

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

Vol. LVI No. 57B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, June 2, 2005

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 2, 2005

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Ambulance Service

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): 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 Monique Rempel, Bernie Rempel, Helen Rempel and many, many others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Fort Garry Hotel

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): 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 Nicky Bigford, Chanelle Birks, Kathleen Perrin and many others.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Fifth Report

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Meetings:

Your committee met on Tuesday, May 31, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

Bill 2 – The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Child Protection Penalties)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille (peines applicables en matière de protection des enfants)

Bill 3 – The Recreational Trail Property Owners Protection Act (Occupiers' Liability Act Amended)/Loi sur la protection accordée aux propriétaires de biens à l'égard des sentiers récréatifs (modification de la Loi sur la responsabilité des occupants)

Bill 6 – The Real Property Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels

Bill 7 – The Personal Investigations Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes relatives aux particuliers

Bill 14 – The Electricians' Licence Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le permis d'électricien

Bill 20 – The Life Leases Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les baux viagers

Bill 36 – The Courts Administration Improvement Act/Loi visant à améliorer l'administration des tribunaux

Committee Membership:

Your committee elected Mr. Jennissen as Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting:

*Mr. Jennissen for Mr. Dewar
Hon. Mr. Selinger for Ms. Irvin-Ross
Hon. Ms. Melnick for Mr. Schellenberg
Hon. Mr. Robinson for Hon. Mr. Smith
Hon. Mr. Mackintosh for Hon. Ms. Wowchuk
Mr. Faurschou for Mr. Cullen
Mr. Reimer for Mr. Eichler
Mrs. Taillieu for Mr. Rocan*

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard 1 presentation on Bill 3 – The Recreational Trail Property Owners Protection Act (Occupiers' Liability Act Amended)/Loi sur la protection accordée aux propriétaires de biens à l'égard des sentiers récréatifs (modification de la Loi sur la responsabilité des occupants), from the following organization:

Rosemary Dzus, Manitoba Recreational Trails Association

Your committee heard 2 presentations on Bill 14 – The Electricians' Licence Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le permis d'électricien, from the following individual and / or organization:

*Marc Pelletier, Private Citizen
Dave Fillion, Certified Technicians and Technologists Association of Manitoba*

Your committee heard 1 presentation on Bill 36 – The Courts Administration Improvement Act/Loi visant à améliorer l'administration des tribunaux, from the following organization:

Doug Dobrowolski, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 2 – The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Child Protection Penalties)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille (peines applicables en matière de protection des enfants)

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 3 – The Recreational Trail Property Owners Protection Act (Occupiers' Liability Act Amended) /Loi sur la protection accordée aux propriétaires de biens à l'égard des sentiers récréatifs (modification de la Loi sur la responsabilité des occupants)

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 6 – The Real Property Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 7 – The Personal Investigations Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes relatives aux particuliers

Your committee agreed to report this bill, with the following amendment:

THAT the proposed clause 9(b), as set out in Clause 8 of the Bill, be amended by striking out ", if the person's identity is verified in writing by a commissioner for oaths" and substituting "and providing reasonable identification".

Bill 14 – The Electricians' Licence Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le permis d'électricien

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 20 – The Life Leases Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les baux viagers

Your committee agreed to report this bill, with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 18.1(4):

Board minutes

18.1(5) *After each board meeting, the landlord must give each tenant representative a copy of the minutes of the meeting, not including any part of the minutes that contains personal information about a tenant or about personnel of the landlord. But this personal information may be provided to a tenant representative if the person the information is about consents.*

Access to minutes

18.1(6) *A tenant representative may give other tenants access to the minutes.*

Bill 36 – The Courts Administration Improvement Act/Loi visant à améliorer l'administration des tribunaux

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Social
and Economic Development
First Report**

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its First Report.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings:

Your committee met on Tuesday, May 31, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration:

Bill 15 – The Emergency Measures Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mesures d'urgence

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 18 – Le Collège de Saint-Boniface Incorporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège de Saint-Boniface

Bill 21 – The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax 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 26 – The Margarine Repeal Act/Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la margarine

Bill 27 – The Horse Racing Commission Amendment and Horse Racing Regulation Repeal Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission hippique et abrogeant la Loi sur les courses de chevaux

Bill 32 – The Rural Municipality of Kelsey By-law No. 5/02 Validation Act/Loi validant le Règlement 5/02 de la municipalité rurale de Kelsey

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

Committee Membership:

Your committee elected Mr. Martindale as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting:

*Hon. Mr. Smith for Hon. Mr. Ashton
Hon. Mr. Rondeau for Hon. Mr. Bjornson
Mr. Martindale for Mr. Dewar
Hon. Ms. McGifford for Mr. Struthers
Hon. Mr. Lathlin for Mr. Swan
Mrs. Stefanson for Mr. Cummings
Mrs. Rowat for Mr. Faurschou
Mr. Hawranik for Mr. Schuler
Mr. Rocan for Mr. Hawranik*

Mr. Cummings for Mrs. Stefanson

Substitutions made, by leave, during committee proceedings:

*Hon. Mr. Sale for Hon. Mr. Smith
Hon. Mr. Smith for Hon. Mr. Sale*

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard 1 presentation on 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, from the following organization:

Rob Robson, Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety

Your committee heard 5 presentations on Bill 18 – Le Collège de Saint-Boniface Incorporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège de Saint-Boniface, from the following individuals and/or organizations:

Solange Buissé, Students Association of Collège de Saint-Boniface

Roland Gaudet, Association des professeurs du Collège universitaire de St-Boniface

*Daniel Boucher, C.E.O. , Société franco-manitobain
John Whiteley, University of Manitoba Faculty Association*

Jim Clark, University of Winnipeg Faculty Association

Your committee heard 6 presentations on Bill 21 – The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax 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, from the following individuals and/or organizations:

Manson Moir, GASPE (Group Advocating Safe Petroleum Emissions)

Bruce Campbell, Private Citizen

Wendy Anderson, Private Citizen

Laura Jean Campbell, Private Citizen

Ken Wray, Private Citizen

Brad Thiessen, Chair, Manitoba Committee Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada

Your committee heard 1 presentation on Bill 43 – The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act/Loi modifiant diverses lois sur les

professions de la santé réglementées, from the following organization:

Dr. William D.B. Pope, Registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba

Written Submissions:

Your committee received 1 written submission on Bill 18 – Le Collège de Saint-Boniface Incorporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège de Saint-Boniface, from the following organization:

Raymonde Gagné, Rector, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface

Your committee received 2 written submissions on Bill 21 – The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax 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, from the following individuals:

*Jim Anderson, Private Citizen
Gordon Halls, Private Citizen*

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 15 – The Emergency Measures Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mesures d'urgence

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

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

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 18 – Le Collège de Saint-Boniface Incorporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège de Saint-Boniface

Your committee agreed to report this bill, with the following amendments:

THAT the proposed section 1.1, as set out in Clause 4 of the Bill, be amended by striking out "As a

college affiliated with The University of Manitoba, the" and substituting "The".

THAT Clause 4 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed section 1.1:

Affiliated college of University of Manitoba that also provides community college programming

1.2 *The corporation is an affiliated college of The University of Manitoba and, for its purposes, may also provide community college programming approved by the Council on Post-Secondary Education.*

THAT the proposed clause 2.1(1)(b), as set out in Clause 5 of the Bill, be amended by adding "one of whom must be a student" at the end.

THAT Clause 5 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 2.1(3):

Term of student member

2.1(4) *Despite subsection (3), the student appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council is to hold office for one year and is eligible to be reappointed.*

THAT the proposed clause 6(b), as set out in Clause 10 of the Bill, be amended by adding "in those subjects" at the end.

THAT Clause 10 of the Bill be amended by replacing the proposed subsections 6.1(1) and (2) with the following:

Agreements with French language universities and other institutions

6.1(1) *With the approval of the Council on Post-Secondary Education, the corporation may enter into an agreement*

(a) with a university in Canada that provides programs predominately in the French language to enable students of the corporation to obtain credit in a course or degree program offered by that institution; and

(b) with a college, university college or other similar institution in Canada, in respect of certificates or diploma programs, to

(i) develop and deliver joint programs, and

(ii) enable students of the corporation to obtain credit in a course or program leading to a certificate

or diploma offered by the corporation or the other party to the agreement.

THAT the proposed section 6.2, as set out in Clause 10 of the Bill, be amended by adding the following at the end:

The audit is to be conducted in the language in which the corporation normally conducts its affairs.

Bill 21 – The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax 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

Your committee agreed to report this bill, with the following amendment:

THAT the proposed subsection 93(1), as set out in Clause 23 of the Bill, be amended by adding "or significantly impair use of the surrounding land" after "environment".

Bill 26 – The Margarine Repeal Act/Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la margarine

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 27 – The Horse Racing Commission Amendment and Horse Racing Regulation Repeal Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission hippique et abrogeant la Loi sur les courses de chevaux

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 32 – The Rural Municipality of Kelsey By-law No. 5/02 Validation Act/Loi validant le Règlement 5/02 de la municipalité rurale de Kelsey

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

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

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 43 – The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act/Loi modifiant diverses lois sur les professions de la santé réglementées

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Ms. Brick: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:35)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Legislators' Forum

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome today legislators from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota to the Legislature who are attending the 5th annual Legislators' Forum here in Winnipeg. With us today, we have five legislators from Minnesota, ten legislators from North Dakota, and eight legislators from South Dakota.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba hosted the very first Legislators' Forum in 2001, and we are honoured to be hosting the forum again here in Winnipeg. Over the course of today and tomorrow, legislators from the four jurisdictions will have the opportunity to share perspectives on issues that affect each of our regions.

The Legislators' Forum grew out of the International Flood Mitigation Initiative agreement that was signed by the Premier and the governors in 2000 in the wake of the devastating 1997 flood. That disaster brought us together as neighbours to work together towards sharing solutions on issues we share in common. The Legislators' Forum continues the tradition of sharing information on important issues and really works to strengthen the ties between us.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members in this Chamber, I am very pleased to welcome each of the legislators here to the Chamber today and wish them well and hope that they have an opportunity not only to attend the conference but also to enjoy friendly Manitoba. Welcome.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I rise today also to endorse what the minister has said but

offer a hearty welcome to all the friends that I have made over the last five years of being a member of the Steering Committee of the Legislators' Forum.

These are people and friendships that we will honour and cherish forever. You are the people that have demonstrated a true neighbourliness to us, and those of us that sit on this side of the House truly appreciate how you have conducted the business that affects all of us.

We have dealt with many issues, and somewhat adverse issues. They include methamphetamines, agricultural trade issues. They include harmonization on pesticides and those kinds of things, the BSE issue, water issues, tourism and many other issues that we have dealt with. We have dealt with them in a diplomatic way, we have discussed them and we have agreed on many of them. We have agreed to disagree on some of them, but truly I think this is a demonstration of the kinds of friendships we can form and the kinds of partnerships that we can form to achieve what is best for this region.

So, we welcome all of you, and we wish you all the best.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome the legislators from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. It is now five years since we have had meetings of the legislators. This is the second one that I have participated in, and I think that this is a very useful and functional forum for sharing ideas. It has already proved its worth and I think will continue to do so in the years ahead.

Clearly, there are many areas where we share common interests in agriculture, in the Red River basin, in developing high-tech industries. I think we can learn from one another, whether it is in the recruitment of rural physicians or in the improvement of our agriculture or our cities.

So, I am glad that you are here, welcome you here. Together with the others in the Legislature, I just want to make sure that you are having a good time in Winnipeg and in Manitoba and feeling very well. Thank you.

* (13:40)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 50—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh), I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005; Loi corrective de 2005, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance, that Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005, be now read a first time.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this is the traditional statute law amendment act that comes in towards the latter part of a sitting of the Legislature that deals with a variety of bills in an omnibus fashion that require technical and other changes.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

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 legislators from various states: North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. These legislators are accompanied by Ms. Karen Bryk from the Protocol Office.

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

Also in the public gallery we have with us today Grade 6 students from Glenboro School. These students are under the direction of Marilyn Cullen and are the guests of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen).

Also in the public gallery we have from Dalhousie School 20 Grade 4 students under the direction of Mr. Richard Schaubroeck. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick).

Also in the public gallery we have from Benito School 8 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Kevin Kirkpatrick. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk).

Also in the public gallery we have from Dakota Collegiate 18 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Larry Patrick. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan).

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

Point of Order

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am just wondering whether there was perhaps an error made this afternoon in the Tabling of Reports.

Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) in this House a couple of weeks ago indicated that on June 2 there would be a report on Seven Oaks School Division. He said on or before, for that matter. We have just gone through Tabling of Reports and I would certainly ask the House to revert back to Tabling of Reports, as the minister has that report available for us.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that the report will be available today, and, in fact, the report will be available today. It is not a formal report that I think normally comes under Tabling of Reports, but will be provided shortly to members opposite. If the member requests that we revert back to Tabling of Reports within the next hour or two, it will be provided. I can also indicate to members opposite that it will be provided before we go into concurrence, of which I expect members would want an opportunity to review as well. So that report will be provided.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does not have a point of order.

*(13:45)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Crocus Fund Proposed Legislative Amendments

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): According to sources, issues with Crocus were becoming so regular that the Department of Industry, then led by former Minister MaryAnn Mihychuk, began drafting legislation cracking down on Crocus by improving reporting requirements. This legislation that would have improved monitoring, compliance and enforcement, but legislation, Mr. Speaker, that was scrapped by a higher authority in this NDP government before word of it ever had a chance to be made public.

I would like to ask the Premier who gave the order to scrap it. Was it this Premier, Eugene Kostyra or some other higher authority?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The Auditor General deals with the matter of legislation on page 145 of his report. I would refer that matter back to the member, the Leader of the Opposition. He will find that the Auditor General's report deals with the issue. He comments it was pacing and liquidity. Pacing and liquidity, ironically, would have made it easier for Crocus. We chose not to bring that legislation in.

Mr. Speaker, when members opposite are talking about who influenced who, I would point out that prospectuses prepared by Wellington West also dealt with the issue of valuation.

Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this Premier shuffled MaryAnn Mihychuk out of the Industry portfolio and some other higher authority in this NDP government scrapped her legislation that would have cracked down on Crocus by improving its reporting requirements, legislation that we understand would have ensured compliance, monitoring and enforcement.

Unfortunately, Ms. Mihychuk was not interviewed by the Auditor General's office during its investigation into Crocus, Mr. Speaker, which only

highlights why it is so important that this Premier call for an independent public inquiry.

Manitobans need and deserve answers and they are clearly not getting them from this NDP government who has gone out of its way to ignore red flags, internal warnings and uses a higher authority to scrap departmental concerns and scrap needed legislation. The only way through to the truth is through an independent public inquiry. I would ask the Premier will he stand in this House and call for one today.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member, it is not surprising he calls for one, he called for it six times before he read the Auditor General's report before it was issued. The matter of his comments about being shaken down by Mr. Bessey and Mr. Umlah have been referred to the Manitoba Securities Commission. The intimidation tactics obviously were successful in leading to the member saying that the valuations were solid, something that members on this side of the House never stated.

I would point out in 2004, January 1, 2004, a company that has a fiduciary responsibility before the Securities Commission, a company well known to members opposite, Wellington West, says, and I quote: "to the best of our knowledge, information and belief, the financial statements of Crocus's Investment Fund for the financial period ended September 30, 2003, and the Auditor's report therein together with the prospectus constitutes full, true and clean disclosure of all material facts relating to the securities offered by this prospectus." Members opposite, did you shut down your critic because of your relationship with Wellington West?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are very early into Question Period. We have a lot of guests in the gallery, we have the viewing public and some of them travelled quite a ways to be able to hear the questions and the answers.

Also I would like to remind all honourable members that when the Speaker is standing that all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence.

Mr. Murray: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The yelling by this Premier in this Legislature may

impress his caucus, but it does not impress 33 000 Manitobans that were fleeced by this government because they did nothing.

Even though this NDP government knew that there were serious problems at Crocus, they ignored all the warnings and allowed their labour-leader friends to have free rein to spend flagrantly, break the law and make poor business decisions. The Premier says that he will be accountable. He says he accepts responsibility but, Mr. Speaker, that is all he offers is words.

Manitobans deserve and want more. Manitobans deserve and want answers from this Premier, Mr. Speaker. This Premier can provide that today by announcing that he will call for an independent public inquiry where all individuals involved with Crocus, including his Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), his former ministers of Industry and their departmental staff will have to testify under oath.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier if he will do the right thing and call for a public independent inquiry today.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor is independent. The Attorney General's department through the Prosecutions branch is independent. The Manitoba Securities Commission is independent. In fact, the Manitoba Securities Commission is reviewing the transcript of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition that he was shaken down and he backed away from raising this issue because he was afraid to lose corporate donations to the Conservative Party.

Now that should be, Mr. Speaker, a strong sign for all members of this Chamber to support the legislation that we introduced that bans union-

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you. The Deputy Attorney General and the Securities Commission will be investigating the allegations made by the member opposite of a shakedown with the corporate community with himself.

Mr. Speaker, why do we not stand up in this Chamber today in recognition? It is like the road to Damascus, maybe today he has seen the light and he

can agree with us to ban union and corporate donations as we have in this Legislature.

Crocus Fund Proposed Legislative Amendments

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve the truth about Crocus, not the arrogance that we have just seen by the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, we know that officials in government are offended and they are discouraged that this Premier and his Cabinet colleagues have blamed them instead of accepting responsibility themselves. Officials in the departments did the right thing in 2002 and 2003 and brought forward legislation to crack down on Crocus and improve reporting requirements.

Why did the Minister of Finance, his Premier and his Cabinet colleagues quash this legislation and go against their officials?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report on page 145 makes it very clear and we have put this on the record many times this week that there were issues about liquidity and pacing that were brought to the attention of people with respect to the upcoming expected redemptions. There was a seven-year hold period. It was increased to eight years. As redemptions on this venture capital fund were coming due, there was an issue of liquidity and legislative options were considered.

Now it has not been put on the record before, but it is in the report on page 183, "The Department acknowledges that in '02 and subsequent years it discussed with Crocus the challenges of Crocus meeting its share redemptions in 2005 and beyond. Crocus indicated that it had a range of options including a more aggressive disposition of investments and changes to the investment pacing rules."

* (13:55)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, again we need to get to the truth of this for those Manitobans that have lost their pension savings as a result of this government's incompetence.

Officials recommended accountability and they recommended stronger requirements for Crocus. We

have a Premier (Mr. Doer), we have a Minister of Finance and their Cabinet colleagues that said no to their officials. How can we get to the truth of the matter and ensure that officials have the opportunity to speak up without repercussion unless we have some sort of an independent process?

Will the Minister of Finance today stand up and say who was pulling his strings? Who advised him to go against his officials? Who was that higher authority?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, a quick review of the history. In '93, when the fund was set up, there was no monitoring done by government. As a matter of fact, the agency of government involved was the Economic Development Board of government and Mr. Mike Bessey who wound up being employed there. In '97, the government put in place the monitoring function inside the same department as the promotional function.

In 2001, Mr. Speaker, we increased the reporting requirements, but the two functions still remained in the same place. We have accepted that those functions should be split which is why we are going to leave monitoring. Now we are going to move it to Finance, and we are going to leave promotion with Industry. That way there will be two separate hats, two separate responsibilities, and, in addition, instead of relying on trust, we will rely on the rule of law to make sure there is compliance.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for River East has the floor.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve the truth from this government and from the ministers of the Crown. Manitobans are asking the question as a result of this whole Crocus scandal. Was there political interference by this Finance Minister, this Premier and his Cabinet colleagues when they ignored the red flags that were raised by their officials and refused to bring in stronger legislation to monitor Crocus? Manitobans need to know that. The 33 000 or more Manitobans who invested their pension savings in Crocus need to know whether there was political interference.

Mr. Speaker, who was the higher authority who said no to the officials who wanted stronger accountability?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, if the conspiracy theory proposed by the members opposite was true, why would we, the first government in Canada to have improved the Auditor General's inspection act to give them—*[interjection]* Why would we have given the Auditor General specific legislative powers to investigate labour-sponsored venture capital? We gave that power to an officer of the Legislature who has a completely unfettered ability to review, investigate and report. That is why we have this report in front of us today.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the report makes several recommendations, including an independent prosecutor to investigate any criminal allegations. We followed through on that.

Crocus Fund Government Inaction

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): The real issue in this Crocus scandal is the inaction of this NDP government, its total disregard for the advice received from departmental officials, its total disregard for its own legislation, its total disregard for all of the red flags that were flown before the minister's eyes. Instead of taking action, the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Finance Minister, the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau), turned a blind eye to all of those red flags. I ask the Minister of Finance this: Why did you turn a blind eye to all of those red flags?

* (14:00)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there was no attempt to do anything but resolve the liquidity issue that was put in front of us, and the way it was presented is properly documented on pages 183 and 184 of the Auditor General's report. I started to read it into the record: Crocus indicated that it had a range of options including a more aggressive disposition of investments and changes to the investment pacing rules in the Income Tax Act. Crocus indicated preference for changing the investment pacing rules but expressed confidence that it could deal with the challenges. They had a variety of options. They knew that the redemption issue was coming up, but they also knew that they could have a more aggressive disposition of assets to solve the problem. We were working with them on a solution, but they had more than one option to solve the problem.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General said that there is a disturbing trend for this NDP government not to notice or act fast enough when taxpayers are being fleeced. This is a theme that is arising out of his audits, and the Auditor General has stated that there are more examples of this than he would like. So many red flags, so little action. I ask the Minister of Finance how could you sit back and do nothing. How could you ignore all of those red flags?

Mr. Selinger: Well, Mr. Speaker, as issues have arisen in this House and as issues have arisen, we have been extremely agile in responding to them and ensuring that we have put back in place all those regulatory measures that were stripped away by the government, the members opposite when they were in government. They believed that the solution to all problems was an unfettered and unregulated marketplace. We found out in the Hydra House situation that the monitoring agency that they removed—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: We discovered that the monitoring agency that they had removed—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I need to be able to hear the questions. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members here, all honourable members. I am hearing it from both sides.

I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers in case there is a breach of a rule, because I know you, and properly, would expect me to make a ruling. So I am asking the co-operation of all members.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the point I was trying to make before the din got loud as it did was that there have been several monitoring measures that were removed in the nineties, and we have put them back in place. We have done this in the case of Family Services. We have tabled legislation yesterday that requires more disclosure and more accountability. Today I am announcing a government-wide review of all the third-party agencies that we give grants to, and I am tabling for the Legislature's benefit the guidelines we have put in place to ensure that happens.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, because you will have to do so in an independent public inquiry, I ask the minister in his response to my next question to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think we have to be a little careful how we choose our words, because all members that bring a question or respond are always bringing actual facts. I just want to take this opportunity just to remind all honourable members to choose their words, just, carefully.

Mr. Hawranik: In January 2002 the Finance Minister's own department official suggested that an independent review of Crocus would be in order. The Finance Minister, who is in charge of an \$8-billion budget in a responsible government ministry, dropped the ball. He turned his back on his own government official and ignored the recommendation, and as a result more than 33 000 unitholders lost more than \$60 million. I ask the Minister of Finance how could you possibly turn a blind eye to your own department official. How could you turn your back on more than 33 000 unitholders?

Mr. Selinger: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor's report correctly identifies the sequence of events and where the blockage was in the system. There were indications that liquidity problems could lead to other issues inside the Crocus organization. That information was provided to the monitor which was placed inside the same department that the promotional arm for labour-sponsored venture capital was located. The Auditor argues correctly that conflict of roles allowed the promotional role to take precedence over the monitoring role. It also suggests that there was an overreliance placed on trust. We are separating those roles. We are applying the rule of law. We have brought new legislation in for accountability. We have the special prosecutor investigating the criminal allegations. We have the revenue agency reviewing the tax matters related to this. The Securities Commission is reviewing all the allegations. There will be follow-up and results.

Crocus Fund Government Inaction

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, the issue has little to do with monitoring. It has to do with what you do with the information you get after the monitoring has taken place.

This is a Finance Minister that has responsibility for an \$8-billion budget. He is in charge of collecting

over \$5 billion of taxation revenue in this province. Yet, when an official in his department comes to him and says, "Mr. Minister, we have a fund that has \$180 million of unitholders' and taxpayers' money in it. It is in trouble. I think we need an independent review." He turns a blind eye and does nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier should be asking himself if this minister has either the courage or the intelligence to do a proper job. I would ask the Finance Minister to explain why he ignored his official and why he did nothing.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would note that the credit rating for the Province of Manitoba under the stewardship of this Finance Minister has improved since 1999. I would note that the improvement has been made on two occasions now since 1999.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: I would note that the tax reductions in this budget, Mr. Speaker, are greater than any year of any Conservative government in the past under the stewardship of this Minister of Finance. I would note that the employment growth, the housing values, the unemployment rate are all better under this Minister of Finance.

I think there are very, very important questions to be asked, but to question any member's intelligence in this House is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I guess we now know who the Auditor is referring to when he talks about a higher authority.

This has nothing to do with monitoring by government officials. The monitoring was done. The red flags were raised. There were enough red flags that were raised to satisfy the Auditor General that the government should have in 2002 conducted an independent review. They chose not to. We have asked the minister time and time again to explain why he did not. He will not.

So I would ask him to table in the House today the memo that the Auditor General refers to on page 145 that was dated January 2002, from the official in

the Department of Finance. I would ask him to table that memo so that the citizens of Manitoba, the unitholders of the Crocus Fund can come to their own conclusion as to why this minister has refused to act.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises questions about acting on things. This is the member that essentially admitted that he was shaken down into silence in 2002 along with his leader. This is the member that actually had to make a payout in a signed and confidential agreement about a payout and will not reveal that to the public about what the payout was in the signed and confidential agreement.

He is asking that we reveal a memo. I ask him to put the confidential agreement on the record that silenced him in the year 2002. I have said in the media that we will take under advisement, according to the access to information laws, the advisability of releasing this memo. I will get a recommendation from our access to information officer, but all that information has been made available to the Auditor General. We still have not seen the agreement which shook down these people opposite. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Fort Whyte has the floor.

*(14:10)

Mr. Loewen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is more and more obvious why the Auditor General has referred to statements from this minister as misleading by omission. We see that time and time again in this House. I have asked him to table the memo. He has had three years to deal with that memo and he has done nothing. He has had since December to determine whether it was, in fact, proper to give that memo out and he has done nothing. Everything is about covering up. It is about red herrings.

It is about distancing this government from the fact that under their watch \$60 million of unitholders' money and taxpayers' money has been fleeced from those who followed the government's advice and invested in Crocus. Obviously, this minister lacks the character to do his job. He lacks the courage to come forward and give Manitobans all the information, to give unitholders all the information that they deserve.

I will ask him one more time. You received a memo in January 2002. Why have you refused to answer the question as to why you did nothing? What held you back, Sir?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we have answered very clearly to the member why there was not the role conflict within the department, the overreliance upon trust and why that had to be solved. The member opposite seems to make references to character. The member opposite makes reference to intelligence. Nobody on this side of the House was shaken down. Nobody on this side of the House made a payment through a secret agreement that they are not making available to the public. If the member is so certain that he is right—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If members wish to have a conversation, we have two empty loges. You are more than welcome to use them, but we need to be able to hear the questions and the answers.

Mr. Selinger: If the member really wants to show his courage, he would have stood up when he was shaken down. He would not have signed a payout agreement. If he really had courage today, he would make that payout agreement available to the public and explain why he clammed up back at the year 2002.

Crocus Fund Government Inaction

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, in that spirit, perhaps the Premier of this province (Mr. Doer) would disclose the information that is held secret as a result of his signing a hush agreement and using \$100,000 of taxpayer money to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance took an oath where he would act without fear or favour on matters of this province. This may be true except for the cozy relationship, the incestuous relationship, with the labour leaders of this province when it comes to this Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, career officials in the Department of Finance came to the Minister of Finance indicating that there were serious problems with Crocus. They put it in a memo. The minister did nothing. The result was that this minister has caused Manitobans

to lose millions of dollars. He chose his labour-leader friends over ordinary hardworking Manitobans. Why?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Once again, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite tries to put forward a conspiracy theory. This is a conspiracy theory that has no basis in fact. We are the government that banned corporate and union donations. The members opposite have promised to reverse that legislation when they come back into power. They wish to reinstate a democratic process where corporate and union donations can call the tune. We have banned those donations. We have operated without fear or favour. If only the members opposite would support that legislation, all sides of the House could operate without fear or favour.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if I could focus the Minister of Finance's attention to this very serious issue of Crocus because that is what this issue is all about, and that is what Manitobans want answers to.

The Auditor's report indicates that officials in the Department of Finance were so distraught about the situation at Crocus that they took the time to put their concerns in writing and bring that document to the minister's attention. They did their job in raising the red flags, and they trusted that the minister would do his job and follow up with an action plan, but, unfortunately, that did not happen.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister do nothing? Did the Minister of Finance decide on his own that he should not proceed, or was he, in fact, instructed by his Premier not to do anything?

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear on page 145 the sequence of events. The memo was sent over to the Department of Industry and Economic Development. It says very much in the report that there was no indication that the department seriously considered the suggestion. The Auditor later on in his report suggests why that was not considered at the time because of a conflict between their promotional activities and their monitoring activities, because of their overreliance on trust.

I say to the member opposite when will he finally and when will all the members of the opposite side finally stand up and say we do not want any more corporate union donations, and everybody in

this province can operate without fear or favour, instead of going back to the dark old days in the nineties.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about in the Legislature today is ordinary, hard-working Manitobans who have lost \$60 million because this Minister of Finance chose to side with his union-leader friends instead of hardworking Manitobans and ensuring that he acted without fear or favour as the oath that he had sworn.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Auditor's report, officials in government have said that they could not act because of instructions of a higher authority. Can the Minister of Finance tell us who that higher authority is?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite would have actually read the report accurately, on page 145 he would have seen that the liquidity issue was put out for discussion and review. He would have seen that there were proposals considered to look at how to address that issue of liquidity.

The fund made it very clear on pages 183 and 184 that they had a variety of options to deal with that. They preferred a legislative option. In fact, the government did not proceed with the option they preferred. That contradicts that we were doing them any favours. We acted against their advice. We acted against what they demanded from us. We did not think it was prudent at that time to proceed because there was not a consensus. The evidence belies the conspiracy theory the members opposite are making. Their conspiracy theory has no basis in fact. It contradicts what was said in the Auditor's report. The members opposite should read the report.

Crocus Fund Government Inaction

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister that it was the Premier that said in this House after having the report for three weeks in government that he had not bothered to read it. That is the disgrace in this whole thing.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is simple. The monitoring was done. Red flags were raised. The minister did nothing. Perhaps the Premier when he is interviewing his ministers about their jobs he should ask them if they can walk and chew gum at the same

time. It is not an issue about having to separate one department to another. His own Department of Industry says they can monitor in their response.

The question has nothing to do with monitoring. It has everything to do with what do you do with the information after you get it, and that is why we need a public inquiry to find out the truth so that the unitholders can find out what happened to their money and the taxpayers can understand what happened to their money.

Will the minister simply take the opportunity he has been given many, many times, stand up in the House today and tell us what is in that memo that he refused to act on?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Again, the member opposite uses terms like intelligence, courage and other terms, Mr. Speaker, to personally attack individuals of this Chamber. The report is full of legitimate questions, but the member opposite has to create personal attacks.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to the member opposite that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

Mr. Doer: After he was visited by Wellington West's legal counsel and after he felt he was in legal difficulty if he proceeded, and after the Leader of the Opposition was shaken down, they had complete and full legal coverage in the House. He could have come in to the Estimates. He could have come in to the Legislature. He would be free of any lawsuit. That information that he had could have been shared with all members of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. That speaks to courage. I think the members opposite had opportunities to deal with this.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Fort Whyte has the floor.

Mr. Loewen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and interesting that I am put to blame here. Somehow the fact that all this money was lost under their watch

when this government had unfettered access to all the information, somehow they are trying to say it is somehow my fault. It just does not fly. It does not hold water.

The questions have to be answered by this government. The questions have to be answered by this government. Why they did not act on information that was given to them in 2001 and 2002? That is why we need a public inquiry, because they refuse to act, they refuse to answer and they refuse to tell why they did not act. We need a forum where everybody involved puts their hand on the Bible and swears to tell the truth.

In the meantime, I would ask the minister to please tell Manitobans, tell unitholders what is in the memo that was given to him in January 2002 and why he refused to act on it.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, he gyrates between personal attacks and requests for information. He gets the information; he refuses to accept it. The report is very clear on that, a report that was only made possible by special legislation that we put in place, legislation members opposite had the opportunity to introduce, never did.

Members opposite created the conflict by locating those functions in that department in '97. We recognized, based on the Auditor's report, that that conflict should be corrected. We have introduced corrective legislation as of yesterday. The best thing we can do for investors is to follow up on that legislation, have greater disclosure requirements, have greater participation for shareholders in the governance of the organization, have all of those measures which will give a voice to the people buying shares to ensure that the fund is run on their behalf. Let us pass the legislation.

Crocus Fund Government Inaction

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, this government has clearly turned the Crocus Fund into a dandelion fund; \$60 million has gone because of government neglect. That is the issue, 33 000-plus investors lost millions of dollars because this Premier and his government did not act on the red flags. That is the bottom line.

For one of two reasons, either the Premier is not that bright or the Premier chose to ignore them

because of his close affiliation with his union friends, the same people that put up his campaign signs, that contribute to his campaign, that poll the vote. That is the real issue here, Mr. Speaker. Millions of dollars have gone astray because of government neglect and incompetence. He took union friends over Manitobans. Shame on him. He should be telling this Chamber why.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I think if the member opposite does something that he is not used to doing and does a little research, he will find that the donations—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: I retract the personal comment to my honourable friend.

Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to check it out, and I would suggest he look at political donations to federal parties which is commented in the report, he might find a little bit of a discrepancy between his rhetoric and the reality of how much money went to the federal Liberal Party from the Crocus Fund of Manitoba. It might be helpful, when somebody is getting holier than thou, to look at some of the realities.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Point of Order

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

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, once again the Premier (Mr. Doer) has chosen to put misleading and wrong information on the record. I think it is important to have the facts straight and to put the information on the record accurately.

I would just say for the House and for anybody else who is interested, I was never visited by lawyers from Wellington West. I was never threatened by lawyers from Wellington West. That never happened.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask for the First Minister to be a little more accurate in his comments. I am pleased at any time to tell him what did take place,

but we should be accurate in this House. Our statements should reflect what actually took place. I simply wanted to correct the Premier's misstatement.

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I think, if the member were to look at his leader's statements on the transcript of a CJOB interview, it is very clearly laid out about who visited who, who called who, who was shook down.

I think it is very clear on the public record as to what happened. It is not a dispute over the facts because the facts have been put on the record by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) himself.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would remind all honourable members that a point of order and a matter of privilege are very serious matters. I need to be able to hear every word in order to make a ruling.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader has the floor.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We wonder sometimes why there is an issue with decorum in the House, especially when it is provoked by inaccurate statements made in this House by the First Minister and his Cabinet colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member from Fort Whyte, just laid out the facts as he lived them and experienced them. If the government cannot take that as the true statement from a member in this Legislature and have to then try to twist it in some way, we are indeed in a sad state in this Chamber.

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker. We are dealing here with some pretty fast and loose accusations with things being put on the table which are very important to the operation of this House. We are dealing, quite frankly, with matters where there are concerns about whether the rights and privileges of this House have been interfered with by people approaching members in ways that would not be conducive to the best possible conduct of the affairs of this Legislature. These are very serious matters and very serious accusations.

I believe that there is an option here which I think would be available to the Legislature and to the Speaker. This is an issue which at the moment is a highly partisan-charged issue and which the Speaker of the Legislature could take a leading role in and indeed has a duty to take a leading role in.

I believe that the Speaker, under these circumstances, should in fact make his own inquiries into what happened in these incidents which have been such a subject of words like "shakedown" and of "interference by"—

* (14:30)

An Honourable Member: He is not a private investigator.

Mr. Gerrard: Well, I believe, just a minute—
[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: There is a role under this circumstance for the Speaker in his non-partisan position to be able to look into the matters at hand, to make his own investigations and to make recommendations back to the Chamber as to whether there needs to be any changes made to make sure that the members in this Legislature are not subject to unwarranted interference of carrying out their duties by actions which are taken by others outside the Legislature.

This is a very, very important matter, Mr. Speaker. All of us as members of the Legislature need to be able to carry out our duties in a proper fashion. Each of us needs to be sure that there are not going to be threats which will interfere with the nature of the duties that we have to do from day to day.

The members on the government side have made a charge that, in fact, there were circumstances which threatened the ability of the people in the Conservative Party and the opposition to do their job. Those charges, you know, are something that are so serious that they should, quite frankly, be looked into by the Speaker in terms of looking at the question about whether there needs to be further—

An Honourable Member: Do not have that power.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, the Speaker does. The Speaker has the role of making sure—
[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Just a minute. Sometimes the Speaker does that by presiding over the Legislative Affairs Committee, but sometimes the Speaker does that by looking into the matters of potential breaches and problems. The Speaker has the duty to make sure that there are not problems with the way that things are running and to make sure that if there can be improvement in ensuring that there are no breaches of privilege that the situation within this House can be optimum.

It is clearly not appropriate for whether it is the Leader of the Opposition or anybody else to feel so threatened that they cannot bring legitimate matters up. I believe that the Speaker has a duty as the impartial Speaker to look into this matter carefully and then report back to the Legislature about the circumstances. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, there is no point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Immanuel Christian School

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, last month I had the pleasure of visiting Immanuel Christian School, located in my constituency of Radisson, where I presented several students with the MLAs Social Justice Awards at the school assembly meeting. I presented these awards and certificates to students for their work in a series of essay and art contest that I co-sponsored along with the school.

The contest was established to encourage the children to reflect on the importance of love and caring. The elementary students were asked to draw

a picture of children living together in peace under the guidance of God, while the junior and senior high students were asked to write a short story, essay or poem about love and care within and beyond the commune of saints.

Mr. Speaker, it pleases me to know that students at Immanuel Christian School understand the importance of sacrifice, tolerance, peace and respect for others. These values are very important to have especially in a society where people from all walks of life and many different backgrounds co-exist. Our province is very diverse with people from many different cultures. Children are the future leaders of our society and maintaining peace and prosperity will depend upon their ability to respect and appreciate each others differences.

I would like to commend Principal Peter Veenendaal as well as other teachers and administrators at the school for their excellent work in teaching their students the importance of leadership and values. These are characteristics which will help the students enjoy happy and fulfilling lives and continue in making a better world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bears on Broadway

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): It is hard not to notice the 62 bears who have taken over Broadway. I would like to acknowledge the team who made the Bears on Broadway endeavour a reality. Fifty-one creative artists have adorned the bears with spectacular designs.

One artist in particular, Peter Sawatsky, has designed two of the bears. *Bearealis's World* is located on the Legislative grounds. *Snowbank* is located at the corner of Garry and Broadway.

Peter Sawatsky's career developed from a blend of his fascination with wildlife and his profession as a painter and commercial artist. He now devotes his time and energies into bronze sculpture. His work is found in private and corporate collections throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. Some of his work can be viewed locally at The Forks and at the Charleswood Bridge. Peter's most recent large project was the commission of a York boat for the city of Selkirk.

Peter is remarkably energetic and a prolific artist who thrives on challenge. He willingly

acknowledges his rural upbringing on the Prairies of southern Manitoba as a catalyst for his own creativity. The Bears on Broadway project for CancerCare Manitoba is particularly significant to Peter, as he lost his wife Karen to cancer five years ago.

I invite everyone to feed *Snowbank Bear* with donations to help fellow Manitobans in their struggle with cancer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Mine Rescue Competition

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, last week I was pleased to attend the 2005 Provincial Mine Rescue Competition Banquet held in Creighton. This year's Provincial Mine Rescue Competition was hosted by HBM&S at their mine in Flin Flon.

The provincial competition is an invaluable exercise which provides a workplace training experience and helps to reduce injuries and save lives. Due in part to the success of the rescue competition, the mining industry has the lowest injury frequency rate of all industries in Manitoba.

I commend all the teams who participated in this year's Provincial Mine Rescue Competition. The Inco team from Thompson was the winner. The HBM&S Flin Flon team was the runner-up. Tony Butt from HBM&S Snow Lake won the Technician's Award for the second time.

Each year, the council of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy presents John T. Ryan trophies to Canadian mines who have achieved the lowest injury frequencies in their geographical and/or mineral sector. During the last 12 years, a Manitoba mining company has been the recipient of a Ryan trophy seven times. Manitoba has won back-to-back national awards, and this year it won the regional award as well. This year the National Metal Mines Award was won by Birchtree mine of Inco, Thompson Division. The Regional Metal Mines Award was won by Tanco mine of Lac du Bonnet. Last year, the national trophy was won by Kinross New Britannia of Snow Lake.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our government, I would like to thank the Mines Accident Association of Manitoba and HBM&S for planning and hosting such a successful competition. Also, I would like to thank all mine rescue workers for their bravery and

dedication to a dangerous and demanding call of duty. Your expertise is a priceless commodity in Manitoba's workplace. Last but not least, I want to thank Kesari Reddy, Director of the Mines Safety Branch, under whose tenure Manitoba has racked up many impressive mining and safety awards. Best wishes on your impending retirement, Kesari. Thank you.

Charleswood Rotary Club

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Charleswood Rotary Club on the occasion of its 20th anniversary of providing service to the community. I was honoured to participate in the celebration on April 11.

The Charleswood Rotary held its charter night meeting on May 6, 1985, at Vasa Lund. Sterling Lyon and Bill Norrie were both in attendance. In that time, the club has been very active and are very engaged in making Rotary work. At the 20th anniversary celebration the special guest speaker was the charter president, John Inglis. John reflected on the last 20 years, saying he was reminded of the number of people who have worked so hard over the year to make the club succeed.

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build good will and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotarians, members of more than 29 000 Rotary Clubs worldwide in 161 countries.

The main objective of Rotary is service in the community and the workplace and throughout the world. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today's most critical issues, such as children at risk, poverty and hunger, the environment, illiteracy and violence. They also support programs for youth, educational opportunities and international exchanges for students, teachers and other professionals and vocational and career development.

* (14:40)

The Rotary motto is "Service Above Self." Community activities for the Charleswood club include joint custodianship of the largest urban green

space in North America, the Assiniboine Forest. Each summer the club conducts work parties to help extend the trail system, and under the watchful guidance of the City naturalist, replant native species to areas cleared before the park was established. The club has organized more than \$250,000 in donations and grants for the forest over the last 10 years culminating in the very successful boardwalk project which raised more than \$435,000 to make the forest more accessible. Virtually every member of the club has put sweat equity into the forest as well as selling souvenir boards for the walk.

In the last 20 years, the club has also hosted 21 one-year exchange students and sent more than that to other countries.

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mrs. Driedger: Leave?

Dave and Nancy Morris, two Rotarians, have also been to South Africa, which marks a significant milestone in an ongoing relationship with that country. These are only some of the many projects that the Charleswood Rotary has supported, Mr. Speaker. I wish the club continued success in their many endeavours. They are an incredible group of dedicated volunteers. Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the 2000—

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.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I rose on a point of order, and I asked whether or not we could revert to Tabling of Reports so that it would give opportunity to the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) to table a report on the Seven Oaks School Division.

Mr. Speaker, moments ago, media in the hallway were in possession of the report. Especially when I had assurances from the Acting House Leader that, in fact, before we got into concurrence he would

ensure the House that we would have access to this, at no time did I ever think that the minister would, in an underhanded way, just to insult members on this side of the House, take this out to the media and then perhaps he would decide at four o'clock to give us a copy in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, this is disrespectful to all members, not just members on this side of the House but I think to all members in the Chamber. For the last week and a half, we on this side of the House have been trying to do everything in our power to make sure that we could conclude our legislative agenda in a respectable time frame that was signed, and I think when we put our signature to a document that means something. We have been working very hard. We have been trying to compress our comments to try to accommodate the legislative agenda for this session. In that spirit, we have tried to hold the government accountable so that they would come forward with information that they had promised to this Chamber in a timely fashion and also in a bit of respect to this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I find this as a bit of an insult to us in this Chamber. I am wondering what the motive of the Minister of Education might be to do this kind of thing when I had the assurance of the Deputy House Leader that that would not happen.

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will admit to the member that that was my understanding and my direction that I had given to members on the opposite side of the House. So, if there is a problem in this regard, I do accept responsibility for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I stood up earlier in the day and indicated and conferred with the Minister of Education and tried to determine whether or not we would revert back to leave to table documents and thought we did not have to and that the matter would be distributed, and I gave my assurance that it would happen before concurrence. If there is a breakdown in the information that I have provided, it is through my error. I will admit to that error, and that was not

the intention of myself nor the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson).

So the member is correct that I had made those assurances. At this point, I suppose I could suggest that we revert back to Tabling of Reports, and we could table the report at least to fulfil that part of the obligation. But I will accept responsibility for the failure to follow through, as I had indicated earlier in my statements.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Inkster, on the same point of order?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to dwell on the issue per se, but I did want to make reference to the fact that the Premier (Mr. Doer), on several occasions, talked about a higher authority being this Legislature. I thought it was interesting in the sense that the Minister of Education would have been present during Question Period or just prior to Question Period when the Acting Government House Leader had indicated what was going to be happening. So the Minister of Education did have the opportunity to make sure that things would have been set proper. I think that members, I would hope, on all sides of the House, would feel somewhat offended by this.

I am not too sure in terms of exactly what sort of response we should be getting from the Minister of Education. I do believe, at the very least, we are entitled to some form of an apology. I will leave it up for the government, in particular the Minister of Education to do what is right on this issue.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I will take it under advisement so I can consult with authorities and peruse Hansard and I will come back with a ruling.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Burrows has a members' statement.

English-Ukrainian Bilingual Program

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the 2004-2005 school year marks the 25th anniversary of the English-Ukrainian bilingual program in Manitoba. The Winnipeg School Division program is

located at Ralph Brown School, a nursery to Grade 8 school located in the North End of Winnipeg. Twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations occurred between May 17 and May 29, 2005, at the school.

The Ukrainian community was proud of its bilingual education between 1904 and 1915, which included a training school in Brandon. Regrettably, bilingual education was banned by provincial legislation in 1915.

After much lobbying, two pilot programs were begun for kindergarten and Grade 1 in the 1979-1980 school year. As a testament to the success of this program today, the English-Ukrainian bilingual program is now found in 12 schools in six different school divisions with 830 enrolled students.

Students in the bilingual program receive half of their daily course work in Ukrainian and half in English. Courses taught in Ukrainian include art, physical education, music, social studies, health and Ukrainian language arts. The program emphasizes an appreciation for Ukrainian culture by including a Ukrainian choir and music program and the celebration of Ukrainian holidays and traditions. A diverse curriculum, including French beginning in Grade 4, helps ensure our children have a bright and successful future.

The 25th anniversary of the English-Ukrainian program included a pyrohy lunch for students on May 17; the official commemoration ceremonies, which featured student performances, an alumni-student soccer game on May 18; art and historical displays and a concert and family Zabava on May 19.

I want to congratulate Principal Linda Bulka and the Ralph Brown 25th anniversary committee for hosting these events. Thank you to all the past and present administrators, teachers, staff and students of Ralph Brown School for their commitment to English-Ukrainian bilingual education.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, regarding House business for

this afternoon, would you please call the following bills for debate: debate on second reading 33, 35; second reading 48; debate 8, 39, 41; by leave, if there is leave, 50, that is, the minor amendments. That was given first reading today.

At 4 p.m., Mr. Speaker, would you please interrupt proceedings to go into Supply, call Supply at that time to consider the concurrence motion?

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Monday, June 6, at 6:30 p.m., to continue, if necessary, consideration of Bill 25, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act.

*(14:50)

Mr. Speaker: We will call the following bills for debate: on second readings, Bills 33, 35, and then we will go to second reading of Bill 48. Then we will debate on second readings of Bills 8, 39 and 41.

Is there leave to deal with Bill 50 for second reading? This bill was given first reading today. We will deal with that first. Is there leave for that?
[Agreed]

Then we will interrupt proceedings to go into Committee of Supply to consider the concurrence motion at 4 p.m.

Also, it has been announced that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Monday, June 6, the year 2005, at 6:30 p.m., to continue with consideration of Bill 25, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I note that we had an introduction of a bill yesterday, Bill 51. I am wondering if there is leave of the House or if I should be even asking for that as Opposition House Leader. I have not consulted with the House leader, but this is legislation that was introduced by government yesterday, and it is of a nature that is important to Manitobans. I believe it was written up in the *Free Press* today.

I do not want to be accused of holding up legislation that is important to Manitobans, and in that spirit I am wondering whether the House would grant leave for us to deal with the second reading on Bill 51 as well. Maybe it was an error.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that request. It was a matter I was going to raise later on when dealing with the Opposition House Leader, but if you would call that bill as well today, if there is leave of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to deal with Bill 51 if there is time permitting? Is there leave?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, perhaps if we could call that as a second bill just so the minister can get his notes. I wonder if asking for this leave, if there is leave to call that after Bill 33, the fourth bill. There may be a budding agreement subject to the House that it would be the fourth bill called.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Charleswood, on a point of order.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would just like to indicate that days ago at the beginning of the week, I also asked for a spreadsheet with specifics in there regarding the financial commitment of government to Bill 48, and I have still not received that either.

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

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): On the point of order, we will provide the member with the spreadsheet, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: When?

Mr. Bjornson: Today.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Charleswood, that should take care of the matter.

We will now go to resumed debate.

* * *

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we might have leave of the House to revert to Tabling of Reports.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to revert to Tabling of Reports. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): I would like to table the Report Respecting the Review of the Financial and Legal Implications of Land Transactions in the Swinford Park Subdivision. I apologize I was not able to do this sooner, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable minister is tabling the report that was requested earlier. The point of order that I had taken under advisement, this process should take care of that matter. So I will not be bringing back a ruling to the House because this should take care of the point of order that was raised by the honourable member.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 33—The Planning Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 33, The Planning Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. It has been denied.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, Bill 33 is a bill of significant consequences for planning, for agriculture, for the environment, for the way of life, particularly in rural Manitoba. This bill needs to be looked at carefully, and I think it is important that we move it to committee so that we can hear from citizens around the province because it covers a large area.

From a Liberal perspective, this bill deals with not only development, it deals with the environment and the quality of life. We see these as not opposed, but as matters which need to be looked at together in an integrated approach.

The bill deals with what level of government will deal with particular issues. It takes away certain powers from municipalities to the Province, and that is, for example, dealing with the storage and disposal

of manure. From our point of view, I think it is very important that one of the things that is looked at carefully is which level of government can do this most efficiently, recognizing that there are some municipalities which are doing a very good job because of their local knowledge in the planning and enforcement area including areas like looking at the application and storage of manure, and some of these environmental concerns.

So one of the things that we would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that the government, rather than completely taking away all powers in this area from municipalities, should look at a more co-operative approach and look at who can do this most efficiently and the fact that we are looking at what can be done best for the people of this province.

We look forward to hearing comments at the committee stage. We will have further comments at third reading, but I think that this piece of legislation needs to be considered with considerable care because of its rather broad implications in terms of future planning, future agriculture, future environment and quality of life. Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to provide some direction for Bill 33 in the House today, and that would be the bill, The Planning Act, the long-awaited Planning Act in Manitoba. There has been much discussion around this bill over time. I believe that, while I still feel that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in this particular area of planning, and if it is not included in this bill, I will be asking the government to bring forward a few amendments in regard to add some further clarity.

* (15:00)

They do not seem to have any end of amendments in regard to bills like The Water Protection Act, Mr. Speaker. The bill, the infamous Bill 22, has been debated and is still being debated in this House long after the hearings have been held in committee. That bill had, I believe, I am not even sure, there are at least 25 amendments that came in, 12 of them from the government with some sub-amendments on it, but, those hearings on that committee, those public hearings were held last fall on that bill, and at that time it was pretty much indicated that they did not want to see Bill 40 passed, which was the bill that was brought in by the government

on The Planning Amendment Act last fall, until they could get the regulations around what the water act should be, until the people of Manitoba could hear what those were.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have had two things happen since. We have finished those hearings. We have had all of these amendments come forward, some from the government, some from our side. Some improvements have been made to that bill, but there are still shortfalls there as well, but the one that I was prepared to deal with last fall was Bill 40 and just one of the first acts that the member from Brandon West in his new portfolio as Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade took hold of was Bill 40. What did he do with it? Well, he killed the bill.

He killed the bill. Imagine. If you cannot plan The Planning Act, what can you plan? I mean, I have heard that over and over and over again out in the country. If this is a government that cannot even put some amendments forward to their own legislation when they were telling the opposition that they needed to come back to deal with this pressing legislation and they cannot get it on the agenda, Mr. Speaker, and carry it forward to deal with it, then it concerns those Manitobans out there that are having to make decisions on a daily basis on how they are going to proceed with their lives, how they are going to proceed with providing income for their families, and what kinds of operations they are going to have in regard to being able to expand or develop their operations.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are many concerns, as I have pointed out, around this whole bill. Bill 40 was moving down a track that would have allowed some clarity in regard to provisions for livestock development, which was, at one time, referred to as intensive livestock operations in the province of Manitoba, but this is dealing with animal units above and below 300 animal units. So it is certainly an issue of not just dealing with the lowering of the animal unit regulations from the present planning act to 400 animal units to 300 but it also puts in question what will happen with some of those livestock operations all the way down to one or two animal units in the case. We do not know where that would go because this government is giving individual municipalities the opportunity to set those animal units wherever they wish, and the 300 is only a guideline.

I must be very clear. I do support the fact that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities—the municipalities across this province and virtually every one of them that I have talked to, and I look forward to talking to more of them at their mid-summer meetings—have made it very clear over the last three years—going even further than that, back to when Ms. Friesen was the minister and I used to travel the country as rural development critic—that municipalities want to have the right to make decisions on land-use planning in their areas. They want the Province to be able to control and monitor and police the environmental side, if you will, monitor it at least, the environmental side of the livestock industry and other developments that take place in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I believe that the minister has brought this bill back to cover up some of the flaws that he had in Bill 40 for the bill that he killed, that he has brought this bill back now to try to deal with this this spring. I must say that there have been ongoing discussions in this regard for, as I said, over three years and finally in April, around April 25, the minister comes forward here with a Bill 33 tabled in this Legislature for first reading to deal with The Planning Act in Manitoba to try to help clarify the decision-making process.

First of all, they have allowed for the opportunity of planning districts to come forward with a business plan, with a plan that they will have to uphold in the House, Mr. Speaker. The planning districts can make those decisions at their municipalities and the act applies to land outside the city of Winnipeg. We must be very clear on that to start with. The planning districts can be within a municipality or a group of municipalities coming together. They can make those decisions on an individual basis as a municipality or in a collective larger region. Larger regions can form planning commissions that might defer some of these, which is more pertinent to some of the cities outside of Winnipeg because of the smaller building permits that might come forward in regard to houses, garages, sheds in their backyard, those kinds of things that require a building permit that a city council would not have to deal with on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we are limited in the amount of time that we can speak on these bills in

the House today because, of course, I think I am basically saying that this government has left it until the end of the session. After three long years, they basically, I think, provided information to municipalities that they have been looking for in some cases, but I want to say this legislation allows for go and no-go zones in each of the municipalities, places where livestock can be developed and places where they will not be.

We have got, I guess I should say that if the House was to end in June, then that would be one thing, but I feel that I could take all the time we need to discuss this bill because it is so important to the livelihoods of rural Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, the go and no-go zones, the outlines of concerns around the whole public hearing process on livestock in the future, there will be many opportunities for citizens to come forward at hearings in regard to the development plans. Municipalities will have the final say.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is some concern by some of the people that have talked to me about this bill that they will not be able to, I guess they have some concerns in regard to the final decision that a municipality will make in regard to their application. So I would urge the government to come forward with some provisions on this.

I know that some groups in Manitoba have been calling for the municipalities to provide a written analysis of why an application for development would not be accepted. I think that is fair because, of course, there must be many technical reasons and I think they should be technical reasons. I think that those people who are in the development process have a right to know what those are. Of course, all proponents or opponents to a particular project should know exactly where they stand. I think an amendment to that effect would clarify this bill.

I know that the technical review committees will be there as well. They need to be made up of people with a scientific background, some kind of agricultural background. I know that it would be very acceptable, I think, to have an amendment come forward where the chair of that technical review committee would be also an agricultural-based person, Mr. Speaker.

I guess while I have a number of other areas that are concerns, I am going to end it there. There will

be opportunity to move this bill to committee. We will be able to debate it further at third reading. We urge the government to bring some of the amendments forward that will allow it to be a better bill than what we have right now. So, with that, I would urge the House to move this bill on to committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 33, The Planning Act; Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

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

Bill 35—The Capital Region Partnership Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The next bill to be considered for second reading is Bill 35, The Capital Region Partnership Act; Loi sur le Partenariat de la région de la capitale, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck)

What is the pleasure of the House?

Some Honourable Members: No.

* (15:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. Okay, leave denied.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to just put a few words on the record today in regard to the Capital Region Partnership Bill 35. This bill purports a co-ordinated and a co-operative approach to ensure the core of the Capital Region is enhanced while still allowing opportunities in other areas of the region. Certainly, that is true and has been something that has been there all along.

I think when it goes further to say it is desirable to encourage leaders of the Capital Region to work together to promote co-ordinated land use planning, economic development and the protection of the environment, certainly that is the spirit of the Capital Region mayors and reeves committee that has been ongoing since approximately 1996, a committee that has been workable, has been co-operative and has had a very good co-operative approach within the Capital Region, including the city of Winnipeg and the surrounding Capital Region municipalities.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting the reason why we now have to have this entrenched in legislation. This committee was struck many years ago, I think it was 1997 or 1996. It could have even been more as an informal committee before that time and has been working well to look at such things as land use planning, watershed management and tourism and things of that nature.

We know that there have been several Capital Region review reports done. I have read them all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, starting with the first one, I think, which was 1997, the Capital Region review. That was followed up in 1999, after this government took office, with the Capital Region *Next Steps* report, and then that was not acted on. The next report that came out was the Capital Region final report, all of them very lengthy. Certainly, some of the clauses in there are very well placed, and some of them need a little bit of attention.

What I have noticed in reading these three reports is the tone of the reports has changed from the original report done in 1997, from a co-operative approach, based on a bottom-up communication with the government. What I noticed happened, in the next two reports became certainly a top-down managed approach by the government. Now, we have come even further, that we now have something that is going to be legislated, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the tone has changed from one of co-operation and communication, to a mandated something put right into legislation and into law, which speaks to the heavy-handed, top-down Big Brother approach of this government, with taking something that has been working very well for several years, and now legislating it.

Now, the minister stood in the House and said there was unanimous support for this bill. Certainly, that term "unanimous" needs to be questioned, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because not everybody in the meeting in the room at the day that when this was discussed came away with the impression that it was a unanimous decision. Certainly, there were discussions, and, certainly, many of the people in the room may have felt that this was the way to go. Some were hesitant, and, in fact, we know that a letter has been sent to the minister asking him to please slow down a little bit on this because they, the mayors and reeves in the Capital Region, would like to have a little closer look at what this actually means.

I know that some of them are concerned about some of the wording when they say that municipalities, the mayors and reeves "must" develop recommendations, and the mayors and reeves "must" submit. So the language is quite strong there, but the language turns when it comes to the minister. The minister "may" recommend. So there are some things in wording here that some of the people in the Capital Region are a little bit concerned with.

I would just like to say that I represent seven municipalities who happen to be in the Capital Region, and I am very familiar with the reeves of these municipalities. Certainly, some of them are quite in agreement, and others are a little more carefully concerned about some of the wording and the intent of this bill which takes something that is a committee, that has been working well, that is co-operative, that communicates, and now it is turning it into legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: They asked for it.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, the minister says they asked for it. Certainly, my understanding is that some may have asked for it, but the minister stood in this House and said it was a unanimous decision, and I just have to reiterate that not all the people in the room at that particular meeting came away with the impression that there was a unanimous decision. That is what has prompted the letter to the minister to ask him to please have a look, slow it down a little bit. They would like an opportunity to review this legislation a little more carefully and succinctly to make sure they understand what is in this proposed bill as it affects them very closely. So I would just have to say that something that has been working very well and now has to be entrenched in legislation, we are wondering why the big push on this, and why does it have to be done so quickly.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will pass my comments on to the critic, and thanks very much.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I would like to just put a few words on The Capital Region Partnership Act, Bill 35, on the record. I, too, have talked to many of the persons involved with this particular bill, and I just want to reiterate that many of these municipalities, the City of Winnipeg, Selkirk and Stonewall have been working very well on a voluntary basis in their daily activities and are somewhat concerned that we may

be forming another level of bureaucracy or another level of government, if you will, in regard to this whole bill.

There are concerns there, and I know the minister has indicated that there was unanimous support to move forward on this kind of a plan, but I think that he needed to check on what the provincial government's share of that agreement would be. What these people have indicated to me is that they are somewhat lacking in regard to what the provincial government's involvement will be in this whole process, and so there is a concern about the words must, in regard to the municipalities, City of Winnipeg, Stonewall and Selkirk must do things, when the minister may do things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that that is a concern.

I just want to make it very clear that they are looking for clarity in regard to what the provincial involvement will be in their partnership. They know that they can work together now, and have been, and there have been studies going back, as mentioned by the member of Morris, for many, many years on this, decades, over a decade, at least. The Conservative government previous to this one brought in many issues of areas to improve that co-operation, but why would we want to legislate these people into a forum that really does not involve the provincial government being a partner in that package? I guess that is a concern that I have with this bill.

I look forward to it moving to second reading and hearing from the couple of presenters so far that are wanting to appear before it, speakers who do represent individual municipalities as well as the larger region, and I would urge anyone, of course, with a concern on this bill to come forward.

I just want to say that I will move it on, Mr. Speaker, but before I do, I just have to reiterate that there is a concern that the Province has still got the final say in all of the powers on this in regard to a bill that, basically, legislates what is happening now on a voluntary basis. There is some question as to the need to do that, and I think that that is the concern that is being raised and that is the concern that I have been asked to raise in this House. So I just want to make the minister aware of that and look forward to any amendments that he might bring forward or any clarity that he can add as to the provincial involvement in this bill as it moves forward.
[interjection]

* (15:20)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): No, we are actually on Bill 35, the Capital Region, and whenever there is an opportunity for me to speak about our fine farmers, I might not have as much expertise as many in the Chamber, but I do enjoy talking about our agricultural community.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, this is in fact a fairly substantial piece of legislation, The Capital Regional Partnership Act. I am a little bit skeptical of it, but I think the idea of seeing it going to committee and hearing some input on it I think would be advisable. It is actually a fairly significant change that is being proposed, especially if you take a look at it from a long-term perspective, as we want to encourage and promote our local communities getting involved as one group in terms of future plans.

I can recall an issue that came up maybe a number of years back. It was in regard to landfills. We had at the time a considerable amount of controversies as one community was looking at having a landfill, another community was looking at having to get rid of a landfill. There was a great deal of competition, Mr. Speaker, of interest, and I really felt at the time that there should have been more of a plan that included the Capital Region, if I can put it that way. When I look at this bill, and you look at the objectives or the purposes, whether it is land usage, when we talk about infrastructure development, the issue of our environment, the issue of our water, all of these play such an integral role for the entire Capital Region.

As a result of that, I do see the merit for putting together a Capital Region board of this nature. I can understand whenever it is that you invoke a change, especially a change of this nature, there is going to be some resistance to it. I think that it is important that the government of the day take that into consideration but look in terms of what is in the best interest of the Capital Region as a whole as we want to move forward into the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I took a list of the groupings or the municipalities that are incorporated in this act, and it looks like they have covered the municipalities that are most critical for the Capital Region. What I would do is I would appeal to the minister before we see regulations of any sort finalized, that there is a great deal of consultation

with those municipalities, because I think it is really important that, as the bill, in essence states in its headline, The Capital Region Partnership, and you know, when you talk about a partnership you want to get all individuals involved and feeling as if they all have something to contribute. No matter what their size might be, we have to respect that we all are in a relatively small area and what one does does have an impact on another.

I am encouraged to see the bill, as I say, because I do want to see the Capital Region prosper, as I am sure all of us do, Mr. Speaker. I do think in principle that it is a step in the right direction, but we do look forward to hearing comments on this piece of legislation, and we would like to be able to get the assurance from the government that, before regulations, maybe that this is how we are going to be approaching, more details as to how they are going to be approaching the regulation prior to its actual enactment.

With those few words, we are prepared to see it go to committee. Thank you.

Mrs. Taillieu: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just would like to correct the record. I believe that I said in my remarks that I represented—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Since the member is speaking a second time, she will need leave from the House.

Point of Order

An Honourable Member: A point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. If this is a point of order, then it will be a different matter. I will recognize now the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) on a point of order.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to correct the record. I believe I said in my comments that I represented seven Capital Region municipalities. In fact, I represent seven municipalities, but five of those are Capital Region municipalities and two are not. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the Member for Morris, but that is not a point of order.

* * *

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the debate on second reading of Bill 35, The Capital Region Partnership Act; Loi sur le Partenariat de la région de la capitale.

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

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker: Second reading, Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Point of Order

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

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, earlier today we had some discussion in the House regarding the ordering of the bills, and it was indicated that for bills 48 and 51, which both the critics for these bills have not yet received the spreadsheets on these bills, I think it only appropriate, you know, we are rushing through some things here, and we are trying to put some bills through the House, but I think it is appropriate that the critics at least have the opportunity to look at the spreadsheets.

I mean, I realize, in Bill 48's case, the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) was too busy, you know, out passing the Seven Oaks report around to the press. But I would ask the indulgence of the members opposite to give leave to move bills 48 and 51 to come after Bill 50 in the order so that the critics can get these spreadsheets.

I note from the Minister of Education that the spreadsheets for Bill 48 are in the House. I think the critic would appreciate looking at them first. I would just also mention that the spreadsheets for Bill 51 have yet to arrive. So we have not even had a chance to look at those. We do intend to deal with these bills today, but what I would suggest we move them to be called after Bill 50, and I would ask for leave and indulgence of the House to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to defer Bill 48 and Bill 51 and deal with Bill 50 until the members get the spreadsheets?

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Mr. Speaker: You are dealing with the same point of order?

An Honourable Member: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, on the same point of order.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Yes, Mr. Speaker, when I was asked for spreadsheets, I did advise members that we would have spreadsheets available to them. I do have the spreadsheets at this time and I would like to provide them for the members. I would like to proceed with second reading on Bill 48.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on the same point of order.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, the arrogance and contemptuousness of this minister is incredible. We are simply asking for the opportunity for the critic to at least read the spreadsheet before we go into the bill. I would ask the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) if he would agree to give leave to move both Bill 48 and Bill 51 to be called after Bill 50. As I mentioned, we do intend to deal with these issues. We just think it appropriate that the critics have the opportunity to read the spreadsheets before we are forced to debate the bill.

I would also reiterate that on Bill 51 the spreadsheets have not even reached the House yet. It is our intention to deal with them. We would just like to move them down in the order so we have a little bit of an opportunity to review this information before we are on our feet speaking to bills. I am sure the House Leader would agree that it is important that, you know, when speaking to the bills that we are able to speak to them intelligently with full knowledge of what is in there. So we are just asking for a little delay.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to do bills 48 and 51 after second reading of Bill 50? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Speaker: Now I will call Bill 50 then. According to the agreement, we are going to resume debate on Bill 8, 39, 41—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, and then we will go to Bill 50, then 48 and 51.

* (15:30)

Bill 8—The Manitoba Council on Aging Act

Mr. Speaker: Right now I am going to call, resume debate on Bill 8, The Manitoba Council on Aging Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, it has been denied.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 8, The Manitoba Council on Aging Act, that was introduced a while ago, in November actually of last year.

In essence, what it is doing is it is entrenching the Manitoba Council on Aging into legislation. As we know, the Council on Aging acts as an advisory to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Ms. Oswald). The council ensures that the seniors' perspective is reflected in government programs and policies that relate to seniors and this bill will ensure that the government continues to seek input from seniors in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I am fairly familiar with this particular area as I was the former Minister responsible for Seniors. I used to have a very close relationship with a lot of the seniors groups here in Manitoba and throughout Winnipeg, and I had the opportunity to be part of some changes and some very interesting meetings and sessions with the council.

The council, when we were in government, which actually was established I believe by our government, was also very, very constructive in their approach to bringing forth concerns to the government through the Seniors Directorate. It is something that I think is very necessary in governments here in Canada, and we are one of the few governments that have this type of recognition for the seniors.

Seniors play a very, very important part in our society here in Manitoba, and especially here in Manitoba because of the aging population that we have in Manitoba. In fact, I believe that on a per capita basis, Manitoba has one of the highest percentages of seniors in Canada. Within a few short years, I believe it will possibly even be the No. 1 province in Canada in its proportion of seniors to the total population. So the recognition of concerns and problems that possibly seniors face in society is something that is very important that government should be very, very aware of.

The Seniors Directorate does give this access to Cabinet, if you want to call it, through the Seniors Directorate and the Minister responsible for Seniors (Ms. Oswald). It is something that is very, very important, to bring forth these views when there is legislation being discussed, there are bills being discussed, there are directions of change that the government wants to take, that the seniors' perspective is brought into the decision making.

The council will act in this manner. This enshrining it into an act is something that, in essence, I think that this government feels is necessary. We did it on a volunteer basis, in a sense. We were committed to having the council, and we worked with them very diligently with prescribed meetings. We had the council represented from various regions not only here in Winnipeg but throughout all of Manitoba in regard to trying to get a cross-section of various people, of seniors, pardon me, that were involved with various aspects.

Seniors centres and seniors groups are very active here in Manitoba. I am familiar with quite a few of them here in Winnipeg, being an urban MLA. I am fortunate a lot of groups invite me to a lot of their functions and events, and I am always very pleased to be part of it. The amount of involvement, the enthusiasm, the directions that they are taking with a lot of the programs are of a very commendable nature. The activity level for a lot of seniors is something that is very, very commendable.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that this is something that we are wanting to move on to committee and, with those short words, I am recommending that we move bill on to committee at this time. Thank you.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 8, The Manitoba Council on Aging Act.

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

Bill 39—The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act

Mr. Speaker: Now I will call Bill 39, The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Fort Whyte. What is the will of the House? Is it okay, the honourable Member for Fort Whyte.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I do want to put a few words on the record regarding this bill, and I do think it is important that the legislation get updated to reflect the fact that there has been a relatively new form of financing introduced in the last few years. Obviously, the legislation is a little late. I think it could have come much earlier than this, but the issue about financing companies through income trust is obviously growing and needs to be looked at in terms of our responsibility as legislators. I am just pleased to see that this bill will go to committee so that we can get some more information from the world of finance regarding this bill. Thanks.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): I rise in support of Bill 39, in regard to the updating, through definition, the new vehicle of investment and to protect those individuals that will see monies from this type of trust fund. I also believe that it is timely to see this bill through to committee and I look forward to hearing from the public at that time. 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 39, The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act.

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Bill 41, The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, standing

in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Stand? What is the will of the House, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: It has been denied.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege here to be able to put a few words into the record in regard to Bill 41, The Drivers and Vehicles Act and The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. The government has brought this bill forward with the intention of moving The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act over to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation and moving the licensing processes for those areas into the jurisdiction of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that, while there are some concerns, there are a number of new statutes that govern the administration of the programs and services that Manitoba Public Insurance will offer dealing with driver licensing, vehicle registration, driver and vehicle information registries, driver improvement and control, the medical records, drug and alcohol programs, vehicle dealers, sales persons and recyclers, driver training schools and instructors and motor vehicle inspection stations and qualified mechanics, just to name the ones that have talked to us when we had the discussion with the minister on this particular bill.

Of course, there are standards that are settings and the public policy principles which establish the legal framework for within which the driver licensing and vehicle registration programs operate that will remain under the direct responsibility of the government through the Department of Transportation and Government Services. There are some principles that are categorized in that area, as well, Mr. Speaker, but there are two schedules referred to, Schedule A, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, as well as Schedule B, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. This bill allows the government to deal with issues of fines and levies in those areas, charges for services, and there are a number of those areas that I have concerns with as we move across in regard to some of the accountability issues.

* (15:40)

But I think one of the areas that I know we need to monitor as well, Mr. Speaker, is that this government indicates that it has been able to hold the numbers of bureaucracy of civil servants and that sort of thing in line with other provinces, and what it has done in the past. I just want to say that I want it on the record that in regard to the reporting of these particular numbers in the future, I would like it noted that there are hundreds of personnel that are presently working for Transportation and Government Services that this bill will allow to move over into the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

We need to make sure that the accounting of those individuals, some 300, perhaps maybe more, are not taken off of the numbers that the government has, particularly the number that are reports, when it is reporting the number of civil servants. I mean, they are going to a lot of work, I know, to move this over, if that is one of the reasons why they are doing it. Of course, I hope I am being unnecessarily cautious in this bill, but I think that it is definitely a concern.

So, with that, I will move this bill on to committee as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on the surface you look at Bill 41 and it is a fairly thick bill. Having said that, its objectives, I think, are actually fairly straightforward.

Moving the drivers vehicles administration branch into MPI would seem to be a logical thing to do. One could question in terms of why is it we are doing it at this point in time. But, ultimately, I think that we have to recognize that it is better to do it now and see what we can do in terms of making things a little bit more efficient and possibly be able to provide even better quality service to Manitobans whether they require either the renewing of a driver's licence to making inquiries into MPI and the issues that MPI has to deal with. So, all in all, in principle, it is a bill that we can be supportive of in terms of going to the committee stage.

I think that there are other things that government could be looking at, Mr. Speaker. I had an opportunity to visit, for example, IBM, where they made a presentation. This is down in stateside where they made a presentation on the types of things that you can do over the Internet through government services. One of the discussions that we

had was the possibility, for example, of driver's licences. There are some concerns, in particular, in regard to securities and pictures and so forth. But again, the idea of incorporating technology as we look at driver's licences from the past to what we have today, and what type of services that we could be providing into the future and how we might be able to provide those services, I think need to be looked at as we anticipate that further change in time will be necessary.

Generally speaking, with this particular bill, what we are seeing, in good part, in most part, is something that will effect a positive change for Manitobans where we will see hopefully a more efficient system that will provide better quality service for the people that are actually footing the bill, that being all Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is 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]*

SECOND READINGS

Bill 50—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005

Mr. Speaker: Second reading, Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Training and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), by leave, that Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005; Loi corrective de 2005, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Attorney General, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 50, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005, be now read a second time and be referred

to committee of this House, and it was done by leave.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill, of course, comes before the House near the conclusion of every session, primarily for the purpose of correcting minor drafting, typographical, translation errors in statutes as well as some more substantive but minor matters.

With regard to the minor amendments, there are a few minor amendments being made to The Family Farm Protection Act that would repeal the requirement for the Manitoba Farm Mediation Board to provide an annual report on its activities to the Assembly. That, Mr. Speaker, is because the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives has indicated that its annual report already does deal with reporting on the activities of such boards and commissions.

Second, The Museums and Miscellaneous Grants Act is being repealed. This act imposed specific requirements on community groups that wish to receive funding to operate museums. Many groups found it difficult to comply with some requirements imposed by this act. The repeal of this act will allow funding of these museums to take place using the normal grant making process.

The Petty Trespasses Act, Mr. Speaker, is being amended to increase the maximum fine under the act from \$25 to \$5,000. The current fine is outdated, in fact, has not been changed for 95 years I am told and does not provide any real deterrent to those who trespass on property.

The Pharmaceutical Act is being amended to reflect the fact that midwives and registered nurses with an extended practice designation now have the ability to prescribe drugs. The definition "prescription" is being amended to specifically refer to midwives and registered nurses with an extended practice designation. This will make it clear that a pharmacist can dispense drugs on the prescription of a midwife or a registered nurse (extended practice).

Those are my remarks, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any speakers?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I do want to express some concern in regard to Bill 50.

As the minister indicates, that generally speaking a bill of this nature is always brought in at the end of the session, and one expects a bill of this nature to be minimal in terms of the types of impact it has if, in fact, it passes. Correcting, putting the right No. 1 in the right spot, doing some minor spelling changes and so forth, one expects is going to happen time for time, and there is a need to bring in something of this nature.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I am not convinced that all the changes in this piece of legislation are, in fact, of a minor nature. I would look to the government and question the government why it is that it has not brought forward other pieces of legislation to deal with some of the things that it is proposing to do in this particular piece of legislation.

All I need to do is just make reference, Mr. Speaker, to what it is the Government House Leader was talking about. Tradition inside this Chamber has afforded us the opportunity after second reading to pose a question or two of a minister, and I was thinking of asking for that leave to pose those questions, but he answered the questions, so I did not have to actually pose them.

In one of the answers that he gave, and I will cite The Pharmaceutical Act: here is a bill that does have a fairly significant impact in terms of health care. We got this bill in the last day. I think it was actually tabled today, so this is the first opportunity I have had to do a quick glance. So I am solely relying on the remarks that the Government House Leader has put on the record.

Based on the remarks that he has put on the record today, I would suggest to you that Point 30, The Pharmaceutical Act, should have in fact been a separate bill in itself. I do not think it is a housecleaning bill.

The Petty Trespasses Act. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have seen government legislation that has come in where they have increased fines. The minister himself says, "Well, all we are doing here is we are increasing fines." So there is another piece of an amendment that the government is bringing forward, and, in some cases, it would have appeared that it could have been brought in as separate legislation.

* (15:50)

The minister made reference to the museums and miscellaneous grants. Mr. Speaker, whether it is in

Winnipeg or in rural Manitoba, we have all sorts of museums that are out there that have relied on grants from the past and will continue well into the future. I do not know, in terms of if these different museums, to what degree that they are aware of it. The minister gives the impression that this is something that would be advantageous to them and therefore we brought it in. We have to take the minister at his word on that. There is no sense in terms of whether or not the museums are in most part wanting to see this. I suspect that they would be in favour of it, but the issue here is why are we bringing in these examples in one ominous bill and then saying that this bill—

An Honourable Member: Omnibus, not ominous. You said ominous.

Mr. Lamoureux: You know, my grammar is not as good as it could have been, it could be. Hansard is wonderful. You know, they do the spelling for me here, and sometimes they might even modify—no, they never modify. They always make sure that what I say is actually printed.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, the government, in a very casual way, brings forward a bill and expects us to be able to pass it. We have not had very much attention given to this bill, and it would be very easily overlooked. It just demonstrates how important it is that when we do get legislation brought to the Chamber, that, in fact, as an opposition, that we have the adequate resources to be able to look into a bill, especially if we have to do things through leave. I can tell you a great deal of hours is spent into prepping and getting a better understanding of the legislation that the government brings in. You need that lead time.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, as I say, on at least those three points, and those are the ones that the minister himself has made reference to. I do not know in terms of the other changes. If you take a look at it, we are talking about 40 different bills that will have an impact with the passage of this one bill. How many of those 40 bills that we are amending in this one bill maybe should have been brought in as a separate bill, because a bill that is brought in by itself has a completely different level of interest, both from the public and from the MLAs inside the Chamber. An example of that would be, again, I will go to 30, The Pharmaceutical Act. Whether it is my leader as a doctor or the Official Opposition Health critic, if in

fact it was a medical bill, this is a bill then in which those individuals would have made a special note of.

So I am prepared to see the bill go to committee. I would be interested in the minister advancing me either a letter in the future or commenting on it in committee. Whether I happen to be in that committee or in a different committee at the time, I would be interested in the minister just making reference to what it is that I am saying and maybe addressing why it is that he feels it is appropriate to have those bills incorporated into this piece of legislation that I am debating now, or he can just give it in his concluding remarks on second reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, it is also customary with this statute that the opposition is provided with explanatory notes. We will see if they can get those as early as today, to go with the bill. That is the usual practice.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) on his point of order does not have a point of order. It was for clarification for the House.

House Business

Mr. Mackintosh: Just on House business, Mr. Speaker, I understand there might be some interest in not seeing the clock at four and deferring concurrence a bit further to deal further with bills. Can you see if there is leave to do so?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to continue with the bills and for the Speaker to not see the clock, and then once we have concluded the bills we will go into concurrence? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few words on the record, some of which will echo the comments made by my friend, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I think he made a point, although perhaps accidentally, when

he said that this was an ominous bill. I think what he meant to say was that it was an omnibus bill, that it was all-encompassing, in fact, but I think he made a point that it could very well be an ominous bill because how is it that we, as an opposition, would truly know all of the impacts and the effects of this particular legislation which touches on a number of very significant acts in the province of Manitoba.

You know, it was introduced prior to Question Period earlier today, just a few hours ago, Mr. Speaker. It does have a number of significant things that it touches on within there. It is disappointing that the sponsoring minister of this bill, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) is also the House leader for the government. It really is his responsibility as the Government House Leader to ensure that there is an orderly, and I would say respectful movement and passage of bills within this Legislature. Yet the Government House Leader has quickly, and I would say, well, we do not have any indication how long the session might last, but seemingly near the end days of whatever the timeframe might be, he introduces this particular legislation and says, Well, we have to move this forward now on a quick basis. Do not worry, take our word for it, there is really nothing to worry about this bill.

Well, there are two points for that, Mr. Speaker. One is that it is not our job as legislators and the people who sent us here, our individual constituents, and really on behalf of all Manitobans, I think that they expect a greater degree of scrutiny on legislation. I really think that most Manitobans, if they knew, would be quite disappointed. They would be quite disappointed to hear that a significant piece, or potentially, a significant piece of legislation, Bill 50, amending a number of different acts, came in at 1:30 in the afternoon and is now going to be moving forward to committee at four o'clock of the same day.

I think that Manitobans would rightfully ask us as their elected representatives what scrutiny did this particular legislation have. What scrutiny did this bill have before it went to committee? You know, now committee will be quickly scheduled, I am sure. There will be an opportunity for presenters to come forward, but what opportunity because they will not have much more opportunity to see this bill than we did, Mr. Speaker. So it is not just a disservice to us as members of the Legislature, but it is truly a disservice to all of Manitobans who would otherwise

have had the opportunity to carefully consider a significant piece of legislation that touches on a number of different aspects.

So I would leave that with the Minister of Justice, who is the Government House Leader. It is not just simply us that he is disrespecting as MLAs, I think the government has sometimes done that in the past and taken for granted that we are going to just simply move things, put us into a corner, into a politically difficult corner to try to get it to go through.

I do not think that is the kind of, you know, we talk about decorum sometimes in this House, Mr. Speaker. It is not just about decorum. I mean, decorum is an extension of how the entire Legislature works. Decorum is an extension of all the things that we do here as representatives, of all the things that we do here as MLAs. I would say that if we want to have respectful decorum in the House at one particular hour of the day that, in fact, we need to have respect for the process throughout the day and throughout all the different things that we do here as legislators in this great forum.

The minister stands up and says, "No, just take our word for it." It is not the first time that we have heard that, you know. We were discussing issues around Crocus for the last two or three days and now that we have seen the Auditor General's report, Mr. Speaker, we see that this is not always a government that can be trusted. They do not have the ability, it seems, to act on warning signs that come forward, "red flags" in the words of the Auditor General. They do not take the opportunity to ensure that things are done properly.

So, at exactly the same time that there is a lot of concern around Manitoba from Manitobans, and particularly the 34 000 that have shares in the Crocus Investment Fund, at the same time that those Manitobans have concerns about how the government operated or monitored, I should say, the operation of that fund, we have the Minister of Justice saying, "Oh, do not worry. This is not a substantive bill. It is not something that anybody is going to be particularly concerned about."

* (16:00)

It reminds me of the Hydra House scandal that happened under this particular government. We had

the same kinds of red flags that went up in, I think, 2000 and 2001 after the New Democrats had taken over government. Those flags and warnings were ignored. You know, it was left to the Auditor General, again, to come in and look at it.

The member from Wolseley thinks that this is a funny matter but, you know, we are talking about, I believe, some \$50 million with Crocus investors, a million dollars regarding Hydra House, and the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), who is very reticent and reluctant to put comments on the record at any other time, squawks from his chair and does not think that this is a serious matter.

Well, in fact, it is. I mean it is millions of dollars of individuals' money when we talk about that, but when we relate it, specifically, to Bill 50, what we saw in the Hydra House situation was that we could not trust this government, Mr. Speaker, that there was not the ability to just simply take them at their word. I wish it was different. I wish it was not that way. I wish that we, as legislators, regardless of whether or not we represent the New Democrats or Conservatives or whether they represent the Liberal Party of Manitoba, we will not get into the federal Liberal Party of Canada, but we wish that we could trust all of the people in this House on their word, on their face value, and to ensure that everything that was done could be done on that basis.

The government has proven not to be able to have earned—and, really, trust is something that is earned, Mr. Speaker. It is not something that is given freely. It is something that, over time, has to be proven. You know, earlier today we had an incident with the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), who had made a commitment to bring forward to this Legislature a report and did not bring it forward here. He kind of snuck it out into the hallway, I understand, after or during Question Period, whatever the time was. He kind of slipped it under the doors at a time when he did not think we, as an opposition, would have a chance to question about it in the House, yet this is a minister who belongs to a government who says, "Oh, just trust us, this bill is not anything and nobody is going to have opposition to it, and let us just move it forward."

Well, there are three incidents which have happened in just the last year: Hydra House, which cost Manitobans a million dollars; we have the Crocus Investment Fund, which cost Manitobans

close to \$50 million; and now we have the Seven Oaks school affair, which, at the very least, has cost trust with Manitobans who ensure that things are being done properly, Mr. Speaker. And that is really, now—and here is the irony. So the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), the Government House Leader, now comes to us and quickly tries to put a bill through and says, "Well, do not worry about it."

I would like to tell all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, that I have been able to study this bill at length, and could give a great analysis of what the impact is, but, of course, I cannot, because it was brought forward two and a half hours and, you know, the Minister of Justice stands up on a point of order just previous to this and says, "Oh, we will get you some explanatory notes." Well, when? After committee has gone through already or, you know, some time closer to third reading? That is not what explanatory notes and spreadsheets are intended for. *[interjection]*

The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) makes a good point from his seat, you know. Basically, what the Minister of Justice is saying, "We will tell you what you passed after you passed it." And what right do we, then, as an opposition have, you know, to go back to our constituents and say, "Well, we appropriately and dutifully looked at this legislation to see what impact it would have on you." You know, I might have constituents who have come to me in the summer at some future point after this Legislature closes and said, "Well, why did you make that amendment to The Petty Trespasses Act, or why did you not make a different amendment to The Petty Trespasses Act?" You know, there could have been a way to do it that would have strengthened that particular legislation, and they will say to me, "Well, you missed the boat." What is my excuse, Mr. Speaker? Should I turn around and say to them, "Well, I am sorry, you know, we got the legislation at 1:30 and we moved it on that same day"? Well, they might say shame on the government, but they will say shame on me, as well.

This is the dilemma that the government puts us in time after time after time. Yet now we are supposed to go forward and close our eyes like so many people in Crocus believed in this government, believed that when those red flags were raised, believed the Premier (Mr. Doer) when he said, "You have got nothing to worry about," believed the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) when he said, "You have got nothing to worry about," believed the

Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines (Mr. Rondeau) when he said, "You have got nothing to worry about." Now the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has the nerve, the audacity to stand up in this Legislature and say, "You have got nothing to worry about." Here we are again, Mr. Speaker, put into this position.

I looked through the legislation and I noticed some of the changes, you know, to The Petty Trespasses Act. This is legislation that had got some attention in The Pas, I believe, because of the result of the gangs up in that area. I had the opportunity to visit The Pas a couple of months and speak to people in that constituency, very concerned about the gang problem in the community, very concerned that there was not legislative action being taken by the government.

So perhaps this is a piece, and I suspect that if I had the opportunity to speak to the mayor of The Pas, Mr. Gary Hopper, he would look at this particular piece of legislation, and he might say this is one step to improve it, but he might say a lot of other things, Mr. Speaker. He might also say to me, well, there are other things you could do with The Petty Trespasses Act to give us powers to enforce laws within our own community of The Pas to ensure that gangs are not running rampant. But I do not have that opportunity now before second reading to speak to Mr. Hopper and ask him about the things that are happening in the fine community of The Pas because we are on the eve of—

An Honourable Member: Three hours.

Mr. Goertzen: It has almost been three hours now since we have had the legislation so that opportunity has been taken away from me. Perhaps Mr. Hopper from The Pas will phone me at some point. I have had the opportunity to meet him before, and maybe he will phone me next week and say, well, you know, we could have made this Petty Trespasses Act better, and there is maybe a better way that we could have done it. We could have had another amendment tonight. I suppose he probably would not object to this one lone amendment in the act, but he might have said we could have brought forward three or four other amendments to make it stronger. But I have no way now of doing that because of the way this government has operated and decided to work.

I look at other legislation that comes out in the act here, the safer communities act. The safer

communities act is one of those acts that was brought forward—sorry, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act was brought forward prior to the 1999 election. It was brought forward by the former Conservative government. It was good legislation, and certainly when after the administration changed, after 1999, when this NDP government introduced it in a different form, a slightly different form, I might say, it was kind of changing the dressings on the window. When they introduced it in a slightly different form, we supported that, frankly, because it was our legislation. I mean we believed it was good before 1999 and we believed it was good after '99. But now we see changes to it and changes in terms of definitions and the adding of sections. Then we are supposed to simply say, to believe the minister when he says that this is some kind of a benevolent, friendly amendment. Well, I mean, I would like to believe the minister, and I am not saying that it is not. We simply do not know because we have not had the opportunity to truly look over the legislation.

I look at The Fortified Buildings Act, and I remember clearly when The Fortified Buildings Act was brought here to the Legislature by this NDP government. It was one of, I think, six or seven or ten initiatives that we have had to crack down on organized crime in the province. Clearly, we have seen the lack of results that have happened with the legislation. But there was a debate not long ago about The Fortified Buildings Act and how few applications that it has actually had. I believe that there have been three or four homes that have been shut down that were being used for drugs or were being used by gangs, under The Fortified Buildings Act, after a number of years of it being in application. Many of those might have even been voluntary of the few that happened.

So now there is a minor change to The Fortified Buildings Act. Well, would it not have been nice to sit down with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), and I would have certainly invited the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) because I know he has a concern about many of these Justice issues, to sit down with the three of us who have concerns about gangs in the province and, I think, have concerns that The Fortified Buildings Act is not working properly, and said, "How can we amend this act to make it work in the best interests of all Manitobans?" Yet we have not had that opportunity, and I suspect now that we will not have that opportunity to ensure that it is doing the right thing.

* (16:10)

The Victims' Bill of Rights, something again that we think is legislation, if it is operating properly, is of benefit to Manitobans, but we had no input on this. We now have no real discussion, but at some point we are going to get a spreadsheet, and at some point we might get a briefing on what the bill does, although it could very well happen after the bill passes or on the eve of when this bill might pass because ultimately we know that the government has the majority in this House. We are aware that if they want to ram legislation through that they will ram legislation through. That is the purview of the government, I suppose, of having the numbers on their side, but it is not, I do not think, what Manitobans would expect us to do.

The Family Maintenance Act is also receiving an amendment here. We have heard within our committee some of the difficulties that have happened with families, whether it is family maintenance or whether it is spousal abuse that happens in the province. We have heard some of that, of course, in the newspapers and the difficult situations, but we heard in committee how there could be changes, how legislation could be passed and enacted based on this particular area. Yet, here again, we will have some amendments that we do not know if they are going to have the improvements that presenters and others who have made presentations on this issue, whether they will actually be enough to have that kind of effect that we are looking for.

We had no opportunity to speak with the minister, which is not that particularly unusual, Mr. Speaker, but we also had no opportunity to review the bill and, I think, in a respectful way, bring forward amendments that might have strengthened the legislation. That opportunity was stolen from us. That opportunity was taken from Manitobans, and I say that is not the way that Manitobans would expect government to be run.

So I want to put on the record those words of caution, Mr. Speaker, and say to the opposition House leader and to members of the government that this simply is not the way we are expected to have an operating legislature in this province. They might think it is a cute way to move forward legislation, but I would say it is too cute by half. There will be Manitobans who would be very, very disappointed by how this Legislature operates and how the NDP

government moves through legislation in the province.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing and seeing in a prompt manner the information that the Minister of Justice, the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh), has promised us as opposition. Thank you.

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

An Honourable Member: 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]*

Bill 48—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Second reading of Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith), that Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants, now be read a second time and be referred to committee of this House.

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

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, that Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, 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 the message has been tabled.

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, Bill 48, an amendment to The Teachers' Pensions Act that allows for an increased contribution by active teachers into the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund, was brought forward immediately after negotiations had drawn to a close.

The increase in contributions will be 1.1 percent. This amendment recognizes the need for an increase in contributions to maintain the long-term financial health of the teacher pension fund as more and more active teachers reach retirement age.

I am proud to say that this is now the fourth time that this government has opened The Teachers' Pensions Act to improve retirement benefits for Manitoba educators. We have addressed a number of pension concerns brought forward by teacher representatives through the teacher Pension Task Force making significant improvements to the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund, or TRAF, and The Teachers' Pensions Act.

Some of these improvements include allowing a window of opportunity to purchase past periods of maternity leave as pensionable service, recognizing part-time service as continuous for the purpose of qualifying for a pension, enabling teachers to purchase future periods of adoptive leave on a cost-shared basis with government, allowing retired teachers to purchase past periods of maternity leave on a cost-shared basis with government; limiting pension premiums for teachers on disability; allowing for a retired teacher to sit on the TRAF board.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I look forward to working with members opposite as we move Bill 48 forward. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): In speaking to this bill, I hope you do not call me to order on relevance because I want to focus my comments on the fact that while this bill addresses what has been an outstanding issue for some time regarding contributions to the teachers' pension plan, it does not in totality come close to addressing the issues that the currently retired teachers have been raising regarding their COLA.

They have pointed out, as almost everyone in this Chamber I am sure is aware of, that they, in seeking COLA, historically gave up other benefits that they might have been able to negotiate in order to achieve that. I believe that we need to consider, as we go forward with this, what government's next step should be in dealing with that segment of the teaching population.

Unless there is someone currently in the government who might wonder why I, as a representative of a rural riding in Manitoba, would be speaking on retired teachers' COLA, I have spent a number of years as a trustee and, during the seventies was involved in the discussion about the changes that occurred in the teachers' pension plan at that time. I became somewhat schooled, pardon the pun, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the issues around this.

There are some outstanding issues with that group of retired teachers who are not being dealt with here. I hope that as this bill moves forward, and it will, that the current government will begin to address those issues. With those few comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I relinquish the floor.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to make a few comments regarding Bill 48. We believe that it is very important to get this bill before a committee to hear what the teachers and other members of the public have to say about it.

We know that in March of this year teachers were sending out thousands of cards to MLAs encouraging government to talk to them about their pensions. They felt that government was not listening and they felt forced to get into a card campaign in order to get the government's attention. According to the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the government had been refusing to discuss this with them for the past two years.

According to the Manitoba Teachers' Society, they have indicated that they presented a proposal to government in 2003, and they raised their concerns about their pension plan at every opportunity. They indicated that the provincial government has not only refused to act, but has not even entered into discussions. They were feeling that what was a small surplus in the teachers' pension plan three years ago has now turned into a deficit, and were concerned that their plan is going to face deepening difficulties unless the government acts.

* (16:20)

What MTS did at the time, too, was an independent telephone survey of 800 teachers that was conducted in November of 2004. They indicated that a vast majority of their members, 87 percent, said that they would choose a 2% increase in their

premium in order to maintain their pension benefits when they retire.

At the time of this card campaign, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on March 21 and 22, I raised this issue in the House with the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), who basically contradicted the Manitoba Teachers' Society, saying that he has met with them on a number of occasions and discussed it on a number of occasions. Following all of that, a pension task force was hastily thrown together, and the last meeting of that group was held on April 18. Nothing happened until last week, the end of May, when Bill 48 was introduced. It had been sitting on the Order Paper since Tuesday, waiting for the Minister of Education to give it second reading.

Yesterday, in a meeting with MTS, they were very surprised and shocked that this bill had not been moving forward. They assumed that it had been. They were shocked that it had not been moving forward and that it had seriously missed the deadline of April 28, which was the last date for bills to be introduced to guarantee passage this session.

Under the new rules where we are trying to work with a more established calendar, the negotiations that had occurred between the three parties here was that April 28 was the last date when all bills had to be introduced in order to guarantee passage. So this NDP government and this Minister of Education were well beyond the date where we were going to ensure that bills would be passed.

Mr. Denis Rocan, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Yesterday, upon hearing that this bill was not budging on the Order Paper, that it was stalled waiting for second reading, I understand that a call had been placed by the president of MTS to the Premier (Mr. Doer) late yesterday morning, and still yesterday afternoon the bill was still not budging. The Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) told our House leader that they did not expect this bill to pass this session, a big surprise for the Manitoba Teachers' Society who had hoped it could be implemented in September.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

In fact, two government ministers, one being the Minister of Education, have said that teachers would understand why this government might not pass it

because teachers knew that this government was their friend and that if it did not get passed this session, that certainly teachers would understand that.

A few more phone calls, Mr. Speaker, and meetings, and more phone calls here this a.m., and here we are now. The Doer government has basically indicated—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead.

Mrs. Driedger: The Doer government has basically indicated, and this indication had been made yesterday, that they did not see that this bill was going to be passing this session, and that the indication was that it was not a priority for them.

This certainly does raise some concern in one particular area that I would just like to identify at this moment, because early in the week we had asked for a spreadsheet on this so that we could have a better understanding of what the financial implications were to the bill. Up until only maybe an hour or so ago we still did not have that spreadsheet, despite the request being made days ago. We had to delay having second reading brought forward this afternoon until the minister was prepared again to bring forward the spreadsheet.

In the spreadsheet there is one particular statement that is quite disconcerting, particularly since the House leader yesterday said that they did not expect that this bill was going to be passed this session. The statement in the minister's spreadsheet said that, "if the increase in contributions is delayed by six months, it is estimated that there would be \$750,000 less into the PAA, which is the Pension Adjustment Account, where COLA is taken from and there would be \$3.25-million less in the main fund." Considering those are significant amounts of money, I do not understand why this Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) has been dragging his heels on bringing this bill forward, why this bill has been sitting, waiting for second reading all week on the Order Paper, making it look like they were doing something when, in fact, they have done absolutely nothing but drag their heels on this particular legislation.

Mr. Speaker, certainly this legislation is important because the pension issue has not been updated for 25 years. That has some concerns for

people because since then, the average retirement age for teachers has decreased, life expectancy has increased and the ratio of active to retired teachers has dropped dramatically, yet the premiums have remained unchanged and are now the second lowest in Canada.

Three years ago, when the teachers' pension plan had a small surplus, MTS apparently advised the provincial government that the pension premiums new teachers were paying were inadequate to pay for the cost of the pensions they would be entitled to when they retire. Today, they have indicated that the plan has a deficit and that no-one is contributing enough for their pension. They have also indicated that there is not enough money in the plan to meet retired teachers' expectations that they would receive an annual cost of living adjustment. The pension plan had been set up so that active teachers pay the COLA for retired teachers. According to MTS, this worked well at the time because the ratio of active retired teachers was 7 to 1, whereas now the current ratio is about 1.4 to 1 and is continuing to drop.

With that in mind, the Manitoba Teachers' Society had made a proactive proposal to the government in 2003, when things were not so bad. According to the president of MTS, the situation with their pension has gotten much more serious and has created some serious concerns for them. According to MTS, the government, in a statement from the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, he said, "The government needs to respond to our offer to increase our pension contributions. We are not asking to improve our benefits. We are asking to pay more money into the plan just to be able to pay for the benefits teachers will be entitled to when they retire."

The retired teachers, certainly, have also raised a specific concern as it relates to them. The retired teachers are concerned that the proposed legislative amendments to this act do not deal with the interests of retired teachers. They have indicated that retired teachers find it unacceptable that issues related to the interests of active teachers are being addressed in this proposed amendment while the issues related to the interests of retired teachers are not. Retired teachers are indicating they are concerned about the level of their COLA payments and the ability of TRAF to provide for reasonable COLA payments in the future. Throughout their career, retired teachers have paid a percentage of their pension contributions

for inflation protection. We would indicate, also, that the retired teachers have indicated that half of the monies held by TRAF are from the contributions and investments initiated by the currently retired teachers.

Retired teachers are hoping that the funding issues related to their COLA payments would be addressed. They would appreciate the opportunity of being much more actively involved in any consultations. They are asking for fairness for their issues and a stronger say in what their COLA should be. While they are allowed to sit on the pension committee, it is only as a guest, and they feel fairly strongly that as long as that continues their interests will not be fully and adequately addressed.

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker, what is probably needed, however, is to have a good actuarial review of this whole plan because right now this piecemeal approach is certainly not going to address the overall problem. That is why we believe it is important to get this into committee to hear what teachers have to say, to hear what the public has to say. The fact that this government has dropped the ball on this particular legislation right from the beginning is extremely disconcerting. Knowing the concerns that are out there and their unwillingness to move this bill forward until they were nudged along, I do not think says very much about the management and leadership abilities of the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson).

Whether it is contempt of a process or what it is, raises a lot of red flags, I think, for a lot of people in terms of how he is managing the issues in his department and his understanding about the significance of some of these issues, especially when his own spreadsheet indicates the serious financial impact that this would have had if this had been delayed, which, in fact, really brings into, I guess, suspicious minds as to what his motivation might be for wanting to do that.

I think what we need to do is get this into committee to hear from teachers. I would like to indicate that the contributions of teachers to this province and to our children are invaluable. They play such a significant role in moulding the minds of our young children, in helping children to strive for their best, to teach them how to be adults and future

leaders. I think what this government could have at least done is shown much more respect in how they were willing to handle such a significant issue as teachers' pensions.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to having this brought before committee and hearing from those people at committee.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few words on this bill. It is said that this government is a friend of teachers, but this government delayed for two or more years before even meeting with teachers and deciding that they would actually bring something forward.

It is said that this government is a friend of teachers, and yet this government delayed in bringing in the legislation until after April 25 so it would appear they could conveniently not, you know, have the responsibility of actually putting it into effect and bringing it into effect this year.

This government is a friend to teachers, and yet the government has been delaying moving this forward in the Legislature after it was presented, you know, and making sure that it is debated.

This government is a friend of teachers, and yet we know that, sadly, this bill does not attend to the needs of retired teachers. We have been meeting on this side with retired teachers who are most unhappy with the fact that this bill does not deal with the central issues in any reasonable fashion for retired teachers. We think that the government really has not done its job properly all the way along the line here.

We are reasonable people and we would look forward to comments from people in the committee. Let us get some public input on this bill. It is too bad that it is sort of in the dying hours of this legislative sitting, but let us do what we can in helping out teachers and retired teachers. Let us see if there may be some possibilities of amendments that could, you know, do the real job instead of doing only part of the job.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

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

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines (Mr. Rondeau), seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Rondeau: Yesterday the Manitoba government introduced The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act in response to the recommendations of the Auditor General's examination of the Crocus Investment Fund. The intent of the bill is to respond to all of the recommendations to government regarding the investigation by the Auditor General. It is also trying to make changes in light of emerging good corporate governance practices and trends in good governance.

So the act amends the Crocus Fund, the labour-sponsored venture capital fund, and The Income Tax Act. They provide for the good governance. They do that for both ENSIS and Crocus, both labour-sponsored venture capital funds in the province. They empower the common shareholders by providing greater representation and voice on the board and committees of each labour-sponsored venture capital fund. They better protect shareholders' interests by strengthening reporting and disclosure. They also streamline the administration.

The act is ensuring about the good governance. I will break it down into the different parts. As far as the governance and empowering shareholders, the board of directors of the labour-sponsored venture capital funds will be required to develop governance policies and practices having regard to the best corporate governance practices for public companies and to adhere to these practices and policies. It is also required that they will provide common shareholders with greater representation and voice on the labour-sponsored venture capital board. The act

will eliminate the government's entitlement to elect a director and will require at least four directors to be elected by the Class A common shareholders.

There was confusion as to who the government-appointed board member was supposed to report to. We explained, and as was confirmed by Bernard Wilson, the role of the government-appointed board director was to the shareholders and did not report to the government. So what we wanted to do is ensure that we ended that confusion. What we did was made sure that that board seat went to the Class A common shareholders which makes sense intuitively.

We also increased the common shareholder representation by doing the following. What we did was the labour sponsor, which was the MFL in the case of Crocus, and had the majority in the original memo of understanding, in 1992, signed by Mr. Stefanson. What we did was we changed the provision of the labour-sponsored venture capital act so that the new labour sponsor does not have a majority, but has the right to elect exactly one half of the directors, and this mirrors exactly the federal law in both ENSIS and Crocus.

The labour-sponsored venture capital funds, both ENSIS and Crocus, will be required to establish key board committees. These board committees will be investment, valuation, audit and governance. Those committees, it is important to note, will have at least one common shareholder who will be on each of those committees. That is the common shareholders who are elected by the people who put money in the fund.

The interesting other part of the key governance roles of the board committees is that they cannot be chaired by an employee of the funds. The other things that will have to happen in this legislation is the board of directors will be required to develop specific financial and investment competency requirements for board members. They will have to be afforded educational opportunities should they need to develop these competencies.

* (16:40)

They are also able to bring experts onto the board committees. The experts should have specific expertise to bring to the board and bring to the board committees any of the expertise that is required. So, if there is a valuation committee, they can bring

experts in valuation. If it is a committee on the board governance, they can bring experts in on that. So it is providing the board, the board-direct committees, both the expertise and the responsibility to manage the fund.

Other examples are that we are going to ensure that no director or employees or fund managers will be in the chair or vice-chair of any of these board committees. They also must develop, both labour-sponsored venture capital funds must develop conflict of interest policies for their committee members, for employees, and they have to be in keeping with the best corporate governance practices for public companies.

They also have to develop whistle-blower policies and procedures for receiving and dealing with complaints and submissions made by employees, and these are done with confidentiality and anonymity.

They also must make sure that they follow good financial practice as far as not allowing promotional or advertising activities in the workplace, such as things like putting advertising stuffers in paycheques. That will be outlawed.

So those are some of the good governance and shareholder empowering provisions. There are more in the act, but that is just a highlight.

It is also going to protect shareholder interests through enhanced reporting and disclosure. An example of some of the issues was that there were not enough provisions for enhanced reporting and disclosures. There were cases when information was to be provided by the management. Again, some of the issues through the Auditor General were that appropriate, honest information was not provided. So what we wanted to do is make sure that there were additional protections for shareholders as well as increased participation on the board committees.

So the descriptions now of all the labour-sponsored venture capital funds, corporate governance policies and practices must be included in all communications to shareholders and prospectus shareholders, not just in the prospectus but also in the annual reports and other information.

Conflict of interest policies and procedures must be made available upon request for all.

They will also have to report in their annual reports to shareholders details of senior staff and director compensation and expenses. This is really important. It was mentioned that a lot of the press coverage has been dealing on excessive expenditures. We are making that mandatory to report that information to the shareholders.

It is also going to be mandatory to have the risks associated with investing in the labour-sponsored venture capital funds in all information. It is also supposed to be talked about how the Class A shares are valued. Also, it is going to talk about the mandate and the extent that it has met its business objectives for the year. It is going to be all part of the policies and new reporting requirements.

Also required are the policies and practices regarding any of the funds' activities. So they are talking about how they are meeting all their objectives, and that will be shown in the information provided.

The other thing that we have made public is that the fact that all these annual reports and shareholder information are available for both funds to the public because of the funding provided by the provincial government for these funds.

As far as the administrative efficiency, one of the concerns raised by the Auditor General was the concern that the Industry Department in 1997 had multiple hats, had multiple roles, the role of the promoter, the group that was working with the venture capital funds, as well as the monitor. Because of that, staff often tried to develop a trusting, co-operative relationship. What we are going to do in the new act is divide the monitoring and the promotional functions between two departments.

The Industry Department will hold the promotional function and the Finance Department will start doing the monitoring function. That, hopefully, will ensure very strict compliance with the act in reporting requirements.

Some of the other things are we have taken the requirements for administration, we have moved the requirements for administration out of the Crocus act. We have put them in the labour-sponsored venture capital fund act. So all the requirements for reporting, administration, et cetera are put into one

act. So what is left in the Crocus act are the things that are specific to Crocus. Then both acts have those functions that are the same, which is the reporting to government, et cetera.

One of the other very important things in the act, and it was explained in detail in the *Free Press* today, is the fact that we are ensuring that there is a return, there is an attempt to ensure that the return on investment on making a profit, a return on investment, is the function of the labour-sponsored fund. So the job is to develop a return on investment.

Prior to this, there had been some discussion about whether there was confusion as to whether there were multiple roles, multiple bottom lines. What we are ensuring is that the bottom line is there should be concentrated effort to get a good return on investment or, at least, a return on investment. Now, we do know that it is risk capital, we do know that there is some volatility, but what we are trying to do is ensure that we have the key principles of having people involved in the decisions, involved in the board and governance.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have the appropriate information. We are going to have appropriate monitoring as well as promotion within government and we are going to ensure that both funds have good corporate governance and adopt good corporate practices. These should better protect shareholders and give them a greater voice. We believe that the committee provisions will allow the board to better enlist expert advice and increase their ability to work on the benefit to shareholders. We believe the monitoring will be strengthened because of the separating of the two roles so there will not be confusion with staff in multiple roles.

We will continue to work to make sure that we improve and support venture capital in Manitoba. I said on the record yesterday that I think that the growth of Manitoba's economy, the growth of the economic pie in Manitoba, is a very amiable cause. I think when venture capital is brought into the province it grows, internally, businesses. It gets new business to establish in the province and that is a good goal. I think what we have to do is we have to ensure that we are adopting the best possible governance model and make sure that people have faith that they are getting information to base their investment decisions on, good information. What we want to do is make sure that we have the system, or

continue to improve the system, so that people have faith in their investments.

In hindsight, it would have been wonderful to have known everything that was going on in Crocus, but what we have done is we have said that we need to move forward quickly to all aspects of the Auditor General's report and take action quickly to stabilize the venture capital funds and move forward. I think what we have to also do is work together to make sure that the economics in Manitoba, the economics of venture capital, have a stable footing. I think we have to work together with the opposition to ensure that we have a bill that does that.

I think what happened is, in 1992 and '93 when Crocus was setup, there might have been some fundamental flaws and, in hindsight, in 1997 there might have been some flaws and, in hindsight, in 2001 there might have been some flaws, but there were levels of people and organizations that missed signs. What we have, an internal fund auditor, we have the Department of Industry, we have the provincial auditor. We have multiple people and organizations and groups, both within and outside of government, that did not see signs that there were difficulties.

I think what happens is, by this legislation we will ensure that we then (a) have the information, (b) we have the monitoring, and we move forward. I think this will give the confidence and the support for people to invest. I think it allows for the venture capital industry to go forward in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*(16:50)

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I do want to speak quite at length about this Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act. I want to make it clear at the outset that I do not particularly blame the minister for the fiasco that we are seeing today with the Crocus Fund, and the fact that over \$60 million of unitholders' money has disappeared and taxpayers' money has disappeared.

Well, firstly, I would say it is obvious that the minister is over his head and does not really understand the nature of these funds or the nature of business or anything to do with board governance whatsoever. Secondly, we realize that he was just

appointed to this role in October, and by the time he got there, the mess had already been created.

It is really the problems of the two former ministers, the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) and the former minister, as well as the Finance Minister and the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province. As a result of their lack of attention to this file, and in the case of the Premier, directly the result of the fact that he was more interested in being what can be referred to often in the financial community as a big shooter. You know, he wanted to hang with the business crowd and prove that he was knowledgeable about business, but, in doing that, he proved once again that he does not understand the basic premise that what is behind all this is good governance and good due diligence.

When I see government press releases that he has attached himself to, particularly with the ones he attached himself to for Maple Leaf Distillers, where, you know, they said from the firm that he went over and above and beyond the call to make it easy for Maple Leaf Distillers to get the support they got. Well, it just indicates that his real motivation was being able to perhaps go down to California and party with some people that he thought were significant players in the business community. Unfortunately, his decision to let this issue revolve more around his ego than good business sense has resulted in some tremendous losses for people in Manitoba.

With regard to this bill, it really is, I mean, I am almost at a loss as to what to say because it is just purely a knee-jerk reaction from this government. It does not really accomplish anything. I mean, you cannot legislate profit, you cannot legislate good governance. If that was the case, you know somebody would have done that before Enron, before WorldCom, years and years ago. So everything that the minister has laid out here basically is window dressing. It will do nothing to solve the issue that Crocus faces in terms of its ongoing viability, and the legislation itself does nothing to ensure that there is better governance.

I must say before getting into the bill that, you know I take offence, and I believe that the good staff in his department and in the Department of Finance will take offence too because the minister in his comments said that nobody saw the signs. It is unfortunate that nobody saw that there might be

problems. Well, in 2001, his staff, the Department of Industry's staff saw that there were going to be problems. There were liquidity problems, there were pacing problems, there was a cash crunch coming, and the minister in charge at the time turned a blind eye.

An official from the Department of Finance wrote a memo to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) presumably. I mean, he has yet to deny in this House that it got to his desk. I would assume that any memo written by an official would have gone to the deputy minister, and the minister would have been informed. If he did not get the memo, he should have the courage to stand in the House and say so and do something about his politically appointed deputy minister.

But to have that type of information come forward with staff and to have their political master simply turn a blind eye, in fact, is worse. Simply say, at the level of a higher authority, as the Auditor General has referred to it, that we are not going to go there. In all sincerity, the Minister of Finance, I think, tries to do his job as best he can. The Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau) tries to do his job as best he can, but I cannot help but think that this higher authority who was dealing directly with Crocus not only subverted the staff within the departments of Industry and Trade and within the Department of Finance, but he subverted the wishes of the two ministers.

I am positive, I would be almost positive that the Minister of Finance, in particular, came forward and gave this information to the Premier and the Premier's staff, and was told, "Well, Mr. Minister, we do not want to go there. You know, I have this personal relationship with the leaders of the labour movement, and you know, particular with the memos that were floating around in 2001, 2002, we do not want to go there. We do not want to upset our friends in the labour movement. By the way, I have put Mr. Kreiner in as co-chair of my Economic Advisory Council, and I have worked closely with him, and, you know, he has come up with this superfund idea. We think it is a good idea that we go around and force all of the pension funds in Manitoba to contribute to a superfund that is going to be run by Crocus and, boy, would that not give me the ability to"—well, not only the ability, in fact, he took advantage of it.

In the Premier's state of the province speech to the Chamber of Commerce this last fall, he went on

at length, possibly as much as five to seven or eight minutes of his speech was devoted to the fact that he was going to be the one that saw that the pension funds in Manitoba invested in Manitoba. Then, sure enough, we saw, Mr. Speaker, that that lunacy blew up in his face. You know, it is not lunacy to have pension funds invest in Manitoba. It is lunacy to put so much pressure on those funds that they feel they have to invest in ventures that they might otherwise have no interest in investing in, simply because of political pressure.

The Auditor General referred to that too when he talked about the interweaving of relationships that created conflicts of interest. I mean, you had the former board member, former chair of the Workers Compensation Board was on the board of Crocus. He was on the investment advisory board of Crocus. The former CEO of Crocus was on the investment advisory board at Workers Compensation. The chief investment officer in Workers Compensation was the government-appointed head of the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund, and they were forced, against the good advice of their then-president to make an investment in funds against the CEO and independent advisers' beliefs. The house of cards has just fallen down, and the house of cards has existed at Crocus for a long, long time. That has been proven by the Auditor General in his review and it has been proven that the employees within the department did the monitoring job they were asked to do.

Could they have done it better? Well, they have admitted in their response, they could have done it better. Were they somewhat confused in their roles? They were somewhat confused in their roles, but I would remind all members opposite that members of government take direction from their political masters. It is the political masters that set the broad policy issues, and it was obviously the policy of this NDP government not to tread on any toes at Crocus because they did not want to go up against their labour buddies. They did not want to go up in any way against the labour movement because, you know, in 2003, they could see an election coming. Why would they go up against a labour movement just before an election? Why would they upset anybody in the labour movement? And so, ministers, good members of this Legislature, were told by the Premier (Mr. Doer), "Do not go there. Do not act on those red flags that your staff have raised."

And then, we saw earlier this week, the Premier has the gall to say to the media that officials in the

department missed the red flags. I mean, they got the red flags to the right bodies, to their political masters, and their political masters said, "We do not want to hear about it. Do not tell us. We might have to act on it." Not only is that against the very tenet of this Doer government, but it is against the immediate orders from this Premier: "Do not touch that. We do not want to go after Rob Hilliard or Peter Olfert. We do not want to have to have a difficult conversation that involves Eugene Kostyra and Robert Ziegler and other labour leaders that were on that board from time to time. We do not want to do anything, you know, that might upset Mr. Fox-Decent because obviously we have areas to deal with him at Workers Compensation and we need his co-operation." It is mentioned that is another story. That is another chapter to this book, and we are going to hear about this in the fall when the audit comes forward from the Workers Compensation Board.

* (17:00)

Unfortunately, for the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), she is going to be caught in the same trap as the now-Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau). She is going to be stuck with a department that has serious, serious problems, and the Auditor General, I believe, is going to report to her that she better do something about those problems because what happened in that department when issues were raised. Well, the minister said, "Gee, I have got these allegations. I better send them over to WCB to see if they are accurate." Well, you know, how ridiculous is that? That is like the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) taking the allegations that were brought to him and saying, "Gee, I better send these to Seven Oaks and see what is going on there; see what our good friend, Brian O'Leary, has to say about this." I mean, that is a constant thread throughout this government.

Not only can they not manage complex issues, they are unwilling to manage complex issues, and they do not have the courage to stand up and ask the tough questions and deal with the situation. That is, unfortunately, creating serious, serious problems for the people of Manitoba. It is something that we are seeing reported on daily in both newspapers and, you know, they are going to pay a price for it sooner than later.

I want to get into some of the aspects that are brought forward in this bill. In the explanatory notes the minister indicates that this bill and these

amendments are going to provide for good governance at Manitoba's labour-sponsored venture capital corporations. Well, there is already good governance at one. There just happens to be bad governance at the one that he was supposed to be monitoring, the Crocus Fund, and because—*[interjection]* and the minister says, "I monitor both."

Well, you know, if, in fact, you have the same type of red flags being raised about ENSIS, then this time I would urge you to do something because, obviously, you did not act when the red flags were issued regarding ENSIS, but the real issue is you cannot legislate good governance. Good governance relies on strong board members. We see in the case of ENSIS that there are well-qualified individuals who have broad and in-depth knowledge of the venture capital business that have been sitting on that board and have been overseeing that fund and, as a result, we have not heard any problems about that fund.

Now, we raised this before and time after time the minister said, "Oh, we have to wait and see, you know, we have to wait and see." You know, it was obvious that the people at the Federation of Labour whom they had appointed to the board, these labour leaders, were way over their heads. They did not even understand the basic concept of conflict of interest. You know, we had a former board member, former chair of the board, who resigned the board simply to move over to a paid position within the Crocus Fund that was funded by government and the unitholders of the fund. So, while sitting on the board, he was designing plans as chair of the board, as a paid chair of the board, he was designing this scheme to get himself a paid job within the fund. Now, if that is not a conflict of interest, I do not know what is.

I mean you cannot, Mr. Speaker, legislate good governance. What you have to assure is that there is adequate knowledge and a broad base of experience among board members and that is what any private sector company will tell you. Nobody legislates any of the banks as to who has to sit on their board. You know, they understand that people like the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer), who have now been tainted with this whole scandal, do not make appropriate board representatives in that situation. So they do not invite them to be on those boards.

This is the same understanding all throughout the private sector. What has happened here is that we

have a knee-jerk reaction that will not solve anything. The only thing that solves this problem is proper representation on the board. We have been asking for months and months and months that this government do the right thing and appoint independent, well-qualified, non-conflicted, knowledgeable investment professionals to the board of Crocus and yet they chose not to do that. Over and over again, when they were advised to do it they chose not to do it. The result is that this whole issue has dragged on and dragged on and dragged on until the point where the resolution is coming, well, it is not coming, but whatever resolution does come is coming far too late.

The minister's explanatory note indicates that the bill's intent is to enhance the reporting and disclosure requirements. There is nothing, really, more in this bill than there was in the bills that were there in 1997 and 2001. The Auditor General makes it quite clear. The monitoring was done by the department. The only missing step was what happened to the information that was brought to government after the monitoring took place and this government, this Premier chose, not by accident, they purposely chose, to be wilfully blind to what was going on at that fund despite what they were being told.

Now the third bullet here indicates that he wants to streamline the regulation of labour-sponsored venture capital funds. You know, I think that is a good goal, but if the minister really wanted to do that then he would have taken the time to come here with one act. We do not need a special act for the Crocus Fund. We need one act that covers labour-sponsored venture capital funds, whoever the sponsor is, whatever form it takes, and we need that to be regulated and we need all of those venture capital funds to be monitored because, you know, quite likely, we may have another one spring up if, somehow, the category itself can overcome the bungling by this government and get itself back on its feet.

The minister indicates that this legislation is going to mandate labour-sponsored venture capital funds to have committees. Well, again, this does nothing. Crocus had committees. They had a variety of subcommittees. The problem was, as the Auditor General has pointed out, that the board did not understand that it was their responsibility to oversee and manage the committees. They abdicated. Everything that the board was responsible for, they

abdicated to committee. So the issue, again, is that you need proper individuals on the committees, but more importantly, you need the proper individuals on the board who will not abdicate their responsibility to the unitholders, who will understand that it is not the committee that makes the final decision. It is not the committee that is responsible for the final decision. It is the board that is responsible for the final decision.

In fact throughout all of this, we may find a situation where the government is imposing (a) unnecessary, and (b) expensive processes not only on the fund itself but expensive in terms of time on board members who may now look at it and say, "Well, I am not going to sit on that. I am not going to offer my expertise or my experience to that board because the government has stepped in and made it too onerous." We saw that board members left Crocus simply because they did not have the time and energy.

You cannot take board members who do nothing else in life and expect them to be good board members on this fund. The board members, if they are going to help make this fund and any venture capital fund successful and any business fund, have to have a wide variety of activities. They have to be out in the business community doing other things because that is where you hear, on the street, that is where you keep in touch with what is going on. The biggest problem that we face is there is nobody in government who understands business or understands what is going on with business.

With regard to the issue of the new make-up of the board, I have no objection to increasing the number of unitholder representatives to four and saying that no more than half of the directors should be from the sponsor. The question is it does not really accomplish anything unless the proper governance is in place, in the first place.

I would remind the minister that within the Crocus fund there were two shareholder directors there, but there really was not a process whereby the unitholders elected them. There was a process where they were elected by proxy over and over and over again at the annual general meeting. That is not a true election process in terms of shareholder rights. Again, it was the rest of the board that was picking the directors and putting them forward. That may not necessarily serve the unitholders in the best possible light.

Mr. Speaker, while it is not a bad amendment, it is not really necessary. We see already with the ENSIS fund, they have two directors and they are doing fine because they have managed to find a broad base of individuals to serve on that board who bring a variety of talent, and who understand venture capital, and who understand business.

The other thing that I do object to is the government giving up its director. The government is saying, and they have said for a long time in this House erroneously, because the minister and his colleagues are confused that the government is not a shareholder. Well, the government owns two million shares. Now I see by this legislation that basically they are repealing within The Crocus Act the right to own these two million shares. So they are saying, "Well, we are giving up the shares so we are willing to give up our director," but the real issue is who now is there to stand up for the taxpayer.

* (17:10)

The government has given a lot of money in tax credits, and that was the whole purpose behind having a director on the board. The Auditor General did not say, "Remove your right to appoint a director." The Auditor General said, "It is quite likely," and I agree with him, "a better idea to appoint an individual who is not an employee of government, who is not going to find themselves in conflicting situations as your representative on the board." That representative is not there to stand up for government, per se, except in government's role as a shareholder in the fund, and a shareholder that is entitled to representation.

I would also remind all members of the House that even though the government has supposedly given up this right, and I am not too sure because I have not had time to review it fully, how this reflects with the fact that in the labour-sponsored venture capital act, there is room for a Class G shareholding where the government owns one share. In fact, in the ENSIS Fund, you know, maybe the minister will stand up on a point of order and correct me if I am wrong, there has been no public announcement that they have removed their government director from the ENSIS Fund.

They want to make a big deal about appointing an independent director to the Crocus Fund because that is the one in trouble, but they pay no attention to the ENSIS Fund where we have the same situation.

A senior member within the Department of Industry is the government representative on the board. I would ask the minister, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), who is technically the holder of the shares, why have you not done the same thing at ENSIS, if it is such a good idea, that you have done at Crocus. I do not know. He may say, I have not read that memo either. He may be like the Premier (Mr. Doer) and say, "Gee, I have not read the Auditor's report yet."

In any event, there are lots more in this bill. In terms of enhanced reporting, all that has to happen is that the government has to, by regulation, inform the venture capital funds that they expect them to operate in the same method as other private companies. In other words, on your proxy and on your financial statements, indicate the salaries and perks paid to the top five officers in the fund. It is standard practice within public industry. It does not have to be legislated. It is just there. It is the nature of doing business these days. If the minister understood anything about business, he would understand that, you know, in this post-Enron world, the big part of corporate governance is disclosing the salaries of your senior management. That is done everywhere and the perks that they get.

In terms of the details in travel and other expenses, what is the minister expecting? Do they have to list every trip? I mean, in public office, when we are dealing with public money, that makes sense. In the private sector, in the operation of these funds, which do have a very direct connection to government, it makes sense for government to monitor what is going on, and it make sense to have some broad reporting responsibilities imposed on the company.

The minister goes on in the explanatory note that the enhanced reporting is going to force him to publish policies and practices in the prospectuses. I would remind the minister he probably has not taken the opportunity to read a prospectus. He may not even really understand what one is, but I would indicate to him that if he did read the Crocus prospectus, he would realize that it is already 63 pages long with some very fine print, already difficult for the ordinary individual to try and read through, and it certainly takes a certain amount of expertise to do it. He is adding nothing other than window dressing in trying to get himself out of a serious problem by adding these types of clauses in this legislation.

The other kind of window dressing here, and I would agree with him on this, that the labour-sponsored funds are prohibited from investing in an entity that is engaged in selling and promoting the sale of shares. That makes sense. This is a conflict of interest which we already see in one case with regard to Crocus. But he has not defined, and what I cannot clearly read from the legislation is what is going to happen with the existing holding that Crocus has in a company that is responsible for the sale and promotion of its shares. We would not want to see a situation where the government stands up and says, well, you know, the fund has to dispose today, because as soon as the government says that it puts the seller of the shares at the advantage in terms of the negotiation. The seller of the shares will simply say, "Well, you have to sell so we are going to buy at the lowest price possible." Again, it demonstrates a lack of thought in terms of government, in terms of looking out for the unit holder.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of good things in this bill, and we will be looking forward to getting those forward to committee. There are two issues that I can clearly say that the Auditor recommended and that the minister is dealing with. The question is why has it taken so long.

There has been since 2001 an argument going on between Crocus and the minister's own department with regard to the meaning of the clause surrounding \$50 million of net assets. I would remind the minister that the fund is designed to invest in small business. The initial reading, I think, states quite clearly that investments are to be made in companies that have less than \$50 million in assets.

Crocus, for years and years, has been trying to convince the minister that it should interpret an "and" in the clause as "or", which would allow them, and has allowed them, to invest in corporations that have net assets, that is assets minus liabilities, of less than \$50 million. That is a mistake. That is something that this minister could have clarified, should have been dealt with in 2001, and he could have clarified in simply sending a letter to the fund and telling them how to act under the act that was already existing.

But, for some reason, his previous minister and himself have sat by and done nothing. They have not been willing to give instructions to Crocus to follow the act and, again, in my view, that points directly to interference from this higher authority, which, although I do not know for sure who Crocus officials

were referring to, but I can almost bet that it was the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province, who was a higher authority that was overstepping his bounds and directing his ministers to ignore issues that were raised by individuals at the Crocus Fund. That is why we found ourselves in the mess that we are in.

We will say that the other recommendation that I have quickly been able to glean from this, and I, again, would want to preface my comments by saying we have only had this bill for a day. I only got the spreadsheet on it an hour ago, so there are likely other issues in this bill that will come up as we move closer to getting to the committee stage in this bill that we are going to have to deal with. I know we are getting close to the hour of 5:30, and I know we are anxious to move this bill on to committee, so I am going to hold my comments there so that my other colleague in the House representing the constituency of Inkster can put some comments on the record because we do want to move this bill forward to committee.

We do want to hear from those in the venture capital business as to what they feel about this, but I would really push and I would urge you, well, and the minister shakes his head, but I would remind him he was the one who could not even get his House leader to put this bill on the Order Paper today. We had to ask leave to get this introduced. He would not ask leave. His House leader would not ask leave. So, in effect, he nods his head, but we are the ones that are pushing through the House, which is another obvious proof to me that this was just window dressing designed to get a headline in the paper today. There is no real meaning behind this bill, and this government has no real intention of monitoring funds any better in the future than they have in the past. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable Member for Inkster, I would just like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us Grade 6, 7, 8 and 9 students from Rock Lake School from Cartwright, Manitoba. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen).

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

* * *

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a great deal to say about this particular bill, and the reason why it is that we have it before us, the manner in which it was brought in, the sense of urgency that has been highlighted with regard to this bill, and having said that, we see the value of passing this bill today so that it can go into committee.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, what we want to be able to see is the public come forward to committee. We look forward to the government actually announcing that this bill will, in fact, be going before committee where investors and others, people that have an interest in what has been happening over the last little while in regard to the Crocus Fund, will be afforded the opportunity to allow greater insight as to the real impact that has been happening as a result of the government's neglect of the Crocus file.

* (17:20)

Mr. Speaker, I think that what we have seen over the last couple of years is a lot of government inaction and today, in Question Period, I tried to the best of my ability to get the focus on the real issue. How quickly we can lose focus on the real issue. I want to take this opportunity, in recognizing that this bill is here today because of the provincial auditor's report, to comment a bit about the provincial auditor's report and suggest to the government that I am sure and feel confident that there will be amendments brought forward in regard to this bill, whether it is at committee stage, or at the third reading stage. I am anticipating that there will be amendments. The reason it is here is because of the essence of 2001 and 2002, there were a number of concerns that were brought to the attention of the government regarding the Crocus Fund.

The government of the day chose to turn their head and ignore the issues, the red flags that were being brought forward, Mr. Speaker. The issue is this. Red flags are raised. Government ignores it. Over 33 000 Manitobans, as a direct result, lose in excess of \$60 million. The reason is because the government was negligent in not addressing this issue back in 2001 when they were first made aware that there were issues related to the Crocus Fund, and they had a responsibility to take some action on. They chose not to do that.

Today in Question Period, I asked the question in terms of why they chose not to do it. The hands-off argument that some might want to use will not

carry the day because, say what they will, there are members in the opposition that are not going to lose focus. You had a responsibility to protect the interests, Mr. Speaker, of Manitobans. That is one of the reasons why you had an appointment on the Crocus Fund, and because of that neglect, over 30 000 people are out over \$60 million. That is something in which I asked the question why did that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it happened because the government of the day looked at who were the people that were in charge, including themselves, and saw a lot of friends, and former colleagues, and individuals that they did not want to hold into account. There were friendships that evolved over time in which affiliations, with the Federation of Labour as an example, that I believe clouded the decision-making process of the Premier (Mr. Doer), and his office, and other ministers to the degree which they neglected their responsibilities because their responsibilities were not to stand by and let the red flags go unnoticed. Their responsibility was to ensure that Manitobans' interest, particularly the Crocus investors' interest, were being served. As a result, for the third time I will say, because of their neglect, over 30 000 people lost over \$60 million.

The provincial auditor was brought in, Mr. Speaker. The provincial auditor has made it very clear. You do not have to go very far. Page 1 of how many pages of a document, in excess of 200 pages, page 1, and I will quote right from the audited statement, "This is an unfortunate example of what can happen when you have a Board of Directors that lacked the appropriate oversight and governance. The Board of Directors and Senior Officers, namely the former Chief Executive Officer, the former Chief Investment Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, failed to fulfill the responsibilities to CIF. This may have contributed to the production of misleading financial statements, prospectuses, and overstated share price valuations."

It goes on. A couple of paragraphs down, and I quote, "During the course of our review, we noted several problems that should have alerted the Fund's Board, as well as"—and I quote this, Mr. Speaker, underline, put it in bold—"the government officials responsible for monitoring the Fund, that a deeper review of the Fund's operations was warranted. Yet, insufficient attention was given to identifying, communicating, and addressing these problems."

Mr. Speaker, this is what the provincial auditor is saying. The provincial auditor is an individual, and his office, that works in an apolitical fashion, apolitical, arm's-length, or not even arm's-length, completely disassociated with political parties, they work and they are held accountable and submit to the Legislature of this Chamber, what is supposed to be the higher authority, in which we would call into question in terms of who the Premier might think is the higher authority, but the provincial auditor works for this Legislative Assembly and, through us, for all Manitobans.

We have seen how effective an auditor can actually be in a report. All we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is take a look at what is happening in Ottawa, right? Take a look at what is happening in Ottawa, and they are talking about, well, I will be fair in my comments, they are talking about \$300 million. Let us put it in perspective, we are talking about over \$60 million, over \$60 million, because of government neglect. Were there government problems in terms of what happened in Ottawa? Absolutely, and they are addressing it. They are addressing it and they are coming clean on the issue. But we do not see this government wanting to come clean on this issue. We do not see that at all.

Mr. Speaker, \$60 million, compare that to what is happening in Ottawa. Well, on a per capita basis, this could be even classified in the minds of many as something that is worse. The only difference is that maybe we have not generated the type of media attention that we should have in regard to this issue. That is quite possible. Maybe the opposition needs to be a little bit more creative in drawing more attention to this issue.

I believe that this is an issue that is going to hurt this government, not only today and tomorrow, it is going to hurt them come the next provincial election because, Mr. Speaker, there are over 30 000 Manitobans that have lost money. You are talking about seniors on a fixed income that have lost savings because of this government's neglect. You are talking about all Manitobans who made contributions, and I call them contributions, they are actually taxes, paid taxes that have subsidized the Crocus fund. These people are not going to forget the neglect that this government has put on this file because we are talking a substantial amount of money, in excess of \$60 million.

Because of the respect that I have for Manitobans, I am going to hold my remarks at that because I want to see this bill go to committee so those Manitobans are going to be able to come forward and tell you just how bad you did in terms of neglecting your responsibilities. Thank you very much.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading, Bill 51, The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended).

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

* * *

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we are just concluding the paperwork necessary for the committees. If we could just not see the clock for just a few minutes?

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement of the House for the Speaker to not see the clock? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

House Business

* (17:40)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, first of all, would you please see if there is leave of the House for the House to sit on Tuesday morning?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to sit on Tuesday morning?

An Honourable Member: In addition to—

Mr. Speaker: Okay, just wait.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there leave of the House for the House to sit on Tuesday morning from nine till noon in addition to the regular sitting of the House on Tuesday afternoon? The purpose of the sitting for Tuesday morning is to consider concurrence, and routine proceedings will take place in the afternoon at 1:30 as per usual.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the House to sit on Tuesday morning from 9 a.m. to noon in addition to the regular sitting of the House on Tuesday afternoon? The purpose of the sitting for Tuesday morning is to consider concurrence, and routine proceedings will take place in the afternoon at 1:30 p.m. as per usual. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you see if there is leave of the House for the bills that are referred to committee for Monday and Tuesday to be reported back to the House on the following sitting day, provided that the bills are completed in committee, and would you also see if there is leave for these bills to be considered at report stage and concurrence and third reading on the same day that they are reported back?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the bills that are referred to committee for Monday and Tuesday to be reported back to the House on the following sitting day provided that the bills are completed in committee? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will be on Monday, June 6, at 9:30 a.m., to deal with the following bills: 5, that is MPI; 8, Council on Aging; 16, Wildlife; 30, Ag Services; 31, Condominium; 34, HTA; 39, Investment Trust; 41, Drivers and Vehicles; 50, Minor Amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs will meet on Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. to deal with 29, Municipal Councils; 35, Capital Region Partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Monday evening at 6:30 to consider 33, that is, Planning; 48, Teachers' Pensions; 51, Labour-Sponsored Investments.

Mr. Speaker, would you please see if there is leave for the two committees that are scheduled for

Monday night to continue on Tuesday morning at 9:30, that is, the standing committees on Legislative Affairs and Human Resources to sit concurrently with the House by leave, and if the committees are not finished on Tuesday morning, to continue to sit on Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m., if need be?

Mr. Speaker: Also, is there leave for these bills to be considered at report stage and concurrence and third reading on the same day that they are reported back? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

It is also announced that the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs will meet on Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. to deal with the following bills, Bill 29, Bill 35.

Is there leave for the two committees that are scheduled for Monday night to continue on Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m., that is, the standing committees on Legislative Affairs and Human Resources to sit concurrently with the House by leave? Is there leave for that? *[Agreed]*

If the committees are not finished on Tuesday morning, to continue to sit on Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m., if need be. Is there agreement on that? *[Agreed]*

It is also announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Monday, June 6, at 9:30 a.m., to deal with the following bills: Bill 5, Bill 8, Bill 16, Bill 31, Bill 34, Bill 39, Bill 41 and Bill 50.

It is also announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Monday evening, June 6, at 6:30 p.m., in order to consider the following bills: Bill 33, Bill 48 and Bill 51.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 2, 2005

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		Bears on Broadway Cullen	3238
Ambulance Service Schuler	3221	Provincial Mine Rescue Competition Jennissen	3238
Fort Garry Hotel Rocan	3221	Charleswood Rotary Club Driedger	3239
Committee Reports		English-Ukrainian Bilingual Program Martindale	3240
Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Fifth Report Reid	3222		
Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development First Report Brick	3223		
Ministerial Statements			
Legislators' Forum Wowchuk	3226		
Penner	3226		
Gerrard	3227		
Introduction of Bills			
Bill 50—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2005 Chomiak	3227		
Oral Questions			
Crocus Fund Murray; Doer	3228		
Mitchelson; Selinger	3230		
Hawranik; Selinger	3231		
Loewen; Doer	3232, 3234		
Loewen; Selinger	3232, 3235		
Derkach; Selinger	3233		
Lamoureux; Doer	3235		
Members' Statements			
Immanuel Christian School Jha	3237		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)	
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Tabling of Reports	
		Report Respecting the Review of the Financial and Legal Implications of Land Transactions in the Swinford Park Subdivision Bjornson	3242
		Debate on Second Readings	
		Bill 33—The Planning Act Gerrard	3242
		Maguire	3243
		Bill 35—The Capital Region Partnership Act	
		Taillieu	3245
		Maguire	3246
		Lamoureux	3247
		Bill 8—The Manitoba Council on Aging Act Reimer	3249
		Bill 39—The Investment Trust Unitholders' Protection Act Loewen	3250
		Faurschou	3250

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

Maguire 3250
Lamoureux 3251

Second Readings

Bill 50–The Statutes Correction and Minor
Amendments Act, 2005

Mackintosh 3251
Lamoureux 3252
Goertzen 3253

Bill 48–The Teachers' Pensions Amendment
Act

Bjornson 3257
Cummings 3258
Driedger 3258
Gerrard 3261

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

Rondeau 3261
Loewen 3264
Lamoureux 3270