigrant father, he began a millwork business in the community of Steinbach. Although the Great Depression was difficult on a number of different businesses, he managed to continue his company on by finding a niche market during those times and ensuring that there was survival of the corporation.

The Loewen story is known throughout Manitoba and glowingly throughout the world as a success story. Certainly, over the last number of years as they have developed a reputation for quality windows in Manitoba and, of course, in North

America and now around the world, they have continued to show that a family-run generational business can succeed when there is entrepreneurship, when there is a dedication to values of a company, values of a community.

I know that the employees at Loewen, at the C.T. Loewen Building Centre and at Loewen Windows would testify to the good treatment that they have and the great corporation that is provided so that they can have careers built. Many, many employees begin their work at the Loewens', either at C.T. Loewen Building Centre or at Loewen Windows and continue on throughout their entire lives in those corporations.

The Loewens also believe in giving money back to the community through the Loewen Foundation and literally hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars have flowed back to a number of good causes throughout Manitoba and around the world because of the generosity of the Loewens.

I do want to commend the Loewen family for being great corporate citizens here in Manitoba, certainly in the community of Steinbach and, really, throughout North America. We appreciate all that they do in terms of creating jobs and wealth in our province and ensuring that they give back to the community through all those good causes.

With those words, we would like to wish the C.T. Loewen Foundation and the corporation a successful 100th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Northern Manitoba

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with pride in order to speak of the resilience and the rekindling of the northern spirit. For many years, northern Manitoba fought for its rightful place in the sun, and I am proud to be part of a government that not only recognizes the potential of the North but also has committed to rebuilding the spirit of the North.

The Tories scoffed at a University College of the North, but the dream is becoming a reality under this government. Enrolment in northern nursing courses has doubled. Much needed dialysis machines are now a fact in some northern communities. This government's investment in Telehealth will tremendously improve health care services in

northern communities such as Flin Flon and Snow Lake.

Our commitment has not stopped there. For instance, our roads and airports, so neglected, if not downright ignored under the Tory administration have since been upgraded through better funding. We have signed new revenue sharing and training partnerships with First Nations for future Hydro development. We have established a \$10-million fund for pre-project Hydro training that will benefit all northerners and restore core funding to Aboriginal organizations that had been cut under the Tories.

Alternative economic initiatives have been fostered by the investments of the provincial and federal governments via the Northern Forest Diversification Centre in The Pas under the seasoned leadership of Dave Buck. Non-timber boreal products are becoming more and more important to Manitoba, whether they are developed through the Diversification Centre or by individual entrepreneurs.

Most recently, I was thrilled to learn of and to sample a particularly northern product that so clearly expresses the adventurous spirit and the self-reliance of the North, birch sap wine. I invite you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues in this Chamber to join me in congratulating northern residents Doug and Linda Eryou on their contribution to the development of birch sap products. I look forward to the day I can invite you all to join me in raising a glass of their fine birch sap wine in a toast to their success as vintners. Moreover, let us toast them for their starring role in the forthcoming German-produced documentary that highlights the Eyrours' unique birch wine.

The North is on the map. Stay tuned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on a point of order?

Mr. John Loewen (Deputy Opposition House Leader): I wonder if we could have the indulgence of the House. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) is going to be going on a grievance today, but he has been called out by the media in the hallway to do a scrum, so I am wondering if we could ask leave of the House just to take a little break

so that he can do the scrum with the media and then come back and do the grievance.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I was going to suggest that, perhaps, to accommodate the Leader of the Opposition, we could proceed to Government Business and perhaps debate some of the third readings that are on the Order Paper. Then we, by leave, could return to grievances when it would be convenient for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the agreement of the House to set aside grievances for the time being, deal with some bills and then we will revert to grievances at the return of the Leader of the Official Opposition? *[Agreed]*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

(Continued)

House Business

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, could you please call the third readings in order? Could you please call Bill 17, by leave, 21 and 30? That was the agreement? Okay, so I will do it in that order. Third time lucky, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I probably should have taken a break after all. I believe there has been an agreed-upon order which would now proceed to 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43, and followed by 5, 33, 48, 51 and 16, followed by Bill 50.

I would suggest we call 17, 21 and 30, and then receive the leave of the House afterward. We will probably get into grievances by then, and we will call the remaining bills following grievances. So could you please call 17, 21 and 30?

* (15:40)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 17—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the

Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 17, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we will support this bill. I think that it is important that we have a procedure for having reports of medical errors or critical incidents. I want to thank the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) for agreeing to support the amendment which we put forward, which allowed for reports to come from individuals as well as from health professionals. I think this will be hopefully a step forward in being able to understand better where processes go wrong within the medical system and to correct them and improve on the quality of care.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Ashton: I was wondering if, by leave, we could revert to grievances.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

(Continued)

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, we will now revert to grievances. Are there any grievances?

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a grievance. It is unfortunate that, when you think about where Manitoba fits in the national media scale these days, when you are talking to national organizations, whether it is the Chamber of Commerce or business organizations, the two

issues that Manitoba is very well known for are, No. 1, the fact that under this NDP government, they are going to force non-unionized workers to pay union dues in the floodway expansion; the other issue, of course, is the fact that under this NDP government the Crocus scandal has caused 34 000 Manitobans to be fleeced of some \$60 million.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, it is very obvious with this NDP government that the relationship between the labour leadership in the province of Manitoba is very, very close. I cite Mr. Peter Olfert, Mr. Rob Hilliard, Mr. Eugene Kostyra, who works in the Premier's office, and the current Premier (Mr. Doer) himself who was a well-known union organizer for years. There are some 25 years of labour leadership just in those four names that I mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear with that close relationship with the labour leaders that the Crocus Fund had the tacit support of this NDP government. There is no question that that relationship allowed for decisions that were made that were poor decisions because of that close relationship. It allowed the fact that the Crocus Fund, because of that relationship with the labour leadership, it allowed for the Crocus Fund to spend flagrantly, and as I say, they were allowed to make decisions on business outside what would be considered solid business practice. That has been highlighted time and time again in the Auditor General's report.

The NDP government in this Crocus scandal is totally and completely culpable because of the result of these personal relationships. They existed, Mr. Deputy Chair, at the highest level in this government. We know that that labour leadership relationship was at the highest level, and the one and only balance put in place to ensure that this Crocus Fund would be run in a business-like fashion, the one and only piece that was put in place was thwarted because the NDP have a relationship with the labour leaders on the Crocus Fund.

So, Mr. Speaker, what is the result of this cozy relationship that we see between this Premier (Mr. Doer) and the labour leaders in Manitoba? The sad fact is that Manitobans lost money. It does not seem to register on this current government. Everybody knows about that relationship at the highest level, and now with the Auditor General's report coming in,

in 2001, everybody knows that, when industry reps in the department were questioned whether Crocus's long-term plans matched the government's original policy purpose on providing tax credits, the Crocus authorities said that they had already cleared their plans with those in a higher authority.

An Honourable Member: Well, who would that be?

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, that begs the question: Who would that higher authority in this NDP government be? I go back to the relationship between Mr. Olfert, Mr. Hilliard, Mr. Kostyra and the current Premier (Mr. Doer), who was a labour leader in this province for many years.

Mr. Speaker, Crocus has to make reports every year, as stated in the Auditor General's report. They have to make reports every year showing that the proceeds from the sale of Crocus shares had been properly invested in qualified businesses. Promptly invested, I should say, in qualified businesses. Well, again, as the Auditor General points out, Crocus failed to do that. They failed to achieve those guidelines.

* (15:50)

Now the other labour-sponsored fund, ENSIS, they were able to do it, but Crocus somehow failed, Mr. Speaker. What happened is when they failed to meet the deadline, this NDP government stepped in and made sure that everything was okay and looked after. Mr. Deputy Chair, therein lies another serious problem as to why \$60 million went missing for 34 000 Manitobans because this NDP government turned their back on serious issues like the fact that Crocus could not report according to the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry has a representative on the board of Crocus. That representative sits on the investment committee. Crocus took part in the Premier's Economic Advisory Committee, by the way of Mr. Kreiner, who was the CEO of Crocus. He sat on the Premier's advisory economic committee. I believe that Mr. Kostyra is also on that Economic Advisory Committee, and I believe that Mr. Olfert, if I am not mistaken, is the co-chair of that advisory committee.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat unusual that this government would try to say that they had no

knowledge of anything going on at Crocus when you realize that all of these dots connect to this NDP government. Where do they connect? They connect to, as the Auditor General points out, to a higher authority.

Well, I have already pointed out what happened in 2001, already pointed out the fact that in 2002, red flags in a memo came to the Finance Department. So now we have a red flag in 2001. We have a red flag in 2002, in the form of a memo, and what happens? This NDP government turns their back on those red flags. Now they are trying to cover up the fact that somehow they do not want to release those, simply because they believe that somehow a civil servant, a civil servant by the way that did their job by bringing these issues forward to the minister in the department, did their job, Mr. Speaker. We are getting this very lame excuse from this minister that somehow they cannot release these memos for fear that there will be some compromise with the civil servant. Well, as I repeat, that civil servant did their job and should be congratulated.

In order to make these memos public, all this minister has to do is simply black out the names of those civil servants. It is the content of the memo that is highly charged, Mr. Speaker, because that raises the question about what it is that this NDP government knew and why it is that they turned a blind eye to something that was very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, we also know that on November 19, according to the Auditor General's report, November 19, 2002, that Mr. Kreiner met with the Premier of Manitoba to discuss this superfund concept. Well, I find it very interesting when this Premier stands up and indicates that they had no knowledge of what was going on at Crocus, that somehow there was no relationship.

Well, Mr. Deputy Chair, we have already talked about the labour leadership. We have already talked about the fact that some of those labour leaders were on the Premier's Economic Advisory Council. Now we know, according to the Auditor General, that Mr. Kreiner, the former CEO of Crocus, actually came in and had a meeting with this Premier to talk about a superfund, a fund that would have TRAF and Workers Compensation and other pension funds as part of the Crocus fund, and at that point in 2002, there had been two red flags raised about issues at Crocus.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Industry, Minister Mihychuk, in 2003, had draft legislation that would have dealt with the monitoring and the controls of Crocus. In an interview that she did, she publicly stated, very clearly, that there were lots of issues that were coming forward about Crocus. So she, as a minister, took them very seriously and was starting to draft legislation that would have dealt with controls on how to deal with Crocus.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the higher authority or who it was—when they replaced the Minister of Industry with the new member from Brandon West, who took over the portfolio of Minister of Industry—the former minister states very clearly that she does not know what happened to that legislation that she was drafting. Somehow it got quashed. It went into that black hole that somehow some of these other memos have somehow tried to be put into. That is one of the reasons that this government, not only from the opposition, but from media outlets and members of the public are stating clearly it is time to do the right thing and call for a public inquiry.

In fact, I thought it was very interesting in that interview that it was the former Minister of Industry, Ms. Mihychuk, when she talked about the fact that she had draft legislation that was dealing with the controls on Crocus, that she is saying very clearly she would welcome the opportunity to clear the air, to come clean, to ensure that the truth be known. She is prepared to stand before a public inquiry and tell exactly what was happening because there is a cloud hanging over this, Mr. Speaker, and it is a very dark cloud. It is a dark cloud for Manitobans because they were fleeced of \$60 million. It is a dark cloud for Manitobans because venture capital under this NDP government has been given a severe black eye.

People want to have confidence in their venture capital. People want to know that if they are going to take the risk of putting money into venture capital, which is what it is, it is a risk, Mr. Speaker, but Manitobans have to know that, if they are going to take that risk, there is some accountability in the process. What we see with this NDP government is that none of those controls were put in place, or, if they were, as the former minister was trying to do, they somehow get quashed by a so-called higher authority.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that we know the Auditor General's report has come out. It is clearly a condemning report not only on the board and on the management but clearly on this NDP government. We know that the Manitoba Securities Commission is going to be looking at doing an investigation. We know that the RCMP are going to be doing an investigation, but it is very, very, very clear—it is clear to the public; it is clear to the opposition parties in this Legislature; it is clear to members of the media—that the only way that every stone gets turned over and looked under, every rock gets examined, nothing goes unwarranted, the only way to do that is to ensure that we have a public inquiry.

A public inquiry would simply ensure that there is somebody from the judiciary who understands corporate law, who has the ability to summon anybody, whether it is a minister, a former minister, a current minister, a member of the department, anybody at all, Mr. Speaker, to come forward, to swear under oath, swear their testimony and ensure that the truth on this Crocus scandal comes out.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we see that this NDP government wants to cover this up. I know that the minister, I should say the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province, has indicated that he is prepared to call an inquiry if it is in the public interest. I do not know how this Premier in all conscience, occupying the highest political office in the land, can honestly believe that when 34 000 Manitobans get fleeced of \$60 million, when all Manitobans, taxpayers that are involved in labour-sponsored pension funds have made a contribution of at least \$100 million, when the future of venture capital is being questioned in this province of Manitoba because of the questionable practices that this NDP government allowed to go unmonitored—how is it possible, Mr. Deputy Chair, that this Premier does not believe the right thing to do would be to call for a public inquiry?

Clearly, if he wanted a public inquiry, everybody would have a chance to come forward and tell the truth. It begs the question, unlike the former Minister of Industry, who was involved in drafting legislation that potentially could have prohibited 34 000 Manitobans from being fleeced, that minister wants to come forward and tell the truth, come clean. She wants to be accountable and transparent. So, Mr. Speaker, I think the question is, and we have been trying to ask this Premier since this Crocus scandal has erupted and since the Auditor General's report

has come out, if he has nothing to hide, if there is no sense of cover-up, if he, as the highest political office in the province, has nothing that he does not want to say, then why would he not do the right thing and call for a public inquiry?

Mr. Speaker, it is the right thing to do for this government. It is the right thing to do for the 34 000 Crocus unitholders. It is the right thing to do for the taxpayers of Manitoba, and it is the right thing to do if they truly believe in trying to promote venture capital and ensure that venture capital grows and thrives and survives in the province of Manitoba. The right thing to do is for this Premier to stand in his place and call for an independent public inquiry, unless he is trying to cover something up. Thank you very much.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Order, please.

* (16:00)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 21—The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): As previously agreed, we will now resume debate on bills. First bill to be called is Bill 21, The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Ms. Melnick), that Bill 21, The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we are going to oppose this bill and I will explain why.

For the last number of days and weeks, we have had a Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau) who has stood up in this Legislature and has indicated that the major problem with their being able to monitor Crocus was the fact that their promotion and monitoring was in the same department. Time and time again, the Minister of Industry has said this was a bad, bad, bad thing to put the promotion and the monitoring in the same department. This was the cause of all the problems that they had in monitoring Crocus. They could not monitor it properly because the promotion and monitoring were in the same department.

Now, we have this same Minister of Industry presenting us with a bill that puts the promotion and the monitoring of the oil industry in the same department. Mr. Speaker, the minister's bringing this bill forward is unadulterated hypocrisy. How could he possibly stand up and argue day after day after day in this House that it was a huge mistake to put promotion and monitoring in the same department and that was the reason for all those problems at Crocus?

I cannot remember exactly how many times he said that that was why Crocus was not monitored very often. But it was not once. It was not twice. It was not three times. It was ten or twenty or thirty times. Again, again and again the minister said the problem with being able to make sure that Crocus was running properly was that they had the monitoring and the promotion in the same department, and the department got mixed up in terms of what it was doing and could not possibly do its job properly, that they could not be monitoring and promoting at the same time. This was his reason for their not being able to monitor properly, Crocus.

Well, the fact is that we know that they had lots of warnings on Crocus, lots of red flags over years and they did not do the job of monitoring. There was a huge problem at Crocus. The Minister of Industry admitted there was a huge problem at Crocus. The Minister of Industry admitted there was a problem in monitoring Crocus because, as he said, there was a conflict within the department. The department was trying to promote and monitor at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, this act deals with the oil and gas industry, and it deals with the situation of being able to monitor and promote the oil and gas industry.

Indeed, we believe that there should be promotion and monitoring of the oil and gas industry, but they should be in two different departments instead of trying to have one department, because, as the minister himself has so clearly and adequately explained over the course of the last month, this is a problem when you put the monitoring and the promotion in the hands of one department.

We are opposed to the legislation as it stands and I think if the minister had any sense of consistency, any sense of rational, if he had even been listening to himself talking for the last several weeks, he would have the sense to withdraw this legislation and reconsider what he is doing. We would understand if he did that, and he could bring it back in the fall and do it properly, but we are certainly, in the Liberal Party, strongly opposed to this legislation. We are going to vote against it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any additional speakers on Bill 21?

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 21, The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): All those in favour of the motion, please signify by saying yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): In the opinion of the Chair, the Yeas have it.

An Honourable Member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): On division, and so ordered.

Bill 30—The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau), that Bill 30, The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any speakers to Bill 30?

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading in Bill 30, The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 38—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau), that Bill 38, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any speakers to Bill 38?

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): I rise on Bill 38 in third reading, but I do want to clarify one point I made yesterday in debate on Bill 46, The Manitoba Loans Act. There were a number of members from the New Democratic Party side that took great exception when I made the statement that we, as opposition in this House, represent more Manitobans than they do, on the government side of the House.

* (16:10)

I want to add very specifically into the record that according to Elections Manitoba 2003, that the New Democratic Party received support from persons in Manitoba tallying 195 425 persons, which represents 49.22 percent of Manitobans that voted in 2003. Clearly, more than 50 percent of Manitobans did not support this government, and that was what I was referring to yesterday afternoon. Even though an overwhelming number of representatives of the New Democratic Party were elected to this House, I want to caution all members of the New Democratic Party that they do not represent the vast majority of Manitobans and to recognize that fact and be cautious when believing that they do so.

Referring to Bill 38, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, I only want to state that this government has made a number of changes moving towards an atmosphere of less and less rent control on properties here in the province of Manitoba. There was presentation by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, and I just want to take this opportunity to state that this government should take the commentary of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce seriously and examine the merit of the comments so that they can look to further legislative changes that will address the shortage of residential rental properties here in the province of Manitoba. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 38, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 39—The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for debate is Bill 39, The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 39, The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I just want to say that we are prepared to support this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 39, The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 41—The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for consideration is Bill 41, The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 41, The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The

Highway Traffic Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words in regard to the Bill 41, The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. Clearly, the government is catching up to the actions that they have taken in regard to the movement of the Driver and Vehicle Licencing programs to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation from their department.

There is a process of following premiums from the cheques that we give in the country for our licences and vehicle registrations to the public insurance, to the government, and funds back to the public insurance, and it is a nebulous end of a flow of funds that, Mr. Speaker, I caution Manitobans to continue to be a watchdog in regard to this bill. But I think it is clear that the government's intention was to move it to a more arm's-length area under the Manitoba Public Insurance.

A caution that I have mentioned in second reading is that the government gets away here with saying that they have probably got 300 or 400 civil servants less on their payroll than what they would have by moving it over, and that is something that I have noted the Premier (Mr. Doer) already stated in the House on one occasion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I caution Manitobans that these are the kinds of games that can be played with these innocent-looking types of moves and bills that it deals with, The Manitoba Public Insurance Act as well as The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

With that, I would move that this bill be going on to finish any third reading, and that I know that the government will be moving to implement this bill. As I say, it is already well down the road to being implemented, and it is the type of legislation that sort of comes in after the fact, similar to when they took money out of Manitoba Hydro and then had to pass a bill later on to allow them to formalize the appropriation of funds that they had already taken, Mr. Speaker.

But this bill deals with the new statutes in this deal with the driver licensing, with vehicle regis-

trations, driver and vehicle information registries, driver improvement and control. It deals with some of the medical records that individuals would have, drug and alcohol programs, driver training schools and vehicle inspection stations and qualified mechanics and some of those areas, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I would close the debate on this particular bill from my end of it and turn it over to anyone else that may wish to make comment on this bill.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just briefly, we have some concerns about this legislation, but we are prepared to support it. We have concerns about how the new relationship and the responsibilities of MPIC will work, and we believe that this needs to be monitored very closely, just making sure that things are working in a reasonable fashion and that there are not problems developing as a result of these relationships.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Just a few comments on this bill, and this has largely to do with a situation that came to my attention about three or four years ago. It dealt with a person that had their licence suspended. What one needs to sometimes consider is in rural Manitoba there needs to be some provision made under the act, I believe, to deal with situations such as developed in this person's case.

This person was from rural Manitoba. He came to me one day and he said, "My licence is suspended. I know I deserve the suspension. However, I live 10 miles from town. I am a bachelor, by myself." He said, "How do I get to town and back to get my groceries, to get my mail, to get the essentials of living in a situation such as that?" He said, "I used to live in the city. A friend of mine had his licence suspended. For him it wasn't difficult. Dialed the taxi and had transportation. Jumped a bus, had transportation. Had all the public transportation at his access. But, me being 10 miles from nowhere, I can't even drive my tractor to town because you cannot drive a tractor to town anymore without having a valid licence as an indication that I'm qualified for driving."

* (16:20)

So I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at some point in time, I would suggest that this Legislative Assembly

be requested to find a way to allow for these people to at least be able to access the marketplace on a timely basis, that they are able to provide sustenance for themselves and the absolute living necessities that we require from time to time, such as groceries and other matters. I think there needs to be some consideration for that, when we do these kinds of pieces of legislation, that there are situations that arise that are simply untenable, under the current act, as it stands.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any additional speakers to Bill 41?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 41, The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 42—The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), that Bill 42, The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration, that Bill 42, The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Any debate on Bill 42?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few brief comments on this bill, which we

are ready to support, but with some concerns. My concern is that the potential in the inspection powers that are provided here, if not used appropriately, could be overly intrusive, could result in fishing expeditions, and could create more problems, in fact, than are necessary and cost people more time than is necessary. So I have some concerns about this legislation.

I think it will be very important to monitor things quite closely and to revisit this at some point in the future, to make sure it is working as it is supposed to be working. There is a concern here that it may have inspectors trying to fish for data, rather than go in for specific reasons and for specific purposes when there is a need to improve the health care for Manitobans.

I think we all want to improve the health care, but we want to do that in ways that will improve the efficiency, not ways that will cause more problems. So I think this needs to be monitored quite closely, and we would need to watch carefully the results of this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any further debate on Bill 42?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the committee is concurrence and third reading of Bill 42, The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 43—The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), that Bill 43, The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act, reported from the standing committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the committee is concurrence and third reading of Bill 43, The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 5—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill is Bill 5, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission).

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), that Bill 5, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any debate?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we have some concerns about this legislation, but we feel that, on balance, this is a modest improvement over what was before. It does not go as far as it probably needs to in terms of making sure that the MPIC process where people cannot get adequate satisfaction initially is fully addressed. But we are prepared to support it.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I certainly appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 5. This bill is an amendment to The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act, and it deals specifically with the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission. The main premise behind this amendment to the act is to reduce the number of commissioners that sit on the panel. The intent is there to reduce the number from three, which is now mandatory under the current legislation, to the appeals where they can now be heard by only one commissioner.

So we on this side of the House oppose the bill on the grounds that we feel that there should be three commissioners there to hear appeals. We think this would provide more of an opportunity to have a fair decision on an appeal made to the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, I think the government has neglected to look at the fundamental reason why we are incurring more and more claims. I just look at some of the numbers here over the last few years. Back in 1999, we had 164 appeals filed with the commission. In 2003, we had close to 190. So, certainly, there has been a significant increase in the number of appeals heard by the commission. I think that the fundamental reason is that people are not satisfied with how they are being handled in terms of the claims process.

So, instead of looking at the fundamental issue here in terms of how people are being handled in the claims process, the government has just decided to change the rules at the end of the day to allow less commissioners to hear those appeals. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that does not really talk about the fundamental reason why the commission is hearing more and more appeals.

Clearly, the evidence is the same when we look at a number of issues that have been raised at the Office of the Ombudsman regarding Manitoba Public Insurance. Back in 2000, there were 260-some phone calls to the Office of the Ombudsman regarding MPI. In 2003, that number had increased to over 360 claims. So, quite clearly, there is a fundamental issue there with how these claims are being handled by Manitoba Public Insurance. I think it would be in everyone's best interest that the

government of the day would look at why people are having issues with the claim handling process in Manitoba Public Insurance.

* (16:30)

Clearly, when Manitobans buy the Autopac product through one of their local brokers, they feel that they are buying a product which they feel they should have some level of comfort with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that at the end of the day, when they do have a situation arise, they do have a valid claim, that they have some recourse to have those claims looked after in a fair and equitable manner. But, quite clearly, there is some lack of confidence in that particular product that is being sold by the brokers across Manitoba, and, quite frankly, I think some of the people of Manitoba are losing confidence in that product that they are purchasing.

Obviously, this particular appeal commission deals directly with the Personal Injury Protection Program in Manitoba, and as such the Personal Injury Protection Program is a very important program to all Manitobans. Clearly, if the issues are not being addressed fairly and in an equitable manner, they have very little recourse. So, obviously, in going forward these claims have to be handled in a fair manner.

So, certainly our side of the House opposes the bill as it is written based on the grounds that we feel that the current act will allow more opportunity to have a fair decision once an appeal goes through before the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Any further debate on Bill 5?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 5, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): In the opinion of the Chair, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. John Loewen (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all due respect, I heard it quite differently. So I would ask you to ask for Yeas and Nays, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question before the House is Bill 5, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injuries Compensation Appeal Commission).

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Gerrard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale,

McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Faurshou, Goertzen, Hawranik, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner, Reimer, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 35, Nays 18.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is carried.

Bill 33—The Planning Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith), that Bill 33, The Planning Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines, *[interjection]* seconded by the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, that Bill 33, The Planning Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation. I think it is a badly flawed Planning Act, that it will create a lot of problems as it rolls out. Clearly, when you look carefully at the nature of this bill, it is the NDP's efforts to play hide-and-seek with the public to keep things behind closed doors so they are not subject to scrutiny. The amendments that were put forward to allow for public documents to come forward on the basis of the Technical Review Committee study were not supported by this NDP, as were a whole lot of other good options.

They did not listen to people at the committee stage, and clearly this is, as I see it, a badly flawed piece of legislation. There could have been easily, significantly more local management authority given

to local municipalities, particularly in the area of injection of manure, which many municipalities have handled responsibly. There are considerable variations from one part of the province to another. If you have one province-wide regulation, I suggest this is going to be a problem.

Mr. Speaker, we see this is as an attempt by the government to hide things instead of to bring them out into the open. It is the sort of thing that they are doing with Crocus, and certainly we will oppose this act as it is written this time.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): This is a piece of legislation that has been long in coming across Manitoba, and this is from a government that could have had it in place a year ago when they brought Bill 40 forward. I made those comments in second reading, and I think it is worth repeating, that if they had put a few amendments in place, they could have had a bill that would have worked back last fall. We would already have had a situation in Manitoba where we would have had clear direction.

Mr. Speaker, there is a concern, though, around the bill that was passed earlier today, Bill 22. Of course, last fall in the hearings for Bill 22, people were wondering what the regulations would be in that bill before we were able to get a planning act in place. Clearly, the people out in the municipalities today in Manitoba and across the farm groups in Manitoba, as well as many of the proponents of a cleaner environment, want to know what the regulations are for a bill like Bill 22 so that we know the rules around development.

*(16:50)

Mr. Speaker, the associations who came forward at the committees and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities have spoken to Bill 33. They have put forth a number of concerns. They are saying that this government has had opportunities to bring forth this type of legislation, and by killing Bill 40 last fall, left them in an untenable position of not knowing what direction they would go, leaving them with the old rules that were there, which they have clearly indicated that the crux of this bill is that municipal associations will be left with the final say on land use planning and that the province will be in charge of environmental controls.

Mr. Speaker, that is clearly where it is at. This bill talks about local livestock planning and regula-

tions now being done under The Planning Act, as opposed to The Municipal Act before. It talks about all of the regulations around manure storage, handling and disposal being in The Environment Act's livestock manure mortalities regulations, and that is clearly what this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, the Province has a responsibility by passing this legislation to make sure that now that they have clarified it, that the onus is squarely on conservation and the Department of Conservation with the environmental aspects that they have thrown into that area. It is another that we have talked many times today, about the government issues of having the proponent of an operation, the regulator and the proponent, in the same tent. Well, they have had that before and we need to make sure that we clarify that in regard to development of, not just livestock, but other issues that have come forward under Bill 33 as they have dealt with it.

Let us not be fooled. Bill 33 is just Bill 40 with a few more issues put back in it from the present-day rules that were under The Municipal Act. They broadened it out to include some other jurisdictions and areas. I brought forth, as the critic for this area, seven amendments that the government flatly refused. I just want to mention one of the amendments, 113(1.1), we brought forward where, as a clear indication that the government is not listening, and that was around the issue of the chair of the Technical Review Committee being a member of the Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Department. Their own government refused to pass that type of an amendment.

Mr. Speaker, an area that all of the farm organizations in Manitoba wanted as well was to have a written rejection from a municipality if a proponent's operation or a proponent's plan was not accepted. They wanted to, you know, receive a written rejection from the municipal jurisdiction that was making that decision. We felt that it was important to look at that and to bring it forward, not just for the proponents' sake, but also for the sake of the municipality because, of course, you do not want to put them in a position where there are lingering thoughts as to why the plan was refused, particularly after any proponent that is going to come forward would have known what the zoning by-laws were for this particular jurisdiction. Under this act, they must, by January of '08, all the municipalities in the province of Manitoba, have a clear zoning by-law in regard to developmental procedures in place, and if

they do not have, then the government has the right to put that in place for them.

Well, fortunately, because of the fact that the legislation had come forward under the previous Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs when she was there, before she left to run for the mayor of Winnipeg, and brought that legislation forward, there was clear, you know, I guess, discussions and indications that for some time this government has been thinking about this type of legislation and wanting to clarify these areas.

I think that, Mr. Speaker, it is worth it to put on the record here the issue of written rejection. Because the municipalities have their by-law in place, no proponent of a proposed development would likely come forward with a plan that did not clearly meet the requirements of the zoning by-law for that area, anyway. It would just make good sense that once the municipality has determined where you can build and where you cannot build in their own jurisdiction, then what would you have? A municipality declare that they did not like the project. If you are meeting all of the rules that they have put in place, it is very clear that they are trying to, at least the proponents, meet all of the specifications that might be there today.

Of course, the Technical Review Committee needs to be in place to have scientific background and scientific mechanisms to make sure that the proponents are meeting a determined standard, an accepted standard, in the industry. Therefore, as I have said many times, we in Manitoba, as we develop these types of industries, have the opportunity, if we could use the catch phrase, to do it right the first time. I think that is a very important issue in regard to being able to meet the zoning plans that these municipalities will put in place, and I think that it is part and parcel of why the farm organizations in Manitoba, the livestock groups, particularly Keystone Ag Producers and others, brought forward and made the request that the chairman of the Technical Review Committee be a member of the Manitoba agrifood area.

Mr. Speaker, it is worth repeating that the written rejection of a plan should be there as well. I want it noted that this government had promised to bring both of those forward to all of those farm organizations before we had committee. I had to bring them forward in report stage from this side of

the House to do the government's work, and they defeated them. After promising the farm organizations in Manitoba that they would bring these types of amendments forward—and no wonder they do not have any credibility with the farm organizations in Manitoba when they do this to them. They spent considerable amount of time on the phone with them, directly and other areas, and I just want to express to the minister, my disheartenment. I know that from speaking to some of those organizations today, he will be hearing from them directly, if he has not already today. I know that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is very involved in this as well, the Deputy Premier. There is a little higher authority left in the province than herself, but that, of course, has been an issue in other areas and other jurisdictions, particularly in relation to the Crocus Fund and the Floodway Authority, BSE issues around the province.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I will say that I do not believe that this is a perfect bill and there will be many shortfalls, as we have pointed out, but this is a bill that has been asked for for some time, a few years here now under this government. This government has not fixed this bill because they have gone part way, but they certainly have not done the things that would make it an opportunity to deal with these shortfalls that I have pointed out from the amendments that we put in place.

With those comments, I just caution the government as they move forward and put regulations around this bill and Bill 22 to make sure that they are doing it with a balance of support for industries in Manitoba, as well as support for the environment, and that they take the responsibility that they have now asked for and direct it to the municipalities that they be the ones that are in charge of environmental issues and that they take it seriously and that they do not abuse that in their ability to enhance development in the province of Manitoba as well.

So, with those comments, I would end my comments on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 33, The Planning Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): All those in favour of the motion, please signify by saying yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): In the opinion of the Chair, the Yeas have it.

An Honourable Member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): On division. The motion is carried on division.

Bill 48—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants, reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

* (17:00)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Debate?

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): This bill has certainly raised a lot of concerns for a lot of people. There are thousands of retired teachers in this province. We were hoping at this point in time that

this government was prepared to address and listen to their concerns. In fact, what we found out through this process is that this government had no intention of even introducing this bill this session.

That became evident when the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) said that his government had no intent of bringing this bill forward, that they expected that they would deal with it next session and that the teachers understood where this government stood. They were good to teachers, and they would understand if it did not go forward this session.

Unfortunately, with the notes that were passed to us by the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), we found out the cost, the dear cost that this would have cost to the pension plan had even six months gone by. This minister and this government certainly had a cavalier attitude toward the detrimental effects that any waiting would have had. There have been problems with this pension for a long time, and it certainly was the time to right a wrong. It was time to address the historical promises that had been made to retired teachers and to address this issue, but this government had absolutely no intent to do that.

The only reason that Bill 48 is before us today is because this side of the House brought it to where it was, pushed it to happen and are moving forward with helping to address the pension issue for teachers in this province, because this minister of education has bungled this whole pension legislation amongst everything else he is bungling in his role as the Minister of Education.

Of particular importance to teachers, not only to retired teachers but the working teachers right now, is the lack of activity, the lack of movement forward to address this COLA issue. What this government is doing by that, therefore, is passing on to future generations an incredible, I think, problem.

The minister likes to say, "Well, we have been good to teachers. We have opened the act four times." So he is trying to pacify teachers to say, "Well, we have done it four times, you know, just hang on." Well, in four times, never once did they address the issue of COLA, and that is still standing out there as a major, major hurt amongst teachers. The retired teachers were in an all-day meeting today, and the minister refused to listen to them the other night when over 40 of them came here, stood, most of them standing in a small, hot room here

until the wee hours of the morning, wanting to get this minister's attention. Mr. Acting Speaker, this minister certainly had a cavalier attitude towards all of their presentations.

The amendment that we would have brought forward would have been absolutely perfect for this government. It was non-partisan. The parties that needed to be at the table were there, from MTS, RTAM, the provincial government, as well as an independent member. They could have properly, thoroughly and actuarially examined this issue and come up with some recommendations that would improve COLA for the future, but it has certainly become clear that retired teachers need to be very aware that the minister and this government have paid nothing but lip service to the many teachers that really had high hopes for this government with this legislation. Many of them, the night of the committee hearings, waited there half the night and then came back the next morning to make their voices heard, but we certainly know just how this minister heard their concerns.

In report stage, he dismissed our amendment as redundant. He and his colleagues all stood in this House on a recorded vote and voted against an amendment that would address the COLA issue for retired teachers. Every one of them stood here and said, "No, we are not going to look at an amendment that would have, by the end of January of next year, come forward with recommendations."

The Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) said that the Pension Task Force that is in place already addresses this. Well, maybe the minister is not aware, but the task force, which was set up in 1976, is more tokenism now than it is anything else. It has no decision-making power. It has fallen into disuse. It was more effective in its early days than what it is now. So he is saying, "Well, the Pension Task Force is there." The Pension Task Force has no ability to do anything other than have a conversation. I heard that the government totally rejected what that Pension Task Force wanted to put forward. They came up with three different sets of numbers and this government chose their own numbers, and the reason they did not go with the 2 percent recommended by the MTS was because they do not want to spend the money. That is why they were going to drag this out until the fall and save themselves a chunk of money, but it would have hurt the whole pension plan far worse than anything.

This minister was more worried about saving government money than he was in addressing this pension issue. I understand that there were three sets of numbers that were put forward and this minister picked his own number rather than doing what was recommended by MTS. Everybody is wondering where did this government get 1.1 percent. The union was recommending 2 percent. Nobody can understand where this government got the 1.1 percent. Well, we know it was because they did not want to spend any more money. They did not want to correct a wrong. They did not want to right a wrong. They just wanted to find a way to stall this issue again, probably believing, "Oh, teachers will not do much, teachers are on our side. This is not going to offend teachers too much."

However, Mr. Acting Speaker, teachers are very offended, working teachers, retired teachers. If this minister does not think that they are going to hear more from them, he is terribly, terribly mistaken, because what he has done is continuing to hurt them. Obviously, he was not listening very well the other night at committee because he has basically thumbed his nose at what they were saying and he has done nothing to take this issue forward.

So teachers have become very aware of this minister's cavalier attitude towards looking at this issue. They know that this particular Bill 48 that was put forward with their 1.1 percent and then with the numbers that they put forward, the numbers, in fact, themselves beg some questions because they show an unfair distribution of the money. What they actually end up showing is that the most lowly paid teachers, the teachers coming in at entry level, are subsidizing the teachers that are paid at a higher level. Really, this is not appropriate, really, in the numbers that this government put forward. You know they went from 5.7 to 6.8. Why did they not look at something like 5.7 to 6.3? Instead of going from 7.3 percent to 8.4 percent, why did they not look at something 8.9 percent or 9 percent? Why did they not look at a more fair distribution that would have been fair to younger teachers, that would have been more appropriate?

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, while this minister was saying that they were doing all of these wonderful things for teachers and that this Pension Task Force could deal with all these issues, this Pension Task Force was thrown together hastily. I am told they only had one meeting. They had one meeting and anything they came up with, this government

rejected. They came up with their own numbers, and basically what is going to happen now is a passing on of a burden into the future. They are tinkering with a serious, serious pension problem, and what they are doing by tinkering is only passing on this burden into the future. They have not even listened to any of the actuarial recommendations. What they have done is they have continued to allow this pension plan for teachers to be put at risk.

* (17:10)

I would just like to say that they have created some serious concern amongst teachers and retired teachers and, certainly, we will acknowledge that at least they went a tiny step forward with the 1.1 percent, but all they have done by doing that is tinker, they have not fixed, and they have passed a huge burden that is going to affect everybody down the road. I think really what they have done is quite inexcusable.

I have to just acknowledge, out of all the members on their side that are teachers, we have to wonder why the members for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), the Minister for Healthy Living (Ms. Oswald), the Minister for Conservation (Mr. Struthers), the Minister for Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), or the Minister for Education (Mr. Bjornson) did not stand up and speak for teachers beyond everybody. Teachers are saying, "You sold us out," and this government did. They never spoke up for teachers, Mr. Speaker, and shame on them for not doing a better job of dealing with the teachers' pension issue. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we will support this legislation, but we have some real problems with the way that the government handled it because it could have been so much more than what was delivered. Clearly, the retired teachers need consideration. Retired teachers should have been included. Retired teachers should have been met with, and there should have been much better legislation for this.

It is an illustration of a government which is only doing a little bit when it should be doing a lot more. It was an example of a government which said it supports teachers but then delayed for months, I think maybe even two years, before meeting with teachers, an example of a government which says one thing but then brings in this legislation very late

in the session, does not really expect to pass it until the fall but, when is pushed by members of the opposition, we now will have this passed. At least, there will be some benefit for teachers, even though what should have been achieved should have been much better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 51—The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur les fonds de placement des travailleurs (modification de diverses dispositions législatives), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, that Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to put a few more words on the record regarding Bill 41. I have already indicated to the House that this bill is basically so flawed and simply just window dressing that it is hard to imagine spending much time on it in the House.

As we have said before, the damage has been done because this government did not do the job that they were given. They did not follow their own advice when they introduced Bill 28 in 2001 into this

House and monitor this fund. As a result, we are sadly witnessing 34 000 Manitobans who are getting financially hurt by this government's inability to monitor the Crocus Fund and, worse still, by their compliance and collusion with the fund in turning a blind eye when red flags were raised by the dedicated public servants of this government to indicate that there were serious problems that needed addressing.

In all the clauses in here, there are really only two issues that this bill touches on with regard to the Auditor General's report, and one already is simply changing back Bill 28 to the original act. It was in Bill 28, the amendments introduced by this government in 2001, that changed the definition of 10% investment into a fair market value as opposed to cost. They did that so that simply overnight, with a stroke of the pen, they could put an investment in Westsun onside that they knew was offside. They all ought to be embarrassed and ashamed about that. Instead of standing up and ringing the bell, they kowtowed to the labour leaders that they so purposely govern for, and the result is Manitobans, many thousands of Manitobans, have got hurt.

The minister has had to amend this bill on at least six occasions since introducing it to the House which again shows how flawed it was. I would refer the minister to section 81 of the bill. That is probably the one that speaks to government more than anything and in the French version replacing duh duh by duh, and from the looks of the member beside him, one would seem to think this might be more aptly titled dumb and dumber bill. In any event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are creating more problems than they are solving with this bill because, if the minister was to look at section 21, we would understand that this clause says that the liquidity must be based on market value, 15 percent of the market value as opposed to 15 percent of the cost.

They have done this purposefully to reduce the restrictions on the Crocus Fund because the Crocus Fund has lost so much money that, in order to keep the 15% at-cost number, it would require the fund to keep an exorbitant amount of cash around, but what they are doing is penalizing the successful funds. For example, if a fund is to have a—*[interjection]* Just let me finish this point. If a fund is to have a big winner in its portfolio, if they have a company that goes from a market value of \$10 million to a market value of \$100 million, by applying clause 21, it

means all of a sudden instead of having \$1.5 million in liquid reserves, they have to have \$15 million in liquid reserves which makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Deputy Speaker, point of order. I appreciate that the member has recognized my opportunity to speak. I wonder if there is leave of the House not to see the clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Is there agreement of the House not to see the clock? *[Agreed]*

There is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I appreciate it was not a point of order, I appreciate the gesture from the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. I will not be too long in this bill, but I just want to reiterate that clause 21 is going to accomplish nothing except penalize success, and, quite frankly, I am not surprised at that from this NDP government, because, you know, that is their vision of Manitoba.

We had a member from the Interlake who had the gall to stand up in this House and say thank goodness there are so many poor people in Manitoba because that meant the NDP would be in government. That fully describes the attitude that this government has towards the people in the province of Manitoba. They want to keep them down. They want to beat them up. They want to make sure that there is no hope, that there is no opportunity. They want to bring in the highest tax regime in the country. They are just interested in beating people down and that is unfortunate.

* (17:20)

They are interested in beating retired teachers down. We just saw that with Bill 48. They are not interested in building this province. They are interested in beating down entrepreneurs. We saw that by the cavalier attitude they brought toward handling the venture capital market in Manitoba. That is no way to grow wealth and prosperity in this province. This is something that members opposite need to pay a great deal of attention to. This bill, in

essence, is window dressing. It puts in a bunch of clauses which are meaningless. You cannot legislate profit, you know. Just like you cannot legislate no more bullying in the province of Manitoba. What you can do is get out there and work with people.

I would remind the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) that doing it in a small group behind closed doors where you are excluding people's attendance does not help the problem. It just furthers the problem because when you lock people out, when you close the doors, when you refuse to be open and honest, that in itself is a form of bullying. When people see their provincial government act in that manner, it is hard for them to understand how serious we are about that issue. I hope the Minister of Education would take that thought with him the next time he wants to deal with an issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot legislate committee structure in a venture capital fund and make it work. What you have to do is make absolutely sure that the people in charge of the fund, the board of directors understands that every decision made by the fund is clearly their responsibility. They are responsible for overseeing every decision, the big ones and the little ones. They cannot delegate to committees any decision. Decisions that are made by committees have to be approved by a board of directors, and the board of directors has to understand that they are fully responsible. One of the big problems we saw with the Crocus Fund is that, although they had a committee structure not unlike the committees that are identified in this bill, they just delegated authority to the committees, and when the committees reported to the board, they simply rubber-stamped that decision.

I know this was frustrating to some board members. I have talked to board members on the Crocus Fund, former board members, some of them, quite frankly, government representatives that were appointed by government on the board who have come to government and said, "Please take me off this board because nobody is listening to me. Management and the representatives of the Manitoba Federation of Labour simply override every question that is brought up. They vote as a block on every issue, and they control the fund." That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is what went wrong with the Crocus investment Fund along with many, many other issues that were pointed out in the Auditor General's report.

So, again, on the basis of the fact that this bill does accomplish two steps that the Auditor General has recommended, and on the understanding and the word given by the Minister of Industry who is responsible for this bill that the committee he has established this summer to consult with the industry and with this category of shares to bring further enhancements to this legislation, on the understanding that he realizes that it makes no sense to penalize those funds that are successful by changing the 15 percent of shareholders' liquidity requirement to fair market value as opposed to cost, we are willing to let this bill go through.

We are counting on this government listening to the committee that has been struck, bringing these issues back to the House with expedience in the fall so that any other amendments can be dealt with prior to the selling season, the primary selling season, which happens in January and February with the one remaining labour-sponsored venture capital fund. We hope they will take the recommendations of the committee to heart.

We hope, at some point, some member opposite, I would prefer it was the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Finance Minister would do, but I would hope that some member opposite would have the courage and the intestinal fortitude to stand up and apologize to the 34 000 Manitobans who invested in the Crocus Fund in good will, in the belief that government was monitoring this fund, that government believed this fund was playing a valuable role within Manitoba and with the belief that government, by the very fact that it was giving generous tax credits for investments in this fund, and were then encouraged in the amendments it made in Bill 28, encouraged investors to roll their funds over to receive another tax credit.

I hope they will stand up and apologize to Manitobans for all the red flags that were missed and all the problems that will be caused for those individuals who have invested in the fund when they try to draw on what is left of those funds for their retirement.

I will just close by saying the proper thing to do is not to pass legislation; the proper thing to do is to call a public inquiry. I would ask the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) to sit with her Premier (Mr. Doer), and with her Finance Minister. Do the right thing for Manitobans; do the right thing for the investors. Call

a public inquiry. Clear the air. Get the capital markets in Manitoba back on solid footing, and move forward from there. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, this bill, which was brought forward to try and improve things at Crocus, is coming now to a vote in third reading at a time when Crocus is just about dissolved, it would appear. It is sort of a little bit too late for the action here in many respects. If this had been moved forward quickly, if there had been an annual meeting, if the amendment that we proposed had been accepted that the majority of the directors would be elected by the shareholders, by the unit-holders so they would be in the driver's seat in terms of making decisions, then there might have been some usefulness in terms of the Crocus Fund in doing this. But all these changes, it would appear, may have very little impact, given the fact that we know in the last few days that Crocus is on its way out the door. That is very sad. We hope that for the shareholders' benefit that they will get as much as they possibly can from the Crocus Fund, but it certainly does not look very promising.

The poor oversight by this government, the lack of attention to red flags clearly have been major issues all along the way. So this might have been good legislation if it had been brought in about three or four years ago, but it is a little too late now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 16—The Wildlife Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): The next bill for debate is Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act.

Any speakers?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act, reported in the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Debate?

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to participate in the debate on Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act. This act is bewildering to myself, and I do not understand why the minister responsible for the bill, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), in committee did not listen to individuals that were noting glaring omissions and errors within the bill. We on this side of the House attempted to address some of the issues with the bill through amendment, but this government chose to vote the amendments down for no reason other than a very partisan positioning by the government members on the committee. This bill, in the explanatory note, states that it is the intent of this bill to prohibit the use of poison to control predators in defense of their property.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

* (17:30)

In layman's terms, essentially producers in the livestock industry are threatened by predatory animals, perhaps they be coyotes or fox or other animals in the wild. Currently, when you have a predator within your flock, within your herd, it is extraordinarily difficult to protect your herd or flock by use of firearm only, which is essentially all that this bill is going to allow. Right now, we have the option of using poison to control the predators. This bill is going to make it prohibited to do so.

Understanding that the current situation, that it allows now after the passage of this bill, would exist that persons would have only one option, and that is to use a firearm. Well, Mr. Speaker, the use of a firearm in large areas throughout the province of Manitoba currently is prohibited through by-law

by municipalities. So, when the minister states that livestock producers will still have the option of using a firearm, they will not, because they are prohibited by by-law in using a firearm within exclusion zones that are clearly identified by municipalities.

I want to emphasize to the members of the government that are present that this government did not even consult with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities to find out how much of southern Manitoba area was within exclusion zones, through by-law, prohibiting the use of firearms. The minister stated that, "Yeah, it will be no problem. We will still have the use of firearms to control predators and protect our flocks." This, clearly, is not the case. A glaring error on behalf of this government, that would have made themselves aware of the situation had they only consulted with the association of municipalities or varied Capital Region municipalities if they had only made even a minor attempt to do so.

Mr. Speaker, this particular act is clearly offside with livestock producers here in the province of Manitoba. This act is also offside with guides and outfitters throughout the province of Manitoba because, as it is now, one department handles the issuance of licences, is responsible for the administration of hunting licences here in the province of Manitoba, and this act is going to divide that responsibility between two separate ministries. Ultimately, two separate ministries means that there will be two separate administrations created in order to allocate licences to guides and outfitters here in the province of Manitoba. The guides will remain under the Department of Conservation for issuance of hunting licences and the outfitters will garner their licensing for hunting under another department because they will be governed by The Resource Tourism Act and that will come under the Culture, Tourism and Heritage Minister.

So how are we ever going to get any consistency when two separate departments are trying, effectively, to govern one activity within the province of Manitoba? It makes no sense. It is a grave concern. I do not believe that this government understands the need to be consistent, the need to be cost-effective, the need to be able to issue a hunting licence in an expeditious fashion. I believe that, again, this act is glaringly deficient in understanding the governance required in the hunting here in the province of Manitoba.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in another clear effort on behalf of this government to garner even more money from Manitobans and those persons visiting our province, they have introduced yet another part of this act to establish that fees and charges will be applied to not only skins, pelts and hides, but this act wants to add the word "parts." Clearly this government wants to diversify its schedule of royalties and wants to collect more money from Manitobans.

The Association of Outfitters and Guides in the province of Manitoba made presentation—I should be accurate, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association that made presentation that drew attention to this situation whereby the act is adding the word "parts." They are concerned that when one purchases a licence to hunt in this province, when someone comes to this province and garners a licence to hunt, both situations the expectation is that you are paying for the privilege of harvesting an animal in the wilds of Manitoba. You do not expect to get a notice in the mail from this government asking for more money because the animal is now dissected into however many parts and you now have to pay a royalty for, well let us say the hooves, or let us say the ears, or let us say the antlers.

When one buys a licence, you expect if you are able to harvest an animal, you will not have another surcharge or bill from this government. But, clearly, this government is bent on trying to open all avenues that will garner more resources, more money, from the pockets of Manitobans and those that visit our province. So, essentially, this section within this act is clearly offside with many individuals engaged in this practice whether it is support of or actively hunting.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I will say that this clause is out of order because the government is attempting to add the word "parts" to legislation without providing for definition. How is a government going to provide regulation to which they ultimately want to apply royalties, and there is no definition of "parts." I attempted to try and find exactly what the word "parts" really, truly means so I went to the dictionary, and this is the definition that was enclosed: Part is a general term appropriate when indefiniteness is required. In other words, this government is trying to slip in a word that is so broad in nature that it really, truly can be interpreted in thousands upon thousands of ways.

* (17:40)

Mr. Speaker, if you really want to get into the definition of a part of an animal, one can look to the medical journals and the journals that persons study in veterinarian college. You look at just the skin or the hide or a pelt of an animal, and there are multiple, multiple different parts to that very small region of an animal. When one thinks about an antler, for instance, well that has multiple dermal layers. So how is this government going to define "parts" without a definition, and is the schedule of royalties for parts going to be two, three, a dozen pages in length, each defining what, perhaps, a hair and then a selection within that hair, or for the ear, to which it will be an outer and inner part, and within those parts, there are other parts?

Mr. Speaker, this clause, really, if I was not trying to keep my composure this afternoon, would find me breaking into laughter. In fact, I am trying to contain myself because I am indeed, perhaps, splitting hairs, but this is what this government is leaving on the books. How can we as legislators support something that is so vague, so far out of context?

I will say that when one as vague as it is in indefinitiveness, it means vague, it means dim, it means obscure, maybe this is, perhaps, a little bit more appropriate synonym, and that means shadowy. What is this government trying pull over on we, as legislators, with such an indefinitiveness by including the word part. It is something that is wrong. It is out of order. One cannot include a word that is not defined and then try to add regulation which is based upon a word which is not defined, and I know each and every minister across the way cannot support something that is really, truly out of order.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on and state, regarding this bill, this government prides itself, at least when it is trying to garner more support from Manitobans, say that it recognizes that impartiality, as to whether someone is of a specific race or religion or creed, and especially gender. Well, I ask, at this point in time, why the government did not attempt to make The Wildlife Act gender-neutral? Why not? This act clearly is only addressing the males in the province engaged in hunting. I know that there was a small passage within a bill earlier that excused this government temporarily from, basically, not recognizing

that all acts of this legislature should recognize both genders, but this is a perfect opportunity for this government to have made this act gender-neutral, and they have not.

Mr. Gregory Dewar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

This is something that really, truly goes against what I stand for as a representative of the constituency of Portage la Prairie, and I hope that all members of this Legislative Assembly have listened to the points to which I brought in third reading of this bill.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

That is why I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler),

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following:

Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be not concurred in and read a third time, but that it be concurred in and read a third time this day six months hence.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to second the motion. I took a good look at this bill when it was brought forward by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and, under the briefing notes that were provided to the member from Portage, there was an indication that the groups have been approached and talked about with the impact that this would have on the industry. We find out that the municipalities were not addressed on this particular bill. They never had a chance for input. We also talked to the sheep association. They were not addressed on this particular bill. Also, the cattlemen's were not approached on this bill, and we find it ironic that the minister would make a statement that was not true.

With that, we find it appalling that they would want to move this bill forward at a point in time without proper discussion on this particular bill, a bill that is going to impact that industry for years and years to come. It is so important, so important, that we take this bill and rewrite the bill, whereby it is

going to be beneficial for all parties concerned. The outfitters addressed concern, and I know the minister took heed to it, but he did not accept the amendments that were brought forward by this side of the House.

We feel that the fact that the municipalities and the outfitters, there are questions that never went on, that should have been addressed. Well, this will give the minister an opportunity to make sure that the bill is right. I know in my last comments to the minister with respect to one municipality within my jurisdiction, the R.M. of Rockwood has a by-law where you cannot fire a firearm within a certain area of the city limits, and this is an unfair situation we have put the farmers in, in order to protect their livestock. This is a serious situation for all farmers, for those within not only the municipality that we are involved with, but all farmers. In fact, without some type of protection, even the farmers would be in a situation where they would be compromised, and we need to make sure that their livestock is protected.

So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this bill, this motion, be hoisted in for six months and reviewed at that particular time.

Mr. Faurichou: Mr. Speaker, I trust the government is listening to the debate this afternoon because if they—

Mr. Speaker: Do any other members wish to speak? Because if the honourable member speaks, it is his motion; he will be closing debate. Any other members?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly to the significant problems with this bill, the way that the government has poorly handled it, although we are not necessarily opposed to the goal of having much less reliance on poison in the control of predators, that certainly the way that this government has gone with this bill, it should have been put off until the fall session. It should have had much better treatment, and it should have had much better review and come back later.

* (17:50)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I did want to put a few words on the record in regard to the amendment that is being proposed by the member from Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Speaker, in putting the comments, what I would like to do is put it into the perspective of

House management and express some disappointment. I think the member from Portage la Prairie did the right thing in regard to Bill 16, in moving an amendment of this nature.

I would expand that to suggest to people, as an example, to look at Bill 50; Bill 50 is yet another bill, and, I must say, my intentions were to do what the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) has done, and that is to move a six-month hoist. The reason for that is because I do believe that there is a process that should have been taken into consideration and, as opposed to speaking on Bill 50, what I am going to do is just put my comments on the record on both those bills right now.

If you take a look at Bill 50, what you will see is legislation that has been brought forward to this House under the disguise of a fairly omnibus bill that does not really change any of our laws when, in fact, there are significant changes that are being made. Significant to the degree in which some of those changes should have been brought in as independent pieces of legislation, should have been introduced by separate ministers, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to being brought in, in the fashion in which they are being brought in. That is why, if I compare Bill 50 to Bill 16, you see the similarities; you see where government really has not done its job. It has not been effective in terms of bringing in legislation that clearly demonstrates that it has done the work that it should have done prior to bringing in the legislation.

Even though my intent, as I say, was to speak on Bill 50, because this is a bill that I think is the classic example of how the government has not managed the affairs of this Chamber properly, and I would suggest to members that they really read through that particular bill. As I said, I will not move that motion, because I want to be sensitive in terms of the issue of time, but I do believe the government has not done this Chamber a service by the way in which they brought it in. In terms of this particular amendment, as I have indicated, it is an amendment that can be supported. This is a bill in itself that we do not support, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to take, also, this opportunity just to express some appreciation to those individuals who have assisted me in preparation of the private members' bills. It has been a great deal of effort on relatively a small number of people, and I just wanted to acknowledge that, and to, once again, express appreciation to the table officers—

[interjection]—yes, my wife happens to be one of those, and she is not paid; the table officers, the pages, just the individuals who really make this Chamber operate as well as it does, Mr. Speaker.

Having said that, I think it is a good amendment, and it is an amendment that should pass. If by chance it were to pass, No. 1, I would be amazed, but No. 2, if it did pass what I would like to be able to see is that the same should be done with Bill 50. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Bill 50 should be pulled, period. Thank you.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): This is a good bill, and this is not a good amendment to a good bill.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, we worked very hard to make sure that people understand what this bill is about. We made sure we worked with the lodges and outfitters to make sure that they were supportive. We worked with a number of people who have concerns in terms of the farm community. It is not our intention to leave farmers without the tools they need to deal with predators. I understand the advice that I got from members opposite in second reading, and, also, the advice that I was given by some members opposite in terms of dealing with predators. I also understand, though, that we cannot allow a situation to continue where poisons are used, poisons are getting into the system and killing off in a collateral way other animals, including endangered species, that this government really does have an obligation to move forward on.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am afraid that I cannot support the hoist motion that was brought forward by my friend from Portage la Prairie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reid): Are there any other speakers before I go to the Member for Portage la Prairie?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I want to simply put a few remarks on the record with regard to this bill, because this bill has not really been thought out very well. We saw this type of legislation proposed to us when we were in government, and we did not accept it because of the pitfalls that it has, and some of the considerations that have to be taken into account when you are dealing with predators in rural Manitoba.

That is what this government does not understand. That is what this minister does not understand. Of course, he does not understand much about agriculture and about the needs of agriculture, so I am not surprised that he would be as gullible as just simply taking up that bill when it is presented to him. There are some folks in our beloved bureaucracy that can do this to you. They will have an agenda, and they will present it to the minister. If the minister is not really on the bit, he will accept it *carte blanche* because it has been provided by, oh, those wonderful people that support him.

Now, I have nothing wrong to say about the bureaucracy, but there are individuals, as there are in any other organization, that have an agenda. They have hoodwinked this minister and now he is coming forward with this legislation. That just demonstrates what a novice minister does. He falls into a trap, and he brings forward legislation that he does not really give a great deal of thought to and has not done any research on. He just takes the word of the sponsors of those bills in his department.

I must say, we saw this legislation. By the way, we saw this legislation years ago. We avoided it for good reason, but this minister has not. He has just fallen into that trap, and away he goes. In other words, he does not really control anything in his department. It is all controlled by somebody else, but we have seen that before from this minister.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I want to talk to you about another issue, and that is the issue of picking lots. Now, you saw the minister rolling the drum, and you saw the lots that he was going to be selling. Now, he did that last year too, and this has become the annual joke, because now the minister is trying to sell you a piece of swamp. He puts these lots on the docket, and have you ever visited them? Well, at Assessippi, along the Shellmouth Dam, is area that has been designated as potential cabin-building area.

Oh, yes, we have got lots for sale, but the only problem is you cannot get to them, because there is no road. He is wanting somebody else to build the road, but it looks good on paper. I will tell you, when he comes out with his list and he says, "Ladies and gentlemen of Manitoba, come out and pick your lot, because we have got 400-or-some lots." He does not tell you they are all swamp lots, but, nevertheless, you have an opportunity to pick your lot.

Well, people are a little wiser than the minister. They understand that if I am going to be buying a lot for \$35,000, \$40,000 and they go beyond that, but I cannot even get to the darned lot, so how do I know what I am buying? It is a pig in a poke, but this is how silly the department has become. It is all about spin. If we can spin Manitobans into believing we are doing something, my Lord, we have accomplished it.

* (18:00)

It is the same with this bill, because he says, "We are going to not allow anybody to use poison on any predators." I want to ask the minister has he ever been at a cattle ranch where coyotes and predators come in and destroy calves in the spring of the year. They will literally come into the shelters, and they will night over with the calves and they will take the calf they want in the morning. I have personally been in that situation where I have caught them inside cattle shelters. How do you destroy a predator like that? Do you shoot him and risk the chance of shooting one of your own animals? Do you start shooting in that environment and maybe hit your own house or put holes through your own building?

Mr. Speaker, the minister has the same solution for this as he had for the deer on Roblin Boulevard. What did he say about the deer on Roblin Boulevard? Does anybody remember?

An Honourable Member: Shoot.

Mr. Derkach: "You got to shoot them," he says. Can you imagine going out on Roblin Boulevard with your 30-aught-6 and blasting away at those poor deer that the children just bussed to see as they roam in the parks in the Roblin Boulevard area. Now that was the minister's solution on how we are going to deal with the deer, and now he has got a new solution how we are going to deal with predators.

Well, strike No. 3 because, first of all, he goofed on the way he was going to deal with the deer. Then he put these lots up for sale in the swamps of Manitoba that nobody wants, and now he has got this bill before us that makes about as little sense as his other initiatives. So he still has a lot to learn, but Manitobans understand and they will certainly reward the minister down the road with the appropriate kind of a reward.

I want to go back a little ways to an issue that happened on Lake of the Prairies before the minister was a minister. When he got beat up by the people who absolutely saw that what was going on was wrong, he got to a meeting in Dauphin and he rolled up his sleeves and—first, he took off his coat and then he rolled up his sleeves. Then he came to the mike, and he said, "I don't give a," and you are not supposed to use profanity in the House, "if you elect me or not 'cause I can go back to teaching." Well, maybe we will give the member that opportunity in this next election. *[interjection]* Yes, he has to be careful about his pension.

So, Mr. Speaker, I regret that the minister has not really put a great deal of thought into this legislation because if he had put some thought into this and if he had, first of all, consulted with the member from Portage, who has an understanding of this legislation and understands why it should be hoisted, because by hoisting this legislation, we are giving the minister an out. We are giving the minister an out. He can redeem some of his, I guess, dignity by going out and consulting with the people who this bill is going to impact on, and then come back to the House and perhaps come in with a wiser, more thought out piece of legislation that will indeed accomplish what it is that should be accomplished through this legislation.

So, with those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I guess I will allow the minister to perhaps even rebut, if he wants, to that extent. Thank you.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, my comments will be brief. I believe that, in large measure, the member from Russell has described appropriately the failings, along with my colleague from Portage la Prairie, that this bill is not well thought out. It does mix some desirable clauses with some that obviously we find less than desirable, and that is why we were left with little alternative but to propose this hoist motion that we are currently discussing.

I want to put it clearly on the record that we understand the concerns of the natural resource officers in the field and the changes that they would like to see done, but I say to the minister we are not going to accept what we believe is a poorly constructed bill where they have mixed and matched a few things that perhaps should not have been in

the same bill. You know, despite the fact that the government members, every time the term "American" comes up, they think it is a swear word. They are in fact Americanizing the legislative process because they have learned how to mix a poison pill in with a decent piece of legislation.

Every time they do that, they may chuckle about the fact that there is going to be some kickback on this side of the House, and perhaps we are going to vote against something that we know has some good aspects to it. In fact, we are prepared to take that stand on this bill. I hope that the minister will consider it carefully because if it does not pass now, it will be reconsidered at a later date, and perhaps amendments would be considered after further consultation.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I recognize the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, in my excitement of the moment, I incorrectly advised the honourable member that I would recognize him because I was treating it as a bill and it was really an amendment. I, in my excitement, advised him wrongly, so if I could have leave of the House for the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie to put some comments on record. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Faurschou: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the leave that has been granted for me to address the amendment which will allow for six months so that the minister can consult with the municipalities, understand what this bill means to producers here in the province of Manitoba because I think he will be surprised as to the amount of area that is actually considered exclusion zones whereby firearms are not permitted to be discharged. In fact in Portage la Prairie, we have an area close by the city of Portage la Prairie and Southport that is determined in such a fashion.

This bill can provide for what the minister intends it to provide for, but I truly believe that if this bill is rewritten and amended in incorporating some of the suggestions that the minister has heard throughout this afternoon in debate, he will be able to bring forward a bill that, as the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) suggested, we possibly could support.

It does have an area at present where we do support and that is provisions given to our natural resource officers in their duties to remain vigilant

in their enforcement responsibilities of legislation we have passed in this Assembly. That is an area that I will say at this time, we on this side of the House wholeheartedly support and recognize the importance of the responsibilities that are charged to our natural resource officers and the hard work and dedication that are exhibited day in, day out by those individuals throughout the province of Manitoba, and we say thank you from this side of the House.

I believe if members on that side of the House were listening this afternoon, and especially the Minister of Agriculture, being of the female gender, I do not know how you could ask a colleague of Executive Council to support a legislation that does not take the opportunity to incorporate all genders into legislation. Why are we looking at maintaining The Manitoba Wildlife Act as singular in gender?

* (18:10)

I do not know why a party that prides itself in saying that all legislation should be non-partisan and be neutral—I know that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) introduced a bill earlier into the House here that did specifically that, making certain that gender neutrality needs to be incorporated into Manitoba legislation. Even on that one note alone, I do not know why the minister is not supporting our amendment this afternoon to give himself and his department six months to review an amendment to The Manitoba Wildlife Act so that all Manitobans will be able to support it. You know, gender neutrality is important. I look to the minister and just ask the minister whether or not his wife would support this legislation, acknowledging that she does not really, truly have recognition on the same level as himself.

That is why I do not know why the minister stood today and encouraged his colleagues to vote against this amendment. Perhaps, maybe, some calls should go out to the honourable minister's wife and ask the very question as to how he could be responsible for legislation that does not give recognition to the female gender. Why? I shudder to think of the reaction from the honourable minister's spouse when informed that he is as sexist as his legislation indicates.

So, Mr. Speaker, I once again hope that ministers, members on the government side of the House listen to the facts that have been presented by

we on this side of the House in support of this amendment and that they will stand in support and provide the honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) the needed time to correct the deficiencies that we see here today in Bill 16. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment to Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act, moved by the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I regret that we will have to have a recorded vote on this one.

Mr. Speaker: Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurschou) to Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner, Reimer, Rocan, Rowat, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Nays

Aglugub, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 21, Nays 30.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act, concurrence and third reading.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of Bill 16, The Wildlife Amendment Act, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Derkach: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

* * *

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just before going to the minor amendments act where the leaders will address the House, I am wondering if you would canvass the House to see if there is leave. We have got two pieces of Legislative Assembly business. If you would ask if there is leave to bring in Bill 52 and for the House to give agreement for the bill to go through the steps of passage, so that the bill can be eligible for Royal Assent today.

Would you also canvass the House to see if there is leave for the committee report from the Standing Committee of the Rules of the House to be presented, and also leave for a motion to be moved to concur in the report of the Rules Committee?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring in Bill 52 and for the House to give agreement for the bill to be expedited through all steps in a fashion so that the bill can be eligible for Royal Assent today? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Is there also leave for the committee report for the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House to be presented, and also leave for a motion to be moved to concur in the report of the committee? Is there also leave for that? *[Agreed]*

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 52—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 52, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: In the commissioner's report, Commissioner Gray's report of May 5, 2005, the commissioner recommended that the past service buy-back program of the Legislative Assembly pension plan should be reviewed and changed because limitations under the Income Tax Act of Canada have prevented members from purchasing past service to the extent recommended by the previous commissioner. In keeping with that report a new commissioner is to be appointed to make

decisions about the purchase of past service in respect of the period April 25, '95, to October 1, '04.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 52.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS

Bill 52—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale), that Bill 52, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of this bill, and I table the message.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 52.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The House will resolve into Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider Bill 52, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2).

**Bill 52—The Legislative Assembly
Amendment Act (2)**

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

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister.

Does the critic have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic.

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

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (18:30)

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 52, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2); Loi n° 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, and reports the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

**Bill 52—The Legislative Assembly
Amendment Act (2)**

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak),

that Bill 52, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2), reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the concurrence and third reading of Bill 52.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): I am wondering if it could be recorded that Bill 52 is passed unanimously.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the agreement of the House for the bill to be reported as passed unanimously by all members of the House? *[Agreed]*

* (18:40)

House Business

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I know that dead air is not acceptable in radio, and it usually is not acceptable in here, but we have a little dead air while we await translation of the Rules Committee report. I am advised it could take about another five minutes. So it is not far from now.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for the information.

Committee Report

**Standing Committee on Rules of the House
First Report**

Mr. Conrad Santos (Vice-Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules of the House.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Rules of the House—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Meetings:

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- Tuesday, December 7, 2004
- Thursday, June 16, 2005

All meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under consideration:

Amendments to the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Committee Membership:

At the December 7, 2004, meeting your Committee elected Mr. SANTOS as the Vice-Chairperson on a counted vote of yeas 5, nays 0.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of December 7, 2004, meeting:

- Mr. ROCAN for vacancy
- Mr. MALOWAY for Hon. Mr. ASHTON

Agreements:

At the December 7, 2004, meeting:

Your Committee agreed that a House Rules Working Group, consisting of two government members, two opposition members, one liberal and the Speaker be struck to consider amendments to the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceeding of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Your Committee agreed that a Public Accounts Committee Working Group, consisting of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee, Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH and Mr. DERKACH be struck to consider changes to the operation of the Public Accounts Committee, with the understanding that Mr. LAMOUREUX be consulted prior to reporting to the Rules Committee.

Your Committee agreed that the Working Groups work as expeditiously as possible in order for the Rules Committee to report to the House when it resumes in March 2005.

Amendments to Rules Considered and Reported:

At the June 16, 2005, meeting your committee agreed to report the following amendments to the Rules,

Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

1. THAT the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be amended as follows:

THAT sub-rule 4(4) be replaced with the following:

Usual Adjournment Hour

4(4) The Speaker must adjourn the House to the next sitting day, without a motion for adjournment,

(a) at 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays; and

(b) at 12:30 p.m. on Fridays during debates on the motions for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and the Budget.

THAT the following be added after sub-rule 4(5):

Intersessional Committee Meetings

4(6) During intersessional periods, any day on which meetings of standing or special committees are held shall be considered to be a sitting day of the Legislature, and the Speaker shall record the number of sitting days which are Committee days. 10 calendar day's notice are required for intersessional committee meetings.

THAT sub-rule 5(1) be replaced with the following:

Quorum

5(1) Except during Tuesday morning sittings for Private Members Business, the presence of at least 10 Members of the House, including the Speaker, is necessary to constitute a meeting of the House, for the exercise of its powers, but if there is not a quorum, the Speaker may take the Chair and adjourn the House.

THAT sub-rule 5(2) be replaced with the following:

Quorum Bell

5(2) If, during a sitting of the House, a quorum count is requested, the division bells shall ring for one minute. While the division bells are ringing, the doors shall remain open and Members may enter the Chamber, but once the bells stop, no further Members may enter the Chamber. If a quorum is not then present, the Speaker will adjourn the House without question put. Quorum counts are to be conducted by counting the number of Members present.

THAT rule 18 be replaced with the following:

Naming of a Member for an offence in the House

18(1)(a) The Speaker shall be vested with the authority to maintain order by naming individual Members for disregarding the authority of the Chair and, without resort to motion, ordering a withdrawal for the remainder of the sitting, despite Rule 15. The decision of the Speaker is subject to appeal.

18(1)(b) In the event of a Member disregarding an order of the Chair made pursuant to sub-rule (a), the Speaker shall order the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the Member out of the chamber.

Offence in Committee

18(2) When an offence to which sub-rule (1) applies is committed in a Committee, the Chairperson thereof shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstances to the House; and the Speaker shall have the discretion to determine if disciplinary action will be applied to the Member in accordance with sub-rule 18(1).

Term of suspension

18(3) A suspension under sub-rule (1) or (2) shall be decided by the Speaker but shall not exceed two weeks.

Suspension from Service of House for Session

18(4) If a Member suspended under this rule is summoned under the Speaker's orders by the Sergeant-at-Arms to obey the Speaker's direction but refuses to do so, the Speaker must advise the House that force is necessary to compel obedience. The Member is then suspended from all sittings of the House for the remainder of the session.

THAT sub-rule 23(3) be replaced with the following:

Private Members' Business

23(3) Subject to sub-rule 4(3), Private Members' Business shall be considered as follows when the House sits on Tuesdays and Thursdays:

Tuesday:

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (Private Members' Hour)

Private Bills
Public Bills
Orders for Return and Addresses for Papers

*Private Members' Resolutions
Motions*

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (Private Members' Hour)

*Private Members' Resolutions
Orders for Return and Addresses for Papers
Motions
Public Bills
Private Bills*

Thursday:

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (Private Members' Hour)

*Public Bills
Private Bills
Orders for Return and Addresses for Papers
Private Members' Resolutions
Motions*

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (Private Members' Hour)

*Private Members' Resolutions
Orders for Return and Addresses for Papers
Motions
Private Bills
Public Bills
Deferred votes from previous Tuesday
Private Members Business at 11:55 a.m.*

Private Members Private Bills and Private Members Public Bills shall be called in the order as listed on the Order Paper. When a Private Members Public Bill or Private Bill is called for debate on the Order Paper and is not disposed of within that hour, it shall be placed on the bottom of the list of bills of that type.

THAT sub-rule 23(4) be replaced with the following:

Divisions during Private Members Business

23(4) A division requested during a Private Members' Hour on Tuesday must be deferred to the Private Members' Hour the following Thursday. The deferred vote shall take place at 11:55 a.m. on Thursday.

23(4.1) A division requested during a Private Members' Hour on Thursday takes place immediately.

23(4.2) In the case of a division occurring pursuant to 23 (4.1), after the division is requested or after the vote is recorded on a

division, the House shall consider the next item of business only with leave or if at least 30 minutes remain in that Private Members' Hour.

THAT sub-rule 27(2)(a) be replaced with the following:

Grievances

27(2)(a) Each Member is entitled to speak for no longer than 10 minutes on a grievance;

THAT sub-rule 31(1) be replaced with the following:

Definition of "resolution"

31(1) In this Rule, "resolution" means a vote, motion, resolution or address, but does not include a motion for the first, second or third reading of the Bill, or a motion to refer a Bill to a Committee.

THAT sub-rules 31(5) and (6) be deleted.

THAT the following be added after sub-rule 31(9):

Tuesdays – Government House Leader calls Resolutions

31(9.1) The Government House Leader or designate shall announce in the House on the previous Tuesday which resolutions will be debated during Private Members Business on the following Tuesday morning. The group of Independent Members will have the opportunity to introduce one resolution during a session on a Tuesday.

Thursdays – Opposition House Leader calls Resolutions

31(9.2) The Opposition House Leader or designate shall announce in the House on the previous Thursday which resolutions will be debated during Private Members Business on the following Thursday morning.

THAT sub-rule 31(10) be replaced with the following:

Resolutions not prioritized for a vote

31(10) When a resolution not prioritized for a vote (other than a resolution for an order for return or an address for papers) is called for the first time by a House Leader during a Private Members' Hour, and

(a) the resolution is not disposed of within that hour, or

(b) the Member is not present or does not proceed with the resolution at that time;

the resolution is to be placed on the Order Paper at the bottom of the list of resolutions not prioritized for a vote.

A House Leader, or designate, may not call a resolution for a second time until all resolutions have been called once.

THAT sub-rules 36(1) and (2) be replaced with the following:

Setting aside regularly scheduled business of the House

36(1) After Members' Statements in the routine business of the House, any Member may move to set aside the regularly scheduled business of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, of which the Member has given prior notice to the Speaker not less than 90 minutes prior to the start of Routine Proceedings.

Explanation of motion

36(2) A Member making a motion under sub-rule (1) may explain arguments in favour of the Member's motion in not more than 10 minutes, and one Member from each of the other parties in the House may state the position of their party with respect to the motion in not more than 10 minutes.

THAT sub-rule 43(3) be replaced with the following:

10-minute limit during Private Members' Hour

43(3) No Member may speak for more than 10 minutes

(a) during a Private Members' Hour; or

(b) in a debate on an item of Private Members' business called by the government outside a Private Members' Hour.

THAT sub-rule 75(1) be replaced with the following:

Rules observed in Committee of the Whole

75(1) The Rules shall be observed in a Committee of the Whole House, insofar as they are applicable, except the Rules requiring seconding of motions, limiting the number of times of speaking, and, in the case of the Committee of Supply, requiring Members to rise

to speak. The speaking time limit in Committee of the Whole is 10 minutes.

THAT sub-rules 77(1) and (2) be replaced with the following:

Speeches – 10 minutes

77(1) All speeches in Committee of Supply, including those of the Ministers, shall be restricted to 10 minutes.

Minister's opening address

77(2) The address of a Minister introducing the estimates of a department shall be restricted to 10 minutes.

THAT sub-rule 78(4) be replaced with the following:

Notice before questioning of Ministers

78(4) The Official Opposition House Leader must, by 4:00 p.m. on the previous sitting day, table in the House a list of Ministers of the Crown who may be called for questioning in the debate on the concurrence motion. This list is to be in effect until a new list is tabled. More than one Minister can be questioned at the same time on similar or related subject matter, however notice of this arrangement must be provided by the Opposition House Leader when tabling the list of Ministers on a previous sitting day. It is to be clearly identified whether Ministers are being questioned concurrently or questioned sequentially. Ministers appearing on the list after the first name listed are not required to be in the Chamber, however the Committee will recess for five minutes to allow the Ministers to attend, once their place in the sequence is reached. The First Minister is only eligible to be called once on the concurrence list, while other Ministers of the Crown can be called for a maximum of three times. By the end of each sitting to consider concurrence, the critic conducting the questioning must indicate whether questioning of the current Minister is concluded or is to continue at the next sitting of the committee.

THAT sub-rule 83(1) be replaced with the following:

Standing Committees

83(1) At the beginning of the first session of each Legislature, a Special Committee of seven Members must be appointed to prepare and report, without delay, the proportional

representation of Members by party to serve on the following Standing Committees of the House:

Agriculture and Food
Crown Corporations
Human Resources
Intergovernmental Affairs
Justice
Legislative Affairs
Private Bills
Public Accounts
Rules of the House
Social and Economic Development
Statutory Regulations and Orders

THAT sub-rule 83(3) be deleted.

THAT sub-rule 85(2) be replaced with the following:

Committee Membership Lists

85(2) At the start of each committee meeting, the Whip or the Whip's designate must provide in writing to the Committee Clerk the membership list of Members to serve on the committee for that particular meeting. Changes can also be made during the meeting by the Whip or Whip's designate providing written notification to the Chairperson.

THAT sub-rule 85(3) be replaced with the following:

Notice of Committee Meetings

85(3) Notice of Committee Meetings shall be provided to the Whip of each caucus.

THAT sub-rule 85(4) be deleted.

THAT rule 87 be replaced with the following:

Order in Committee and speaking times

87(1) The Chairperson of a Standing Committee or a Special Committee or a Special Committee of the House, shall maintain order and shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the Committee.

87(2) No MLA attending a Standing and Special Committee meeting may speak for more than 10 minutes in any debate, however there is no limit on the number of times a Member can speak, unless otherwise agreed to by the Committee.

THAT sub-rule 92(4) be replaced with the following:

Evening Meetings to begin at 6:00 p.m.

92(4) A Standing or Special Committee that meets in the evening to consider a Bill must meet at 6:00 p.m. As an exception, if a Committee considering a Bill in the afternoon has not finished hearing presenters at 6:00 p.m., it may recess and reconvene at 7:00 p.m.

THAT sub-rule 92(5) be replaced with the following:

Sitting past midnight

92(5) Except with the unanimous consent of the Committee, a Standing or Special Committee that meets to consider a Bill in the evening must not sit past midnight to hear committee presentations unless:

(a) the Committee has already heard presentations on two previous evenings; or

(b) fewer than 20 presenters are registered to speak to all Bills being considered when the Committee meets at 6:00 p.m.

THAT sub-rule 132(2) be replaced with the following:

Form of Petition

132(2) A petition must be in the form set out in Appendix A and must be signed by at least 15 petitioners. The names and addresses of the first 15 petitioners must be legible. If more than one page is required for signatures of petitioners, the subject matter of the petition must be indicated on each page. The signature of the Member must also appear at the top of the original petition.

THAT sub-rule 138(3) be replaced with the following:

Report on Bills

138(3) All amendments made to a Bill in any Committee shall be reported to the House on the sitting day following the conclusion of the Bill's review by the committee, and every Bill reported from any Committee, whether amended or not, shall be received by the House on report thereof.

THAT sub-rule 138(9) be replaced with the following:

Restrictions on Amendments

138(9)(a) No motion to amend a Report Stage Amendment shall be accepted except by unanimous consent.

138(9)(b) No amendment to a Bill moved in committee may be moved as a Report Stage Amendment.

THAT sub-rules 138(10) and (11) be replaced with the following:

Limitation on Debate

138(10) Members are limited to 10 minute speeches when considering Report Stage, except that the Premier or the Leader of the Official Opposition may speak for 30 minutes.

Combining the amendments

138(11) The Speaker may select or combine amendments or clauses to be proposed at the Report Stage.

THAT sub-rules 138(13) and (14) be replaced with the following:

Concurrence and Third Reading

138(13) If no Member moves a Report Stage Amendment, the Bill will be listed for Concurrence and Third Reading on the Order Paper for the next sitting day after it was listed on the Order Paper for Report Stage.

138(14) Where debate takes place on a Report Stage Amendment, the Bill will be listed for Concurrence and Third Reading on the Order Paper on the sitting day after the amendment is voted upon and reported to the House.

THAT Appendix A be replaced with Appendix A to these amendments.

THAT Appendix D be replaced with Appendix D to these amendments.

THAT Appendix E to these amendments be added as Appendix E to the Rules.

2. THAT the Clerk may re-number the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and make other minor corrections that in no way alter the intended meaning of these Amendments.

3. THAT the Clerk may prepare revised Rules incorporating these Amendments.

4. THAT these Amendments will come into force immediately.

5. THAT these Amendments will be permanent changes to the rules.

APPENDIX A**MODEL PETITION****TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF
MANITOBA:**

These are the reasons for this petition: (or: The background to this petition is as follows:)

(Briefly summarize the problem or grievance and any necessary background information)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(Set out the action the Legislative Assembly is being asked to take or not take)

<i>Name (Please print)</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Signature</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

NOTE: A minimum of fifteen signatures is required for the completion of the petition.

APPENDIX D**FINANCIAL PROCEDURE GUIDE****BUDGET PROCEDURE**

1. **Finance Minister** (without notice or leave) moves Budget Motion.
2. **Page** picks up motion and delivers it to the Speaker.
3. **Speaker** proposes motion to the House.
4. **Finance Minister** presents Budget Address.

5. **Leader of the Official Opposition** adjourns debate.
6. **Finance Minister** advises the Speaker that there are two messages from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.
7. **Sergeant-at-Arms** picks up messages and delivers them to the Speaker.
8. **Speaker** reads messages. (all Members stand)
9. **Sergeant-at-Arms** delivers messages (when read) to the Clerk.
10. **Government House Leader** moves adjournment of the House.

**INTERIM SUPPLY PROCEDURE
(WHEN INTERIM SUPPLY
FOLLOWS THE BUDGET)**

1. **Speaker** announces that the House will resolve into Committee of Supply.
2. **Committee of Supply** considers resolutions respecting interim supply. (debatable)
3. **Chairperson of Committee of Supply** presents the report of the Committee to the House and moves that it be received. (non-debatable)
4. **The House** considers and adopts the motion regarding interim supply. (notice not required)
5. **Finance Minister** moves First Reading of the Interim Supply Bill. (may not be debated, amended or adjourned)
6. **House staff** distributes copies of Interim Supply Bill immediately after adoption of First Reading.
7. **Finance Minister** moves Second Reading of Interim Supply Bill and referral to Committee of the Whole. (debatable - may be agreed to without debate or adjourned)
8. **Speaker** announces that the House will resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Interim Supply Bill for Concurrence and Third Reading.

9. **Committee of the Whole** considers Interim Supply Bill. (debatable)
10. **Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole** presents report of the Committee to the House and moves that it be received. (non-debatable)
11. **Government House Leader** moves the Concurrence and Third Reading Motion. (debatable - may be agreed to without debate or adjourned)
12. **Lieutenant Governor** grants Royal Assent to Interim Supply Bill.
10. **House staff** distributes copies of Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act immediately after adoption of First Reading Motion.
11. **Finance Minister** moves Second Reading of Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act, and referral to a Committee of this House. (debatable motion – may be agreed to without debate or adjourned)
12. **Finance Minister** moves First Reading of Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act. (may not be debated, amended or adjourned)

MAIN AND CAPITAL SUPPLY PROCEDURE

1. **Speaker** announces that the House will resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the Capital Supply Bill.
2. **Committee of Supply** considers the resolution respecting Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act. (no debate if 100 hour time limit has expired)
3. **Chairperson of the Committee of Supply** presents the report of the Committee to the House and moves that it be received. (not debatable)
4. **Government House Leader** moves Concurrence Motion and Committee of Supply considers it. (debatable motion - 100 hour time limit does not apply)
5. **Chairperson of the Committee of Supply** presents the report of the Committee to the House and moves that it be received. (not debatable)
6. **Government House Leader** moves Concurrence Motion in the House. (cannot be debated, amended or adjourned)
7. **House** considers and adopts motion regarding Capital Supply Bill. (no notice required)
8. **House** considers and adopts motion regarding Main Supply Bill. (no notice required)
9. **Finance Minister** moves First Reading of Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act. (may not be debated, amended or adjourned)
13. **House staff** distributes copies of Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act, immediately after adoption of the First Reading Motion.
14. **Finance Minister** moves Second Reading of Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act, and referral to a Committee of this House. (debatable motion - may be agreed to without debate or adjourned)
15. **Speaker** announces that the House will resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act, and Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act, for Concurrence and Third Reading.
16. **Committee of the Whole** considers Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act, and Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act. (debatable matter, but no debate if 100 hour time limit has expired)
17. **Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole** presents report of the Committee to the House and moves that it be received. (not debatable)
18. **Other Minister of the Crown, usually Government House Leader,** moves Concurrence and Third Reading of Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act. (debatable motion – may be agreed to without debate or adjourned)
19. **Other Minister of the Crown, usually the Government House Leader,** moves Concurrence and Third Reading of Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act.

(debatable motion – may be agreed to without debate or adjourned)

20. **Lieutenant Governor** gives Royal Assent to Capital Supply Bill – The Loan Act, and Main Supply Bill – The Appropriation Act.

APPENDIX E – SPEAKING TIMES

Rule	Debate	Speaking Time	Exceptions
43(1)	Budget	30	Unlimited speaking time for:
43(2)	Debate	minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of recognized parties (may be transferred) Ministers moving Government Orders Members making "no confidence" motions Ministers replying to "no confidence" motions
77(1)	Committee	10	
77(2)	of Supply	minutes	
	Minister's	10	
	Opening	minutes	
	Statement		
27(2)(a)	Grievances	10	
		minutes	
36(2)	Matters of	10	Member has 10 minutes to
36(4)	Urgent	minutes /	explain why MUPI debate
	Public	10	should proceed.
	Importance	minutes	One member from each of
			the other recognized parties
			may respond for 10 minutes.
			If debate proceeds Members
			have 10 minutes.
			Total debate shall not
			exceed two hours.
26(1)(b)	Member's	2	
	Statements	minutes	
25(3)	Ministerial	-	Time of Critic's response
	Statements		must not exceed Minister's
			Statement
28(7)	Opposition	10	
	Day Motions	minutes	
43(3)	Private	10	
	Member's	minutes	
	Business		
138(10)	Report Stage	10	30 minutes for:
	Amendments	minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of recognized parties (may be transferred)
43(1)	Second	30	Unlimited speaking time for:
43(2)	Reading of	minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of recognized parties (may be transferred) Ministers moving Government Orders Members making "no confidence" motions Ministers replying to "no confidence" motions
	government		
	bills		
87(2)	Standing	10	Members may speak more
	and Special	minutes	than once

Rule	Debate	Speaking Time	Exceptions
<i>Committees</i>			
43(1)	Third	30	Unlimited speaking time for:
43(2)	Reading of	minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of recognized parties (may be transferred) Ministers moving Government Orders Members making "no confidence" motions Ministers replying to "no confidence" motions
	government		
	bills		
43(1)	Throne	30	Unlimited speaking time for:
43(2)	Speech	minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of recognized parties (may be transferred) Ministers moving Government Orders Members making "no confidence" motions Ministers replying to "no confidence" motions
	Debate		
48(2)	Time	10	
	Allocation	minutes	
	Motions		

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that the First Report of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just a few brief remarks, Mr. Speaker. This is a product of some good work, some ideas actually that have been going around for as long as maybe a couple of years, and I think over the last few days we have made some good progress. I think there are some further good efforts in modernization. I think of a few areas in there where there was 10 days' notice of committee meetings intersessionally. We have dealt with the quorum rule, an area that has been outstanding and in contention for quite some time with a one-minute ringing of the bell and a number of other issues, I think, more substantive.

We have added that the Legislature will now sit on Tuesday mornings, and we have doubled the amount of time available for Private Members'

Business. I think we have facilitated a greater input from private members. There will be, of course, the rotation of private members' bills now, and in addition to the votable resolutions, there will be the ability now of the opposition and the government to call private members' resolutions and indeed to bring some resolutions in as the session progresses so they can be dealt with on a more timely basis, Mr. Speaker. The adjournment goes to five; a number of other issues around report stage to facilitate that to a greater extent in concurrence. I think the rules are much clearer there in terms of the expectations of both opposition and government at that stage.

So I think those are some of the highlights, and I commend the work of all members of the Rules Committee and the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Derkach) and the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and, of course, our respective staff that has worked on this in the Clerk's office and Legislative Counsel.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want to put a few remarks on the record with regard to the issue that we are dealing with because, despite the difficult environment in the House sometimes, there is still an obligation for the parties within this Chamber to work co-operatively to improve the workings of this Chamber. To that extent, I want to say that this not only is apropos for the people that are here in the Chamber today, but these are rule changes that are going to impact on future generations of legislators and I think that they are extremely positive in every respect. When the Government House Leader says that we have been tossing these around for the last couple of years, that is true, and it even goes beyond that.

But, Mr. Speaker, to conclude, I want to thank the Government House Leader for the positive approach that he took to this, also the member from Inkster on behalf of his party, but also a huge gratitude to the table officers here, Madam Clerk and her staff, who very quickly today put together the document. Last, but certainly not least, to the Government House Leader's assistant, Rory Henry, who, I know, is moving on to a different position and he will certainly be missed, and to my own assistant, Linda Marek, who has done a tremendous job in working out the process within this Chamber, to them we owe our gratitude as well. So thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to express appreciation in the fact that members as a whole recognize the importance of consensus-building, and I think that all in all that it is a very good package, that it will make the process even that much better. Again, as the member from Russell and the Government House Leader have done, to commend those individuals, whether they have been relatively recently involved in the process or they were involved years back.

I look forward to, hopefully, having further discussions. I think that, in particular, the member from Russell talked about something that really intrigued me about the whole happy hour, or whatever one might want to call it. I think there is a need for us to look at some change still. I look forward to ongoing discussions as to how we might be able to even make the rules that much better. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion. Agreed? [*Agreed*]

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS Bill 50—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Food, that Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we are coming to the end of the session, and I would like to begin by thanking the legislative staff, the Legislative Counsel and the pages and the many who have worked so hard to make what we do here

possible. I think that we owe a debt of gratitude as well to the many people who either volunteered time or came in as presenters at the committee stage and contributed in one way or another to the process that we are undertaking, and that is to improve the laws of Manitoba.

* (18:50)

That being said, as I look over the course of the last number of weeks of this session, what is becoming more and more apparent is that we have a government, an NDP government which is running out of gas and an NDP government which is running out of credibility. Manitobans are asking how many red flags will there be before the government even sees them flying. You know, it is curious. It is sending a signal to the opposition that they are going downhill. It is sort of surprising, in a sense, because we are used to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) seeing flags of all sorts of different colours, all over the place, charging at them like a bull and issuing a press release.

Now, to see a government which cannot even see red flags all over the place, this is clearly a significant issue. If we go back now to 2001 and 2002, the government clearly was warned there were all sorts of signs and signals. The former Minister of Industry, MaryAnn Mihychuk, had clearly indicated that the government had known that there were problems, and there was an opportunity to act. There was an opportunity to protect more than 33 000 shareholders or unitholders in Crocus and protect their investment, but this government failed to act.

Indeed, they not only failed to act appropriately, but they moved to change the law so that Crocus, which was operating outside the law, with more than 10 percent of its investment in one company—when they realized that Crocus was outside the law, instead of reining Crocus in, they changed the law so that Crocus could act even more flagrantly in disobedience of what the previous law had been.

Indeed, the remarkable thing that the Auditor General noted is that I think, from 2002, 2003, 2004, with the possible exception of the MTS Centre, there was not a single new investment. There were only follow-on investments for old ones. In fact, they were so tied in to their old friends that in the case of one of them I think there were as many as 55 follow-on investments. It is an amazing story of tragedy

which the Auditor General has outlined in great detail, and, clearly, it needs a public inquiry to find out what went wrong and to set a course for the future in terms of venture capital for Manitoba firms.

We have seen huge problems in Family Services and Housing, with the Hydra House. The responsibility for caring with people with disabilities in Manitoba was let down by this government, and let down very badly. The Aiyawin Corporation, housing for Aboriginal people, and the responsibility of this government to monitor, to make sure that the money provided by taxpayers was spent well, was abrogated. They left their responsibility behind them as they took over the Aiyawin Corporation funding and monitoring, but they just forgot to do it.

At the Manitoba Development Centre, \$40 million on the table, but no plan and no clear idea of what the numbers are. At one time, they are moving people into the community, and the other time they are spending \$40 million and not knowing what they are spending it on. Money going here or there and everywhere, from Manitoba Hydro up north, and a tragic situation, a northern child, Preston Martin, who was let down very, very badly by the system, which the government was ultimately responsible for. Tragedy after tragedy.

It is sad, the situation with children in this province. We have the highest infant mortality rate in the country. We have one of the highest rates of teen suicides. A very high rate of teen drug use. A very high rate, the highest rate, or close to it, of a high dropout or push-out rate in the country. We have big problems with early childhood tooth decay, big problems with increased numbers of children and adults with diabetes. If these matters had been addressed, we would not only improve people's quality of life but we certainly could have saved our health care system a lot of money.

Even on issues where one would have normally expected the NDP to be able to do their job in a responsible way perhaps, in the environment, they have shown an extraordinary level of incompetence. Lowlands National Park, a solemn memorandum of understanding signed by this government to have the consultations completed by May 30 and they have not even started. Solemn commitments just blowing in the wind. It is too bad and a lot of people who care about having a Lowlands National Park feel they have been deserted by this government.

There has not been a State of the Environment Report since 1997. I do not know whether they do not believe there is an environment or they do not believe there is a state, but whatever it is, there has been no State of the Environment Report. The Sustainable Development Round Table has rarely met. The Sustainable Development awards have not been given in, I think it is two or three years. The situation with algal blooms and problems in Lake Winnipeg is now actually worse than it was when they were elected. The state of Kissinging Lake is running red, but they have done nothing in six years.

This government is amazing in spending \$2 billion out of accomplishing so little, \$2 billion a year more than when they began. There are major problems clearly in the management of Manitoba's health care system. Two years wait, up to two years wait, for knee and hip surgery, far too long. Even the Premier acknowledges this. They blame it on anesthetists and yet in 1999, it was very clear there was going to be a shortage of anesthetists, and yet six years later when it arrives they say that, oh, well, all of a sudden it is here. Quite frankly, with a little bit of planning, they could have been on top of this and made sure that we did not have these sorts of waits, but this government cannot be on top of anything except a mess, and that is sad for Manitoba.

They have talked about making Manitoba's workplaces safer, but in six years, we still have the rate of time loss to injury which is almost double that of Ontario and Alberta. The NDP said that they would talk about and do something about child poverty in 1999, but six years later we still have one of the highest rates of child poverty in Canada. They said they were going to increase citizens' input into regional health authority decisions, but six years later, we still do not have a single regional health authority in all of Canada.

Clearly, it is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker, that we are the last have-not province in western Canada. We need to do much better in the areas of children, environment and growth. I called for a public inquiry because we need to set the standard, the future and learn from our mistakes. When SmartHealth was such a disaster, they know what happened was that this government pulled back from investing in information technology and looking to the future in health care. If we had had a proper inquiry then and set this goal for the future, it might have helped, but now there is an opportunity to build for the future and this government will not take it.

They will not call that public inquiry which could, like the Aboriginal Justice inquiry, have set some targets and direction for the future, but, no, this government is not interested in the future. They are just interested in covering up. It is a sad day when this government is only looking at covering up.

* (19:00)

We saw this more than ever when it came just a moment ago to The Planning Act, they do not want anybody to know what goes on in a Technical Review Committee hearing. They do not want public documents. They believe that somehow, you know, science mysteriously is going to be sorted out in the Technical Review Committee, but they forget that even in science there needs to be a debate and discussion and alternative reviews presented.

Mr. Speaker, this government should be ashamed of itself for trying to hide information. It should move on and look forward.

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): I would like to, Mr. Speaker, take this opportunity to thank all of the pages who have done a wonderful job during this session. I would like to thank all of the table officers and the staff, who have done a great job this session, and I would like to thank all the people in this Legislative Building that make it work.

Mr. Speaker, I think that in this session there have been some very interesting things that have happened. For example, I know that in Bill 25 we had some issues, but the one thing that we did support was the fact that the presumptive legislation for firefighters was important and so we all agreed that it was the right thing to do, because we on this side recognized, when the first presumptive legislation came in, that a firefighter is a firefighter is a firefighter. So they were delighted to support that legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the other initiative that I thought was very positive about this session, I want to try to be positive with members opposite, was when we unveiled the portrait of the former Premier Gary Filmon, a very, very positive event. I wanted to just, in Hansard, state what the current Premier (Mr. Doer) said about the former Premier, and he said, "I believe that Gary Filmon has made Manitoba a better place to live," quoted from the member opposite.

Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that is where it ends, because after six years in government, what do we see from this NDP government? We see blame. We see lame. And I say shame on this government for not providing the kind of leadership that we want to have. It is all about mismanagement, it is all about misleading, it is all about misspending.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, did this Premier say that he was going to end hallway medicine in six months? Yes, he did. Has he done it? No, he has not. Is there anywhere that this Premier went across the province of Manitoba and said, "Elect me, and I will make sure if you live in Westman, if you need access to health care, I am going to ship you on a highway, down in an ambulance to Winnipeg"? Did he say that? No, he did not. Did this Premier stand before Manitobans and said, "Elect me, and I will make sure that every emergency room and rural hospital closes." Did he say that? No, he did not, and he is well on his way, with 12 being closed today, and it is climbing.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Premier who says that he wants to ensure that people have a quality of life in this province. Well, we have people waiting for hip and knee replacement, and what they have to do is they have to take second mortgages on their houses, they have to go outside the province of Manitoba, and that is all right for this Premier. Well, I say shame on him, because access to a waiting list is not access to health care, and what this Premier should actually stand up and say to Manitobans is that, "Under my watch, under six years of NDP leadership, health care delayed is health care denied." That is what we see in this government.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to finance, well, after six years, the old NDP, they are showing their true colours. The debt in Manitoba is at a record high, and every single day that this Premier oversees the spending in Manitoba, debt goes up \$1.5 million per day. This is a government that has no long-term plan. What they look for simply is they want to bring in sneaky user fees. That is what they want to bring in, it is all about sneaky user fees, and when you ask the business community what this Premier is all about, they say, in a resounding voice, that we have the corner on nothing. That is the record of this NDP government and this Premier, corner on nothing.

Mr. Speaker, in Family Services, what do we see? We see chaos. In Justice, what do we see? The

Hells Angels have moved into Manitoba under this Premier's watch, now the Bandidos are here. And members on the NDP want to go out to Manitobans and say that we voted against the budget. They are absolutely right. We will always vote against a budget that purposely underfunds police in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to education, the Seven Oaks scandal that we see in Education is an issue that was developed under the former manager, the former disgraced campaign manager for the NDP, Mr. Brian O'Leary.

When we get to Advanced Education, what do we hear? Well, in Advanced Education, we now are having universities forcing user fees upon the students because they are starving universities. But user fees do not mean a thing to this government. They love to put in sneaky user fees through the Finance Department.

What about Agriculture? Well, Mr. Speaker, Agriculture. You know, this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has talked about bringing in Rancher's Choice, talked about bringing in a plant into Dauphin. We supported it. Where is that plant? Well, it is in some warehouse somewhere collecting dust and rust. The minister is the minister of dust and rust, not the Minister of Agriculture. We came in with a plan, our five-point plan. Did they use it? No, they did not. So, after two years, how is it going? How much more slaughter capacity have we seen in the province of Manitoba? Nothing. Not one. I say shame on this government for misleading our people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, with the floodway expansion, we are absolutely opposed to forced unionization, unlike members opposite. They want to ensure that everybody is forced to pay a union due to work on the floodway expansion. We say shame on that. That is not democratic. That is the New Democratic approach, not the democratic approach, the right for capital markets to thrive and grow and survive.

The worst of all, Mr. Speaker, is this Crocus scandal that has developed under this NDP government. This ostrich hide-your-head-in-the-sand approach is not going to work for Manitobans. There have been red flags that this government has tried to cover up. We have seen the fact that there have been people involved in the Premier's (Mr. Doer)

Economic Advisory Committee that is involved in Crocus. The dots are starting—

An Honourable Member: What is his name?

Mr. Murray: Well, his name is Mr. Eugene Kostyra. Thank you very much for the reminder. As a matter of fact, let us talk a little bit about the labour leaders in the province of Manitoba. When you look to Eugene Kostyra, when you look to Peter Olfert, Rob Hilliard, and I should say that the member from Concordia, the current Premier of the province of Manitoba, who was a huge union organizer in his heyday—well, I know that the member from Concordia would know how to organize a Wal-Mart. That is something that he would know how to do, but, in terms of a long-term economic vision for Manitoba, unfortunately, as the business community knows and as the business community says about this Premier, we have a corner in Manitoba on nothing.

An Honourable Member: Zero.

Mr. Murray: Zero. That is the kind of thing we have, Mr. Speaker.

It is very, very clear that when you talk to business leaders in the province of Manitoba, when it comes to what this Premier is doing, they say things to him like he thinks small. He is a small thinker. Well, when you talk about Crocus, I can tell you right now Crocus is like this. It is like an iceberg. Right now we know the tip of the iceberg, but what is coming, and it is coming fast, is everything that is below the surface. That is what the Crocus scandal is all about. This NDP government is the Titanic, and it is headed straight for that iceberg. When it hits, it is going to go down.

Mr. Speaker, the captain of the *Titanic* is now the Premier of Manitoba. This is a serious, serious issue on behalf of 34 000 Manitobans. They have been fleeced by this government for \$60 million. Manitoba taxpayers have been investing in, by the fact that they pay taxes, into the Crocus Fund. They have been affected. Ultimately, at the end of the day, I can tell you that this is a black eye for Manitobans, and, as we go out, this Premier is going to have to be aware of the fact of what he has done to venture capital in the province of Manitoba.

*(19:10)

I can tell you, as we on this side of the House go out and celebrate this great summer that we are going to have in Manitoba going from barbecues to picnics to parades, that we know that this issue of Crocus will be out there, and we are going to take a message that the right thing to do would be to call a public inquiry. Unless this Premier has something to hide, he should do the right thing on behalf of Crocus shareholders and Manitobans. Call a public inquiry. Show some courage. Show some leadership. Thank you very much.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to pay tribute to the veterans in this, the International Year of the Veteran. I think it is very important in this Chamber that those of us who are in the position of leadership recognize the contributions that the veterans have made. Any speech at the closing of a session, I believe, should start with the veterans that have contributed so much to the security, the safety and the democracy that we are all able to enjoy in this Chamber. So, on behalf of our caucus, I want to start with that point.

I also know that these last 12 months have been a time where tens of thousands of people perished with the tsunami in Asia, and I want to thank the generosity of Manitobans, I want to thank the organizations, and I want to thank all of the members of this Chamber for remembering our fellow human beings in times of trouble.

I also want to say that this has also been a time when we have had to, as a nation, pay tribute to our law enforcement officers with the deaths of four police officers in Alberta. Certainly, this House spoke as one, and I think that that is extremely positive for our province and for our nation, to respect the people that put their lives on the line, not only just in police positions but many other occupations that they work in throughout this province and in many other positions.

It has also, I think, been a time where again, no matter what your political belief, that we have to realize that there has been an unholy alliance of negative economic conditions against the farmers here in western Canada. The drought and the BSE of two years ago have been compounded by the

situation of last year, the monsoon, and again, with an eerie sense of déjà vu, do we find—[*interjection*]

An Honourable Member: Where are the slaughtering plants?

Mr. Doer: —do we find a situation where the agricultural producers have been in very tough positions.

The member opposite heckles again from his seat, but I would point out that he was the minister responsible for the reassessment where farmers' land was increased in the portioning they paid, thereby creating an increase in taxes. I am proud of the fact that we have lowered farm taxes by 50 percent.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: So, when the Leader of the Opposition is out on the barbeque circuit, running into his colleague in Ottawa, who apparently is going out for an image makeover, an image makeover on the barbeque circuit—[*interjection*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: I certainly believe that he will find many producers that understand the tax reductions on farmland are not perfect, but they are sure a lot better than what they had for 15 of the last number of years in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken wonderful steps forward. Let me go through them quickly. We have had the new opening of the Manitoba MTS Centre in downtown Winnipeg, and I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) was at that opening party. I was glad he saw the light on the road to Damascus, and I was proud of the fact that we hosted the Juno Awards in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, because of that new centre. I am proud of the fact that Waterfront Drive is now going to be developed in a commercial way with investments we have made. I am proud of the fact that the Millennium Library is soon going to be opened in downtown Winnipeg. I am proud of the fact that we have the first Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce anywhere in Canada. I am proud of the fact that Neighbourhoods Alive! has built and rebuilt thousands of families and homes in the inner city of Brandon, Winnipeg and

Thompson, and the arson rate from 1999 to today is down 46 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I know they think it is funny to invest money in the inner city. I know they think it is funny. We think it is important for the future of all provinces where people have housing and dignity and can live under a roof that is affordable. Mr. Tax Increaser for Farmers, we know your record.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, Budget 2005 has four pillars that have put Manitoba into a strong position. There has never been a budget in Manitoba that pays down debt, that decreases taxes, that invests in vital human services for the people of this province, and also puts more money in the rainy day fund. In fact, the rainy day fund is higher today than when we came into office because of the prudent fiscal stewardship of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

This budget invests in more police officers in Manitoba. How can anybody vote against more police officers, Mr. Speaker?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (19:20)

Mr. Doer: This budget, Mr. Speaker, invests 15 percent more in the very, very important parts of public transit. It also invests money in the Kenaston underpass, something that members opposite could not get done for 11 years.

It invests more money in a continued progress on health care, 1200 more nurses, 150 more doctors, four more MRIs, health care services delivered outside of the city of Winnipeg. We are proud of the progress we are making and there is more work ahead of us in health care.

Mr. Speaker, we are investing more money in education and training. [*interjection*]

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know their arrows are pointed in all different directions and so are their comments.

This budget invests in education and training. We are proud of the fact that we support the 19 faculties of the University College of the North because we understand northern residents deserve credit courses in their communities and in their communities across this province. We are proud of the fact that we have expanded Red River College, Mr. Speaker, and have fulfilled a three-year plan. We are proud of the fact that we are on the cusp of announcements at Assiniboine Community College, and we are proud of the fact today we announced the expansion of a new Eastman Community College in Steinbach, Manitoba, because we do not have one set of values for the south and one set of values for the North. We govern for all of the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that we are—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are proud of the fact we are investing in sewage treatment in the city of Winnipeg and in other parts of this province after a number of years of neglect. We are also very proud of the fact that Manitoba over the last 12 months has become the centre for disease control in Canada, the command and control centre. The old days of losing every federal-provincial battle are over. We are starting to win and we are really proud of the fact.

A point that was not raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray), we are really proud of the fact that the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights will be located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we are also very proud of the fact that we now have windmills in rural Manitoba. We are very proud of that. You know, I got criticized by some pundits. In fact, one pundit once said to me, "Why did you vote for the 1999 budget? Mr. Filmon put you in his Jimmy and he drove away." Members of the opposite do not understand that the public expects you to be responsible. They expect you to vote for, they expect you—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, they can howl all they want but they voted against the middle-income tax break. They voted against a property tax break for education payers. They voted against more police officers. They have voted against the very sole of the future of Manitoba. They stand for nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our Water Protection Act, our Workers Compensation Act, our Electricians' Licence Act, the needle sticks injuries act and our pension legislation act, all again making quality of life and affordability of life for all Manitobans possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members opposite in the middle of the Crocus debate, and there was lots, 200 pages of material that were worthy of discussion, but I find it really interesting when it came down to the crunch members opposite were more concerned with political donations from their corporate friends than they were in the public interest. We will remember that because your words are on tape, Sir, and it is a lot better than the Grewal tapes in the next election campaign, I guarantee that.

Mr. Speaker, the former deputy leader of the Conservative Party stood up in this House on August 14, 2000, and, reading from a favourite pundit's article, predicted in this House in 2000 that this group on this side would be a one-term government. She went on to say that the government would increase taxes, increase welfare, property taxes would plummet and the unemployment rate would go up.

Well, let us take a look at the predictions she is making today and compare that with the predictions she made with her pundit friends four years ago or five years ago. Mr. Speaker, we increased the population; we increased the jobs; we increased the number of students; we increased the businesses in Manitoba; increased the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce. We decreased taxes, decreased all the taxes in Manitoba, and we did get elected to a second term with more seats.

Mr. Speaker, the public, when you ask the fundamental question today and when these people hold onto their favourite little surrogate pundits, is Manitoba better off today than it was a year ago, two years ago? You know, there was just an article in the paper the other day about the increased property

values. After the member predicted decreased property values, her neighbours' property values went up 35 percent in one year. That is why you are going over there for a long time. You are going to be over there for a long time because when you ask people today are they better off within two years ago, three years ago, the answer is yes, yes, yes, yes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this can-do government will continue to build Manitoba. I want to finish by again thanking the veterans of Canada and also pay tribute to the greatest Canadian ever, Tommy Douglas.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I am advised that His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is ready to come into the Chamber.

* (19:30)

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Blake Dunn): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Honour John Harvard, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the Throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in the following words:

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

At this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain bills that I ask Your Honour to give assent to.

Madam Clerk Assistant (Monique Grenier):

Bill 5—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba (Commission d'appel des accidents de la route)

Bill 8—The Manitoba Council on Aging Act; Loi sur le Conseil manitobain du vieillissement

Bill 16—The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune

Bill 17—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les offices régionaux de la santé et la Loi sur la preuve au Manitoba

Bill 21—The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Reduction Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le pétrole et le gaz naturel et la Loi de la taxe sur la production de pétrole et de gaz.

Bill 22—The Water Protection Act; Loi sur la protection des eaux

Bill 29—The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act; Loi sur les élections municipales et scolaires

Bill 30—The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act; Loi sur la Société des services agricoles du Manitoba

Bill 31—The Condominium Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les condominiums

Bill 33—The Planning Act; Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire

Bill 34—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route

Bill 35—The Capital Region Partnership Act; Loi sur le Partenariat de la région de la capitale

Bill 36—The Courts Administration Improvement Act; Loi visant à améliorer l'administration des tribunaux

Bill 37—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale

Bill 38—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation

Bill 39—The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act; Loi sur l'immunité des détenteurs d'unités de sociétés de placement

Bill 41—The Drivers and Vehicles Act and the Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi sur les conducteurs et les véhicules et Loi modifiant le Code de la route

Bill 42—The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie et la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance

Bill 43—The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act; Loi modifiant diverses lois sur les professions de la santé réglementées

Bill 44—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2005; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2005 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité

Bill 48—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants

Bill 50—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005; Loi corrective de 2005

Bill 51—The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur les fonds de placement des travailleurs (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)

Bill 52—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2); Loi n° 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative

Bill 207—The Medical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi médicale

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour assents to these bills.

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks your Honour to accept the following bills.

Madam Clerk Assistant (Ms. Grenier):

Bill 45—The Appropriation Act, 2005; Loi de 2005 portant affectation de crédits

Bill 46—The Loan Act, 2005; Loi d'emprunt de 2005

Madam Clerk: In Her Majesty's name, the Lieutenant-Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to these bills.

God Save the Queen was sung.

O Canada! was sung.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

* * *

* (19:40)

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, as we conclude the session, as Opposition House Leader I want to simply extend the gratitude of our party to all of the pages, all of the table officers, the Sergeant-at-Arms, his staff, the translators, the people who keep charge of Hansard and, of course, all of the people that work behind the scenes to make this Assembly run.

Mr. Speaker, although this is a place of heated debate and issues that certainly are important to all Manitobans, there are times when we work co-operatively together to enhance the procedures and the conduct in this House and, indeed, the way that we do business on behalf of all Manitobans. To that extent, as Opposition House Leader, I simply want to say thank you to all the people that I have worked with in this past session, to the House leader and his staff and also to my colleagues who have had to put up with me for the course of the last while.

So I certainly wish everybody a wonderful summer and certainly look forward to coming back and resuming our lively debate in the fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): And until the final words I was wondering if that was a retirement speech. But, Mr. Speaker, I

echo the thanks. There are a lot of people that do a lot of work behind the scenes and I think the pages, in particular, deserve our thanks for doing the tasks that are important to us here.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice that your legs are much stronger than at the beginning of the session. You were up a lot. We will try and do our best to reduce the strain on your legs in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I know as we head off to the fairs, the AGMs, the graduations and the wind-ups that we will have the best wishes of our constituents first and

foremost in our mind, but today also I wish all members, on behalf of our caucus, the best for the summer. We will see you all on October 27, if not in the next two weeks at LAMC.

Mr. Speaker: Also, on behalf of all Legislative Assembly staff, I want to wish all of you a good summer and enjoy the barbeques. So all the best in the summer.

Now, the hour being past 5:30, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until October 27 at 1:30 p.m., or unless I am otherwise advised.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 16, 2005

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