

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

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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.
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.
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STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
<i>Vacant</i>	Fort Whyte	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 20—The Family Farm Practices Protection Amendment and Farm Lands Ownership Amendment Act

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 20, The Family Farm Practices Protection Amendment and Farm Land Ownership Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, this bill amends The Family Farm Protection Act by replacing outdated references to administrative staff serving the Manitoba Farm Mediation Board. Also replaced are outdated provisions for confidentiality of information and liability protections for board members and other persons working under the board. The Farm Lands Ownership Act is amended by replacing gender-biased language, outdated reference to administration staff serving on the Farm Land Ownership Board and an outdated liability protection provision.

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

* (13:35)

PETITIONS

R.M. of Piney Windstorm Damage

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for the petition:

A severe windstorm swept through the Rural Municipality of Piney on July 31, 2005, causing extensive damage to approximately 60 residential properties of the Sandilands forest.

The R.M. of Piney was forced to declare an immediate state of emergency in response to this storm.

The estimated cost of cleanup is estimated to be between \$360,000 and \$1 million.

The R.M. of Piney can only afford to allocate \$20,000 toward the recovery and cleanup effort.

Individual property owners and residents have been forced to incur significant costs related to the cleanup of their property, which they cannot afford.

The Province of Manitoba has not declared a state of emergency in response to this storm.

Provincial road restrictions in this area are limiting the access of vehicles required in the cleanup and recovery effort.

The R.M. of Piney has contacted the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux), the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) to request temporary lifting of the road restrictions and the provision of provincial aid for the cleanup of the area but has received no commitment for assistance.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider temporarily lifting the road restrictions on roads in the storm-affected area of the R.M. of Piney.

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider providing aid to the R.M. of Piney and to the individual property owners to assist in the cleanup and the recovery efforts.

Signed by Ken Prociw, Jo Ann Prociw and Joan A. Ford of the Sandilands community.

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

Crocus Investment Fund

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Norman Bagge, Dreena Duhamel, Lorna Pink and many, many others.

Highway 10

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

A number of head-on collisions, as well as fatal accidents, have occurred on Highway 10.

Manitobans have expressed increasing concern about the safety of Highway 10, particularly near the two schools in Forrest where there are no road crossing safety devices to ensure student safety.

Manitobans have indicated that the deplorable road condition and road width is a factor in driver and vehicle safety.

It is anticipated that there will be an increased flow of traffic on this highway in the future.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux) to consider providing sufficient resources to enhance driver and vehicle safety on Highway 10.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider upgrading Highway 10.

This petition is signed by Greg Bradco, Art Dalton, Greg Mackling and many, many others.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation Inc., Aboriginal Community Campus, 7 visitors under the direction of Mrs. Linda Smith, Miss Lisa Lacoste, Miss Candace Neuman and Mrs. Margaret Dankowski. The group is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Workers Compensation Board Allegations of Mismanagement

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter from the former president and CEO of the WCB to the then-Minister responsible for the WCB regarding Workers Compensation Board issues.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker, when a minister of the Crown is sworn in, you take an oath of office that includes a promise to perform and fulfil your duties, quote, "without fear or favour."

For the past week, we have been asking the Minister responsible for WCB to explain why her government did not investigate the very serious allegations that were raised by former WCB president and CEO, Pat Jacobsen, in March of 2001. Specifically, Ms. Jacobsen raised red flags about management interference and corporate governance issues at WCB. Her letter also outlined her concerns about the professional conduct of the chairman at the time, Wally Fox-Decent.

My question is for the Premier. Could he explain to this House why Minister Barrett did not act on this March 27, 2001 letter? Was it out of fear or out of favour?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, some of the allegations in the letter have and are being reviewed by the Auditor General. The matter was referred to the board of directors by the former minister. The matter was referred to the stakeholders, which are made up of business, labour. The stakeholders are the board representatives, and the minister referred the dispute between a chair of the board, who was initially appointed in 1992 by the

former government and reappointed by us after being appointed three times by the previous government, and the CEO who was appointed, I believe, prior to our election.

Again, the dispute between the two was referred to the board of directors, who are the ultimate stakeholders, because business, of course, pays the rates. I think they are still the lowest in Canada, Mr. Speaker. They are responsible for claims which, of course, workers supervise through the Workers Compensation Board.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, Ms. Jacobsen, the woman who raised these serious allegations in March of 2001, was fired three days after she sent her letter to then-Minister Barrett. Yesterday, the Minister responsible for the WCB told the media that Minister Barrett referred Ms. Jacobsen's letter to the WCB board of directors. In other words, a letter that contained accusations about Wally Fox-Decent was sent back to Wally Fox-Decent.

My question is for the Premier, who, ironically, is the former minister responsible for accountability of Crown corporations. Did he or anyone in his office have anything to do with the decision to ignore the letter and these very serious allegations?

Mr. Doer: The letter was referred to the board of directors which is made up of stakeholders from the corporation. The CEO of the corporation, including Mr. Sexsmith, is not hired and fired by the provincial government.

If you note, Mr. Speaker, in terms of Orders-in-Council and the hiring of the last CEO of Workers Compensation, it was a matter that did not go to Cabinet, did not require Cabinet approval and did not require Cabinet approval for an Order-in-Council appointment of the CEO. The reason for that is, under the former act and under the existing amended act which improves accountability for Workers Compensation, the CEO is not hired and fired by the provincial Cabinet minister or the provincial Cabinet. The individual is hired and accountable to the board of directors of Workers Compensation Board. That is clearly under the act and that is clearly reflected in Orders-in-Council in the government.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, this letter that I tabled today is very, very troubling. It is troubling because Pat Jacobsen did what she was supposed to do in her role as president and CEO of the Workers Compensation Board. She lived up to her fiduciary responsibility and was fired for doing her job. The

Doer government, on the other hand, ignored the red flags raised by Ms. Jacobsen and allowed the problems at the WCB to fester.

* (13:45)

The Doer government ignored its promise to Manitobans, its promise to act without fear or favour. I ask through you, Mr. Speaker, to this Premier: The red flags were there; you knew about them. Why did you ignore them?

Mr. Doer: In terms of overall performance of Workers Compensation Board, we had, as a government direction, the overall desire and priority of lowering the number of accidents in Manitoba. We were on target to do that.

I think we have reduced the number of accidents and, therefore, claims in Manitoba by some 21 percent. We also had lowered and kept low the cost to the employers in Manitoba, the companies in Manitoba. I believe we have one of the lowest rates in the country in terms of employers.

In terms of macro issues, Mr. Speaker, the board chair is hired by Cabinet. The person selected, I believe Mr. Fox-Decent if I am not mistaken, was appointed in 1992 by former Minister Praznik. I believe he was reappointed by former Minister Gilleshammer, and I believe he was reappointed by Harold Gilleshammer.

When we came into office, we had no reason not to trust Mr. Mauro, who was then head of the Crown Corporations Committee. Mr. Art Mauro we reappointed and Mr. Wally Fox-Decent we reappointed. We did not take every chair in government and change it, Mr. Speaker. CEOs are not hired by the provincial government. I would suggest to you strongly that if you look at—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the other day members opposite were talking about government control of investments of Workers Compensation in Crocus. I thought it was rather ironic because it was in 1996 and 1998, so if the government did control the investments of Crocus, you perhaps should ask the question in your caucus.

Workers Compensation Board Allegations of Mismanagement

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a copy of Pat Jacobsen's WCB

performance evaluation. This evaluation is signed by the WCB chair at the time, Wally Fox-Decent. The evaluation indicates that the board is confident that its strategic direction is being accomplished under Ms. Jacobsen's leadership and, further, viewed her as a strong leader.

Mr. Speaker, just months after this report, Pat Jacobsen was fired by the very person who signed this review, the very person she raised concerns about to Becky Barrett, the very person Minister Barrett turned to to deal with these troubling allegations.

My question to the Minister responsible for Workers Compensation: Why would the government pass these serious allegations back to Wally Fox-Decent, the same person named in these very serious allegations?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Well, Mr. Speaker, the WCB is an arm's-length agency, and, as the Minister responsible for the WCB, I am the minister responsible for the act.

I said yesterday in the hallway that the concerns that were raised were referred by the previous minister to the entire board of directors, the tripartite board of directors that represents the employers, the employees and the public interest of the WCB. That is the appropriate mechanism for reviewing those particular concerns that were raised in that letter, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General is doing a review, and we look forward to any recommendations that the Auditor may have in regard to human resource issues at the WCB.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, we too are looking forward to the Auditor General's report. Ms. Jacobsen's performance evaluation indicates the board strongly expressed the view that you are the right person for this job. The evaluation goes on to say, "You are also seen as having developed a positive working relationship with the chairperson."

Mr. Speaker, just months after this review, the chair fired Ms. Jacobsen. Why was Ms. Jacobsen fired three days after bringing management and government issues to the attention of the then-Minister of Labour?

*(13:50)

Ms. Allan: Mr. Speaker, I, once again for the member opposite, will explain how these matters work. The concerns that were raised with the former

Minister of Labour were referred to the tripartite board of directors of the WCB. They are the stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General is doing a review of the human resource issues at the WCB, and we understand that report will be published soon. We look forward to any recommendations in that report in regard to any governance structures that we can put in place. We changed governance structures in Bill 25. There is now more accountability, there is now more transparency and that is what we are interested in.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, we now know that this NDP government received a credible complaint about management interference and corporate governance problems at Workers Compensation back in March of 2001. What did the NDP do? It referred the matter back to Wally Fox-Decent.

To add insult to injury, the NDP then had the audacity to hire Wally Fox-Decent to chair a recent committee that recommended changes to WCB's investment policy and corporate governance. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government knew the fox was in the henhouse. Then the NDP turned around and hired the fox to straighten out the mess in the henhouse.

Mr. Speaker, we ask, in light of these serious allegations, why would this government continue to appoint Mr. Fox-Decent to chair such an important committee.

Ms. Allan: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind members opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Allan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to remind members opposite that Mr. Wally Fox-Decent was appointed by the previous government in 1992. I just want to remind that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray), on the 29th of April 2004, said that Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, a champion of Manitoba, frankly somebody who has served both governments—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Allan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, a champion of Manitoba, frankly someone who has served both governments extremely well. That is a comment that was made by

the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Wally Fox-Decent did work for both governments, our government and the previous government.

**Workers Compensation Board
Allegations of Mismanagement**

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I table an affidavit sworn by Pat Jacobsen, the former CEO of the Workers Compensation Board. In paragraph 6, Pat Jacobsen swears that she had serious concerns about the Workers Compensation Board and Wally Fox-Decent, and she followed up by arranging a meeting with the Minister of Labour.

An Honourable Member: What happened?

Mr. Hawranik: The Minister of Labour then cancelled the meeting and told the CEO to meet with Wally Fox-Decent, the very person the CEO complained about. I ask the Minister of Labour why is the policy of the Doer government to ignore the pleas of all whistle-blowers and to ignore all of the red flags.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the WCB is an arm's-length agency, and, as Minister of Labour responsible for the Workers Compensation Board, I am responsible for the administration of the act.

The CEO of the Workers Compensation Board, Mr. Speaker, is hired by a tripartite board of directors. The concerns that were raised were taken by the former Minister of Labour, and they were taken to the tripartite board of directors for their review. The Auditor General—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Allan: This was a human resource matter, Mr. Speaker, and it was reviewed by the board of directors of the WCB.

* (13:55)

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, they got the complaint in 2001. Why did they not deal with it? In paragraph 5, Pat Jacobsen swears that, in 2001, she was concerned about the use of the Workers Compensation investment fund for government purposes. Wally Fox-Decent controlled where the funds from Crocus were being invested, and he was also controlling where the Workers Compensation

funds were invested, and they were often invested in the same places. This NDP government knew this. They sat back and they let it happen.

I ask the Minister of Labour: Why did the Minister of Labour turn a blind eye to the CEO of the Workers Compensation Board? Why did they ignore the red flags?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, prior to the legislation that we passed in this House in June, Mr. Fox-Decent chaired all of the key board committees, including the investment committee. Under our legislation that we passed, effective January 1, 2006, the investment committee will no longer be a statutory committee. The investment committee will now have transparency and accountability, and that investment committee will report to the board of directors. It is the strongest governance in the province and the strongest governance in the history of this province.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, again, I refer to the affidavit. In paragraph 9 of Pat Jacobsen's affidavit, she swears that she believed that, had the NDP government conducted an independent audit of the Workers Compensation Board in 2001 as she requested, both Crocus and the Workers Compensation Board would not have lost millions of dollars. Instead, this government chose to ignore the red flag, and, as a result, 33 000 Crocus shareholders lost more than \$60 million.

I ask the Minister of Labour: The former CEO is prepared to swear to testify to the truth. Are the minister and the Premier (Mr. Doer) prepared to do the same?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that the member opposite is interested in cozy relationships because, first of all, I want to remind the member opposite Crocus was set up by the previous government and the WCB—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Allan: And the investment, Mr. Speaker, in Crocus was in 1996 and 1998, under their watch. What we have done is we have made sure that there is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Allan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under their watch, the investment committee was a statutory

committee that did not report to the board of directors. Under our legislation, the investment committee is a committee that reports to the board of directors and strengthens the transparency and the accountability of the investment committee on behalf of all Manitobans.

Workers Compensation Board Allegations of Mismanagement

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): In the affidavit, Pat Jacobsen swears, and I quote, "I was concerned about the concentration of power between the Crocus and the Workers Compensation Board investment committees, and I was concerned about the lack of fiduciary responsibility to the shareholders to get the best returns, particularly in using the Workers Compensation Board funds as government development funds which goes beyond the mandate of the employer-funded Workers Compensation Board."

Mr. Speaker, why were these red flags ignored by the Minister of Labour? Was she directed by a higher authority to turn a blind eye?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but, once again, I would just like to remind members opposite of the legislation and of the investment committee.

* (14:00)

Prior to our legislation that was passed in June, and I thank the members opposite for supporting the legislation, the investment committee was a statutory committee that did not report to the board of directors. It made decisions on its own. Under our legislation there is strengthened governance. That committee now reports to the board of directors.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Allan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because of the legislation that we passed and will be proclaimed on the 1st of January 2006, we have the strongest governance in the country.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Pat Jacobsen, the CEO of the Workers Compensation Board raised red flags with this government about the inappropriate use of Workers Compensation Board funds. In the affidavit, she also swears, and I quote, "I requested of the

government that Wally Fox-Decent, the chair of the Workers Compensation Board, and I both step aside so that an independent audit could be done."

My question to the Minister of Labour is why were these serious red flags ignored by the Minister of Labour? Why was an independent audit not ordered in 2001?

Ms. Allan: Well, I just want to remind members opposite once again, when the previous Minister of Labour received a letter with the concerns that were raised she took that letter and she referred that letter to the arm's-length agency, the board of directors, the stakeholders, the tripartite board of directors that is responsible for the WCB. There is, Mr. Speaker, an audit that is being done by the Auditor General, and, if there are recommendations in that audit, we will take those recommendations very seriously.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Speaker, these allegations came forward in 2001. This is 2005. The Auditor was not called in by this government. They turned a blind eye. The minister referred it back to the board. Did she ask for a report back from the board? What was that report and what did it say? The buck stops in the minister's office.

Mr. Speaker, red flags were raised with the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau) about questionable Crocus Fund investments. These red flags were ignored. In March of 2001, red flags were raised with the Minister of Labour about concentration of power between the investment committees of Crocus and the Workers Compensation Board. These red flags were also ignored. In January of 2002, red flags were raised with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) about management concerns at the Crocus Fund. These red flags were also ignored.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is three ministers and three different government departments had red flags raised. Why were they ignored?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member opposite should be asking the question in the mirror because the affidavit includes comments about the relationship between Crocus and the Workers Compensation Board.

We, of course, have changed the governance system of the Workers Compensation Board, but I would point out that, in a *Free Press* article this summer, the former critic stated that the investment appears to be motivated by more of a government desire to promote Crocus and its efforts than by a

desire to earn a financial return. Well, when were those investments made? 1996 and 1998. We have changed the procedures, and I am sure the Auditor General will know the dates and the public will know those dates.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member for Ste. Rose has the floor.

Workers Compensation Board Allegations of Mismanagement

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Premier's hostility could be explained by the fact that he is somehow worried that he is culpable.

They were told in 2001 about the red flags that were raised by Pat Jacobsen. They chose to ignore them. At the very time when Mr. Fox-Decent was the chairman of the investment committee of WCB, the investment committee at Crocus, this government ignored Pat Jacobsen's letter, a very credible source. They continued to ignore the red flags that were raised by her letter. Why did they ignore them? How could they possibly not see the problem coming?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to acknowledge the investments that were made in 1996 and 1998, and I certainly want to acknowledge that the amendments that were made by our minister responsible for Workers Compensation will deal with this issue that is being raised by members opposite. The Auditor General is looking at these issues.

I want to say that, when one looks at the appointment of CEOs for corporations, we have had a couple of examples. I think Ms. McLaren has been appointed by a recommendation from the board of directors that comes to Cabinet, that is approved by Order-in-Council, I believe. In the case of the CEO of MPI, in the case of the Liquor Commission, the recommendation comes from the minister to Cabinet, from the board of directors to Cabinet and is signed by an Order-in-Council. In the case of Workers Compensation Board, you will note that the current CEO, Mr. Sexsmith, did not require an Order-in-Council. Why? Because the individual is hired by the stakeholders which are represented on the board of directors. Those are the legal facts of the matter.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier wants to hide behind a technicality that is his choice.

It is astounding that, when Mr. Fox-Decent was the chair of the investment committee in both organizations, Crocus and WCB, there were things that occurred that were undoubtedly going to cost the investors in WCB, the ratepayers in WCB, a significant amount of money. Mr. Speaker, \$10 million that came from The Fond in Québec to Crocus was characterized as an investment when in truth it was a loan, and while that was going on WCB continued to be involved with Crocus. Did this government know what was going on or is anybody in charge over there?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that the member opposite mentioned the ratepayers because I want the member opposite to understand that—*[interjection]*

I would like to spend a moment talking about the financial health of the WCB. It has the lowest average assessment rate of any jurisdiction in Canada. It also is one of only two fully funded boards in the country. It also has reserves of over \$70 million.

I hope members opposite have had a chance to read their news releases yesterday because the WCB put out a news release, and, as of the 1st of January, the average assessment rate will drop to \$1.68 per \$100.

* (14:10)

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the sad part about this is that we now have both the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the minister floundering on this file because the WCB is the poorest-performing investment portfolio of the WCBs across the country. They are driving looking in the rearview mirror. They are not comparing themselves with what is happening across the country.

Mr. Speaker, Wally Fox-Decent was in a very conflicted position. This government received red flags in '01 indicating that there were problems associated with him being in that position and associated with future investments that were going to be at risk because of the decisions that were being made. If the minister would have seriously taken an interest in that letter, or, unless she was overruled by a higher authority, Mr. Speaker, we need to know. The 33 000 investors in Crocus lost \$60 million. How much money was lost in WCB?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that the member opposite talked about how the WCB investment committee compares to the other jurisdictions in Canada, and I think it is important that we correct the record.

The WCB's published results for the last two years compare very favourably to the other WCBs. We are one of the top performers in Canada. The WCB of Manitoba performs better than 75 percent of the other WCBs in Canada. Mr. Speaker, those are the facts.

Workers Compensation Board Allegations of Mismanagement

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in Ms. Jacobsen's sworn affidavit, she states and I quote, "I was concerned about the concentration of power between the Crocus and Workers Compensation Board investment committees." She goes on to say in her sworn affidavit, "I was concerned about the lack of fiduciary responsibility to the shareholders to get the best returns particularly in using the funds which go beyond the mandate of the employer-funded Workers Compensation Board."

Mr. Speaker, some 33 000 Manitobans lost some \$60 million because this Premier ignored red flags. In 2001, he had information. He sat on his hands and did not lift a finger. When they became aware, why did he not do something? What was he thinking?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the board of directors of Workers Compensation and the member opposite have praised the chair of Workers Compensation, the former chair, Wally Fox-Decent, on numbers of occasions. That individual obviously had the confidence of both governments because he was appointed three times by the former government and, obviously, by us.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we do not hire and fire, at Cabinet, the CEO of the Workers Compensation Board. I can demonstrate that clearly because there is a difference between Orders-in-Council between MPI and the Liquor Commission. The people that hire and fire the CEO of the corporation are the stakeholders, business who are paying the fees and labour who are making the claims. It is not the responsibility of the Cabinet to decide who would be the CEO of Workers Compensation. You will not find an Order-in-Council appointing Mr. Sexsmith because it is not within our realm of responsibility because it is the

responsibility of the board of directors, as it should be.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, the president and CEO, the one who understands what is going on in this business, raised a very serious issue with this government in 2001 about the investment of the Workers Compensation Board. When that information became available to the then-Minister, Becky Barrett, Becky Barrett told Ms. Jacobsen that their meeting scheduled for the fall of 2001 was cancelled because the Premier directed it to be cancelled. Clearly, the Premier knew of these allegations, these very serious allegations, and cancelled the meeting.

My question to the Premier: Why did he cancel the meeting?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Workers Compensation does deal with the fiduciary responsibilities that the board of directors has to the ratepayers, business and the claimants in labour. That is the fundamental model of Workers Compensation.

There is an issue of a Deputy Minister of Finance, under the previous government and for a period of time under our government, and, most of the time, it was the same Deputy Minister of Finance being on the investment committee of Workers Compensation. There was also an issue of the chair of the board being on all of the committees of Workers Compensation.

I trust that the Auditor General's report will support what the action was. I am not sure whether it will be happening or not. This minister removed the Deputy Minister of Finance from the board of directors, from the investment committee of the Workers Compensation Board, and, Mr. Speaker, also removed the role of the chair from being on all the committees of Workers Compensation, all good recommendations to enforce the principle that it is a board of directors that manages Workers Compensation. It is not managed through political Cabinet ministers in terms of the day-to-day affairs.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the Premier says the issue about this is that this government was made aware in 2001 about concerns raised by the president and CEO that came to this Premier and he ignored the red flags.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that Ms. Jacobsen states in her letter that I tabled, and I am going to quote what she said from her letter. She requested

the government, "to conduct a truly independent review of these issues interviewing the members of the executive committee, the business agent, president of the union, CUPE local 1063, the external auditor, Don Chatterley of PricewaterhouseCoopers. For my part, I will abide by the results," Ms. Jacobsen said. She further states and writes in her sworn affidavit, quote, "I believe that, had the government conducted an independent audit in 2001 of the Workers Compensation Board, as I requested from the Minister responsible for the WCB in 2001, both Crocus and the WCB would not have lost millions of dollars."

Mr. Speaker, I say through you to this Premier, you, Sir, have a problem. You were given red flags on this issue. You stood by and did nothing and Manitobans lost some \$60 million. Why did you do nothing?

Mr. Doer: The members opposite can yell and scream, but there were articles this summer that we would conclude are accurate, Mr. Speaker, and the article stated that the investment in Crocus by Workers Compensation, one investment, I think, if I recall correctly, was \$250,000 in 1996. A second investment was made in 1998 of \$250,000. If members opposite also want to check the facts, I was not the Premier in those two years and this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I may have failed to ask the question, as Opposition Leader, to the former Premier, but the government, and there are many Cabinet ministers sitting there that were involved, I assume that they practised the same practice we did, and the stakeholders manage Workers Compensation, not the Cabinet.

* (14:20)

Crime Reduction Strategy Electronic Monitoring of Offenders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. In 2004, the same 200 people stole an estimated just over 6000 vehicles. There is a tool that would go a long way in preventing crime in the province of Manitoba, and I am asking for the government to acknowledge that fact. What I am referring to are the ankle bracelets, not necessarily the GPS which the minister has said no to, but there are other forms of ankle bracelets

that could have a positive impact dealing with crime in the province of Manitoba.

My question to the Minister of Justice is would the Minister of Justice acknowledge that there is some value in going towards ankle transmitters that would have a positive impact in fighting crime in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am certainly pleased to report on what can have a positive impact on crime in Manitoba and that is, Mr. Speaker, the initiatives that are taking place with regard to auto theft.

First of all, I want to commend all Manitobans who are installing passive immobilizers, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of preventative action that can make all the difference and make sure that vehicles cannot be stolen in the first place.

Second, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the investments of MPI and Manitoba Justice, there has been a focus on making sure that the high-risk auto thieves are being supervised and monitored on an ongoing basis. I am pleased to report to the House that auto theft is down by double digits in this province.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Rulings

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have a ruling for the House.

During Oral Questions on November 29, 2005, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Derkach) raised a point of order regarding the authenticity of a document tabled by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Sale). I took the matter under advisement.

I am now returning to the House with a ruling on the matter. First, I believe that it is important to remind the House of two important principles that are applied in the House. The first principle is that all members are honourable members and I, as Speaker, accept the word of honourable members. This principle is supported by *Beauchesne* citation 494 which states that it has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted. The second principle is that it is not up to the Speaker to adjudicate matters of fact.

In a similar case which arose in this Legislature in 1996, when a government minister raised a matter

of privilege accusing an opposition member of misleading the House by tabling an alleged false document in the House, Madam Speaker Dacquay ruled against the matter of privilege on the basis that the word of honourable members must be accepted and that statements by members respecting themselves and within their own knowledge must be accepted.

Also, I would like to remind the House that when the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) tabled an audio cassette in the House, I ruled on April 25, 2002, that it was not the function of the Speaker to identify the authenticity of the tape or the information on the tape, as the authentication of material is not the responsibility of the Speaker.

Based on the principles that it is not the role of the Speaker to verify the authenticity of material and that the word of honourable members must be accepted, I would therefore rule that there is no point of order.

I have one more ruling.

During Private Members' Business on Thursday, December 1, 2005, the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) rose on a matter of privilege concerning a vote that had just been held regarding the second reading of Bill 200, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act. The honourable member contended that it would have been more appropriate to allow the bill to continue at debate or to let the bill die on the Order Paper rather than having the bill being defeated at second reading. At the conclusion of her remarks, the honourable Member for River East moved that this matter be referred to a committee on Legislative Affairs and report back to this House.

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh), the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) and the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) also offered contributions to the Chair. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. I thank all members for their advice to the Chair on this matter.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity and, second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached

in order to warrant putting the matter to the House. Regarding the first condition, the honourable Member for East River asserted that she was raising the matter at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member. Regarding the second condition, whether there is sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House have been breached, it is important to determine whether parliamentary privilege has been breached in the actions complained.

Joseph Maingot, in the Second Edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, states on page 14, "allegations of breach of privilege by a member in the House of Commons that amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by their very nature matters of order." He also states on page 223 of the same edition, "a breach of the Standing Orders or a failure to follow an established practice would invoke a point of order rather than a question of privilege."

In addition, Speaker Rocan ruled on March 12, 1993, that a matter concerning the methods by which the House proceeds in the conduct of business is a matter of order and not privilege. Speaker Dacquay made a similar ruling on April 22, 1999, and as the Speaker, I made a same finding in the House on April 21, 2005.

Therefore, with the greatest of respect, I would rule that the matter raised does not fulfil the criteria for a prima facie case of privilege.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

St. John's-Ravenscourt School

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate Manitoba's Advanced Placement National Scholar recipients. The Advanced Placement Program, or AP, is a co-operative educational program between secondary schools and post-secondary institutions. The AP program allows motivated high school students the opportunity to take university level courses while still in high school. Students who participate in the AP program gain university level skills and can earn university credits while in high school. Last year, over 1252 AP exams were written in Manitoba by 837 students from 39 Manitoba high schools.

This year, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to announce that St. John's-Ravenscourt School was awarded six of the sixteen AP National Scholar designations. St. John's-Ravenscourt continues to

provide an exceptional educational atmosphere that allows its students to strive for academic excellence.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend my congratulations to St. John's-Ravenscourt National Scholars Lia Cerasani, Jennifer Kovnats, Matthew Literovich, Julian Prokopetz, Jason Rosenberg, Davinder Singh and all other recipients. Thank you.

* (14:30)

Dr. Krishan Sethi

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Krishan Sethi, a family doctor from Flin Flon, Manitoba, who was recently named Manitoba's Doctor of the Year by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. The awards are given annually to a doctor of each province. The award honours the excellent care these doctors give to patients and the contributions that they make to their communities as educators of future generations of family physicians. This year's ceremony took place in Vancouver.

Dr. Sethi has been practising medicine in Flin Flon for over 25 years. He works as a family physician out of his private practice. He also works at the hospital as an emergency doctor, an anesthetist, a pediatrician and until recently, as an obstetrician. He is an active member of the community, donating time and energy as an administrator and teacher at the hospital in Flin Flon and has worked for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, the Manitoba Medical Association and the NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority.

Dr. Sethi and his wife, Poomidevi, immigrated to Canada from Scotland in 1980 and immediately located themselves in Flin Flon. Since then, they and their two daughters have been an integral and positive part of the community. Dr. Sethi enjoys the outdoors and hopes that more doctors choose to locate in rural and northern Manitoba.

I congratulate Dr. Sethi on receiving this honour and I commend him for his years of service to the people of Flin Flon and the North. He has truly made a difference in the lives of many northern Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

United Way Student Awards

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today and recognize 53 high school students

from 47 different Winnipeg schools who have been presented with the United Way Student Community Service Award.

Every year the United Way of Winnipeg teams up with Winnipeg high school students who invest their time, energy and talents in their schools and communities. Students become involved in a wide variety of community services including Take Pride, Winnipeg's mentoring program, the Winnipeg Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program, student council, sports and theatre programs, local churches and hospitals.

It is vital for our youth to give back to their communities. Youth volunteers serve as role models and connect with people to make a difference. They are the leaders in our communities and motivate others to get involved. I, along with the United Way of Winnipeg, am proud to recognize their contributions. The United Way of Winnipeg builds upon the strength of its volunteers and partnering with our youth provides an opportunity to improve not only the lives of the people in their communities, but the lives of the volunteers who gain life-changing skills.

On behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend my congratulations to all 53 recipients of the United Way Student Community Service Award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

King Buck Competition

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to tell the Assembly of the very successful 17th annual King Buck Competition, our fall classic, put on by the Poplarfield Development Corporation.

I would like to take this opportunity to put the names and the winning scores of the successful hunters on the record. In the cash competition, the winners were as follows: the heaviest field-dressed buck weighed in at 252 pounds and was taken by Jim Scharf, incidentally, with a muzzleloader; the largest typical whitetail rack scoring 174 inches was taken by Gord Leduchowski and the largest non-typical rack at 181 and 2/8 inches by John Nosal.

In the trophy category, for those that did not enter the cash competition, the winners were: the largest typical whitetail rack was 167 and 5/8 inches by Brad Bjornson and the largest non-typical whitetail at a whopping 204 and 7/8 inches was shot by Rocky Wallach.

The most uniform antlers over 140 was Brad Bjornson again, and under 140 was Roy Sigurdson at 90 inches. The junior winner was Zakeri Parks, with a deer that scored 125 and 5/8 inches. Incidentally, all junior entrants made the record books.

The largest elk at 318 and 5/8 was taken by Lorne Woysyshyn and the largest moose at 133 inches by Stanley Wallach.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all the successful hunters not only for the trophy animals taken but also for carrying on the hunting tradition of their forefathers. By culling the wild herd, as man has done since time began, hunters do a service to society, and they do a service to themselves as well by keeping fit and providing wholesome, natural food for their families. The survival skills that they develop in the process also cannot be underemphasized.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the organizing committee and thank on their behalf those who donated prizes towards this worthy event. Keeping the hunting tradition alive is vital to the good health of rural Manitoba, and the Poplarfield King Buck Classic plays a major role in this regard. Thank you.

Justice System

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a card which I circulated to my constituents in which I received in excess or right around 350 responses, and I had indicated to those that took the time to mail it to me that I would ensure that the Premier's Office was made available of their signatures.

So this is what the card states, Mr. Speaker. Our judges are not being fair to the victims of crime. Our Premier (Mr. Doer) could be doing more. When a person commits a crime, there needs to be a real consequence. I would like to ask the Premier and all Manitoba's judges how many vehicle thefts and home break-ins does a person have to commit before they would spend more than a year in jail and why are you not standing up for the victims?

Then, Mr. Speaker, as I say, well over 300 people took the time to mail this back to me and part of the commitment I made to them is that I would ensure that the Premier's Office does get a copy of that, and I will later on this afternoon ensure that that does take place.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that there is a genuine lack of confidence in the public in regard to our judicial system. One of the questions that I had asked people was, "Do you feel our judges are doing a good job?" In excess of 90 percent of the people said, "No, they are not."

I think that there is a responsibility of this Chamber to do something in regard to judicial accountability, always wanting to respect judicial independence, Mr. Speaker, but the bottom line is we have to ensure that there is more of a debate on this issue because I believe this is what Manitobans want to see, more accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) and his response to my answer in regard to ankle bracelets. It is that closed-mind mentality that causes more harm in our province than anything else, and I appeal to the Minister of Justice to think and reflect on the question and his answer today from Question Period. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill 11 and then third readings starting at Bill 5 and then second readings starting at Bill 4.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 11—The Winter Heating Cost Control Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading, Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell.

* (14:40)

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Bill 11 is one of these bills that should create a lot of interest and especially in rural Manitoba, and I would also suggest that this will cause a very significant reaction by people all

over this province, including in our large urban centres, because what this bill really does, Mr. Speaker, it forces one of the cleanest energy corporations anywhere in the world, Manitoba Hydro, to subsidize fuels that are going to be used. This government, being a proponent of stemming global warming, encouraging people not to use fossil fuels, certainly do not demonstrate with their actions what they have been putting out in word. The people of Manitoba have followed very closely what this Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province has said, time and time again, that we are, without question, a province that can and will ensure that the environment will be protected.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I found it rather interesting that when, in 1989, 1990, the Province of Manitoba, then under the Progressive Conservative governance, formed a round table on the environment. They were the first province in this country to initiate the sustainable development approach to developing industries and/or governance models. I know that some of the members in this House are relatively unimpressed by the actions that were taken in 1990. Yet what I found interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we were able to attract a world centre to Manitoba. Why were we able to do that in 1999, '90 and '91? Why did we initiate the international sustainable development centre right here in this province? Why did they come here? You know why they came here? Because they knew that there was a government in power that was serious about maintaining the environment and taking action to ensure that the environmental protection laws would be put in place that allows this Premier today to stand in his place and want to take credit for all the work that was done from 1990 to 1999.

What I find most interesting is when this same Premier that is now trying to take credit for all the work that has been done during the last decade, decade and a half, he wants to put himself off as being the proponent for environmental protection. That is what he says, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is what his verbiage is. What do we see from him in reality? We see them introducing a bill that will set up a pool of money, and I call this the NDP sustainable squash fund because what they are really doing is setting up a slush fund for themselves to try and bail themselves out of trouble if and when situations like Crocus arise. That is what it is all about.

Then they are suggesting that they are going to use that money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to subsidize the use and encourage the use of fossil fuels, namely, natural gas. The more you use, the less you pay. So what does that mean? So, if you use Manitoba Hydro, you are going to now pay seven and a half percent more than you did a year ago for the use of hydro, and then you are going to use that seven and a half percent, or part of that seven and a half percent, increase to set up a slush fund.

What are you going to do with the slush fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker? You are going to pay it to the natural resource sector, in other words, the fossil fuel developers, the Alberta government. That is who this Premier (Mr. Doer) is supporting by setting up this slush fund, setting up a subsidy to encourage more use of natural gas. It is strange that this Premier has just come back from a meeting where they were discussing the destruction of the permafrost. We all read the papers. Look at what was said at the meeting the Premier just came from. Everybody is well aware that the proponents of global warming, of the theory of global warming, are the ones that are accusing fossil fuels and the burning of fossil fuels, one of the main culprits of the increasing of temperatures on the globe.

Now, does it make any sense that this socialist government today is going to penalize the hydro users in this province and support the fossil fuel industry, does that make any sense at all, and then to turn around and close their eyes and say, "Oh, well, we did not really want to do that, but we had to because fossil fuel prices were rising exponentially, and so we have to help those people to use more natural gas than hydro"?

You know the alternative would have been to say, "Well, yes, we can produce far more hydro in this province than we use in this province, so we export the surplus, do we not?" Would it not have been simpler just to say, "Well, we are going to put in place programs to encourage those people who are now on natural gas to convert to hydro"? Would that not have been nice? Number one, cleaner fuel; No. 2, stop the destruction of the ozone layer; No. 3, stop and decrease the effects of global warming.

But that would have been too simple a fix for this government. They simply do not understand the merits of that, nor do they understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the long-term economic benefits would have been to Manitoba. We could have, then, substantiated the building of not only one additional

hydro dam, encourage the development of the wind industry, encourage the development of other energy sources that are absolutely clean, absolutely clean.

But, no, this government has to put a bill before this House, which I, by the way, will not support, put a bill before the House that encourages the furthering of global warming in this province and in this country and in the world. Then we have people that sit in this Legislature on the government side of the House that have been long-term proponents of protecting the environment.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask you which is more profound, the establishment of bringing the international sustainable development offices to Manitoba to develop the first round table in the province on sustainable development and the environment in the province of Manitoba, to have the chair of the ministers on environment act out of this province, the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), and being recognized internationally as a province that truly understood economic development from a sustainability perspective. That is the history that the Filmon administration left. That is the legacy they left for our children because they set up the model, they set the model of how to decrease the contribution to global warming and how to put in place programs that would actually encouraged the decrease of global warming.

* (14:50)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here we have a bill, Bill 11, and it is called The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. Would it not have been just a great idea, instead of introducing this bill, to say that we are going to support the building of new heating facilities in this province that would no longer be dependent on fossil fuels and be the contributors to the degradation of the environment and the ozone layer? I think there needs to be a real thought process put into place. If you are going to be the proponent of one thing on Sunday, then on Monday you are going to do the exact opposite by legislation and introduce a bill that will further degrade the environment in the province of Manitoba.

I think the other one that is far more dangerous over the long term, and we can see what is happening to the Crocus Fund and through the Crocus Fund when governments get too enamoured with themselves and are not able to care for the fact when the red lights go on and they do not heed the warning, is that when you set up slush funds such as

this, these slush funds can very often be used as, again, detrimental vehicles to drive a side of the economy that you are really not very proud of in the end.

I think the establishment of this kind of a fund is dangerous in itself, because it would force one of our Crown corporations to take monies that are generated through the profits of the export of hydro and hydro development, set up separate accounts, and set those accounts aside for questionable methods. You know, some people would say, "Well, this slush fund would be another perfect example of how the NDP government could set up funds that could be used during election events and to help, sort of, get around The Elections Act at times."

I find it very interesting when the government of Manitoba established the laws under which the new Floodway Authority is going to be governed and again an ability for government-friendly organizations like the unions, to set up special funds, little slush funds right through the establishment of the union management agreements: slush funds for health care, slush funds for worker compensation, slush funds for many other things. Nobody knows. There is no mechanism of control under that act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no mechanism for control, really no responsibility, no accountability of the funds that will be established.

We know now that, during the last election campaign, the NDP collected significant amounts of money from their membership and so-called bundled it, in other words, set up little funds and handed it to the government of the day and said, "Here, go fight your election." They called it bundling. You know what I call it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I call it bungling, and I know the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) just chirps across the room, and he said, "We call it a good idea." I call it the evasion of The Elections Act at worst, and they had every intent of ensuring that the unions would be able to collect money as other organizations could not. We are not allowed to under the act, but the unions were, and therefore they were able to collect large amounts of money in small little denominations and give it to the NDP party so that they could run their election campaign. The chief election officer, hopefully, will take a look at that, and I believe that there should be a significant investigation on how that was done, who got the money, who collected the money, and who was responsible. The question should even be asked whether there were double tax benefits under that process. I think we should do a significant

investigation into that, and I believe it is a similar kind of a situation that arises here.

You know, we looked the other day at Manitoba Hydro's financial situation, and we said to ourselves after having looked at the financial statement, "How come that Manitoba Hydro can increase its debt by \$1.8 billion without having anything to show for it? They did not do anything significant. Where did all the money go?" Then today I find out that Manitoba Hydro has been forced to take over the fish hatcheries in this province. Why? Why would the funding of fish hatcheries have to come out of Hydro funds? Why is that?

Is it not somewhat ridiculous that they think that the people of Manitoba will not see those kinds of little slush funds being used for the benefit to make this government look better? They tried taking money out of Autopac. It did not work, but they found ways to take large amounts of money out of Manitoba Hydro, \$203 million to help the government meet its balanced budget legislation. Maybe that is part of \$1.8-billion additional debt. Maybe. Maybe it is. Then maybe it is that the fish hatchery expenses are no longer going to have to be carried by the department. I think it was the Department of Conservation at that time that was funding the fish hatcheries; they had to budget for it. Now they no longer do have to fund it. Where does the money come from? Out of your hydro bills. Now we are going to take natural gas and fund that with Hydro. What is next, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is time that the people of Manitoba start looking very, very closely at how this government has absolutely destructively mismanaged the economy of this province and forced its corporations into a very difficult position. Number one, they have ordered them to build another hydro dam. Where is the money going to come from? Manitoba Hydro is already \$1.8 billion deeper in debt than it was five years ago. Where is the money going to come from? Oh, we are going to go to the banks and borrow it, are we not? That is easy, driving Manitoba Hydro even deeper in debt. Interest rates are climbing. You know that. I know it. I see it. It went up another quarter percent this morning. It sounds as if it might go up another three-quarter percent before the year is out, or maybe before next spring. Who knows? But if it does, it will add a significant burden to Manitoba Hydro, and it will force Manitoba Hydro, most likely, to increase their rates again before next spring. Why? For two reasons: to set up the slush fund, to help keep the

money in the slush fund so the NDP government can use it; and to ensure that the interest is paid to the banks because once, whether it becomes a government organization, government corporation, or whether it is a farm organization or a farm, once the debt-to-equity ratio becomes too high, the borrowings go up very substantially, and the cost of borrowing goes up dramatically.

*(15:00)

You know that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have taught those economics. So are you warning your colleagues as to what is happening to Manitoba Hydro when they do these inordinate kinds of things without recognition, or do they simply not understand? Do they not understand what they are doing to the environment when they are subsidizing the cleanest power, using the monies from the cleanest power generation, energy generation, anywhere and giving it to the fossil fuel resources in western Canada? Subsidizing Alberta. That is really what it means, and I think we need to use caution when governments think that they can use government corporations at will as their tools to try and make it look as if, to the rest of society, there is no feel of hurt to the economy, that the economy is better off than what it really is, then we are in trouble.

There are many, many ways that you could put in place economies of scale that would allow the use of natural gas at a cheaper rate than it is being allowed to be used today. There are ways to encourage the use of cleaner fuels other than natural gas, such as hydro or wind energy or, for that matter, other sources of energy that could be set up and used in this province as well instead of subsidizing natural gas. We believe that, when the Government of Manitoba raided the Crown corporation of Manitoba Hydro of \$203 million and Hydro had to borrow this money at a cost of \$276 million, hydro rates had to increase by seven and a quarter percent, and we know now that they will have to rise farther to meet the demand of this ever money-hungry NDP government.

So I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we pay a lot of attention, a lot of attention, that the people of Manitoba think very long and very hard about the kind of economics that are being used in this province and the kind of accounting that is being used in this province to demonstrate how lacklustre the economy has become in this province and how unsupportable the huge debt is that this government

has incurred over the last six years and foisted upon the people of Manitoba.

You only need to look at the health care budget. The health care budget has virtually doubled in the last five years. This Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province promised the people of Manitoba before he was elected, he said, "Elect me, and in six months, I will fix the health care system. Give me \$15 million, and I will fix the health care system."

Well, ask yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you know the numbers as well as I do, how much has he really spent. See, in 1999, the health care budget was \$3.8 billion in this province, \$3.8 billion. What is it today? What is the cost today? Eight billion dollars. We are approaching \$8 billion, \$4 billion more than was spent five years ago, \$4 billion, not \$15 million, as the Premier promised that they would have to spend. Not in six months, but six years, and what has he fixed? He has fixed absolutely nothing. He has ensured that the waiting list will be longer and the people waiting will be deeper, the lines will be deeper.

What can we, as Manitobans, look forward to? Well, we know that interest rates are going up. We can ensure, we can be ensured, we can tell the people of Manitoba that they will have to pay more money year after year after year as long as this NDP government is in power to maintain just the essential services. Secondly, they will have to pay more money to ensure, and should be ensured, that they will have to subsidize natural gas consumption in this province.

I think this is a dangerous bill that sets a dangerous precedent, and every person in Manitoba should take a very hard look at what kind of lacklustre performance this government has demonstrated over the last four years, how they have in fact directed their economy, how they have misused the people's money and how much more money they have borrowed to keep this economy going.

Then, once people would really start looking at that and really start seeing, they would suggest to their neighbours, next time you go to the polls, think very long and very hard about the promise, the promise that was made to them that the Premier of this province today would fix the health care system in six months, six months and \$15 million. What they have in fact done, Mr. Speaker, is they have spent \$4 billion annually, even more money now than they did on health care. The lines are longer and

the promises have been broken. The promises have been shattered and the trust in this government has been shattered.

We are concerned that the people of Manitoba will end up paying the bill. It will take a long, long time to drag this economy out of the hole that it is in today and make it work. It will take a long time for a new government to come in here and rebuild the economy and its programs, rebuild the jobs that have been lost here, rebuild the industries that have been given away. Then, we need to focus on our food producers because the legislation that we have seen brought before this House by this government, the legislation is nothing than an attack all under the auspices of ensuring that the environment will be maintained.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that the grass was greener in 1999 than it is today. We know that the economy was in much better shape in '99 than it is today. We know that the health care system was in better shape than it is today. Yet they are spending \$4 billion more a year in taxpayers' money.

I would suggest that, when the next election comes around in Manitoba, the people think long and hard as to whom they elect and then they will truly see what kind of economic benefits were given to them and brought to them by the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba, and they will re-elect a Progressive Conservative government in this province and the people will be better off. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any more speakers on Bill 11? If none, it will remain standing, as agreed before, under the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 5—The Dental Hygienists Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now we are going to Bill 5, The Dental Hygienists Act; Loi sur les hygiénistes dentaires, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), nine minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

An Honourable Member: Oh, we have a stander.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Oh, there is somebody there.

* (15:10)

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I just wanted to say a few things about this bill; first of all, to congratulate the people who worked with the government on a multidisciplinary committee for many, many years. In fact, I understand that the dental hygienists lobbied the government for about 30 years in order to get their own professional act. So I would like to congratulate them. It is certainly long overdue.

I certainly enjoyed the conversations that I had with members of this profession. A number of them phoned me. In fact, it all began with a conversation on a flight from Toronto to Winnipeg with one of the faculty at the Faculty of Dentistry who was one of the people lobbying the government to get this professional act.

I had a very small role in it. At the time I was chair of the government caucus, and I told their association that they had the right to come as a delegation to caucus which they did on two occasions.

I remember that one of the ministers of Health said this is a no-brainer, let us just do it, and eventually it got done. It was not supported by the dentists and I guess that was really no surprise, but finally this profession which is—a vast majority of this profession are women, and they are no longer under the direct supervision of dentists, unless they want to continue to practise with dentists and then I suppose they are. But, in terms of having their own college and their own discipline committee and complaints committee and that sort of thing, they are a self-regulating profession now.

With those few remarks, I just want to conclude and say that we congratulate them. We believe this is long overdue. It is a good bill and we look forward to its proclamation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The bill, as agreed upon, will remain standing under the name of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 6—The Dental Association Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Going now to concurrence and third reading, Bill 6, The Dental Association Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Association dentaire.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith), that Bill 6, The Dental Association Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any speakers on third reading and concurrence?

An Honourable Member: On what? Bill 6?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Bill 6. If there are none—*[interjection]* The honourable Member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I wanted to do is just to give acknowledgment, whether it was Bill 5 or Bill 6, that we had a number of presenters who came to committee and expressed their thoughts.

As we know, there were no amendments. It was a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. I had opportunity to comment on it in second reading and just wanted to recognize the valuable contribution of those individuals, and, in particular, even it was encouraging to see so many young people inside the committee room obviously in support of the legislation.

You know, I think the dental industry, if I can use that terminology, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a very important one for the province. It is good to see that we are bringing forward legislation that helps and provides a little bit more definition and scope to some of those professionals who work in that area because it is an area to which we need to give a little bit more attention in terms of the public interest at a different level, Mr. Speaker, that level being our children. The government needs to be more proactive at dealing with some of the problems that we have with our children and the current state of their teeth.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

What I am thinking of is individual children in particular that, in essence, are losing their teeth because of their diets. I know that I have met with many parents over the years who have expressed a great deal of interest in what it is that the government is doing, or a better phrase, what it is the government is not doing and should be doing to try to deal with this critically important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is nice to see some acknowledgment towards our professionals and what it is that their responsibilities are. But I think that where we have really let them down is what the government's responsibility is in terms of dental care for our children. This is where the government needs to pick up the ball and be a little bit more creative, some might argue a whole lot more creative, but at least do something more in terms of proactive at dealing with that problem.

Mr. Speaker, one could ultimately argue that that problem exists throughout our province, but there are certain spots in the province in which you could see that the problem is significantly larger. I think that there are ideas of pilot projects that could be put into place. You know, there was a time in which I believe there was a more aggressive approach at dealing with children in our schools. One could even extend that in terms of our nursery type of programs, the parent programs that outside organizations have.

The children that concern me the most are probably anywhere from that four-year to seven-year category. Dentists and other professionals will tell you how critically important it is that we start dealing with some of these diseases that are affecting our children and the long-term impact that it is having.

We have individuals who are flown down from northern Manitoba because of serious teeth decay and problems that dictate the need for some form of surgical work. Can you imagine the cost involved in providing a service of this nature? Whereas, if we were being more proactive in certain areas, through monitoring, through education, we could prevent some of those costs. More importantly than the cost, Mr. Speaker, is that we would have a more positive impact on the quality of life for that child because of the immense amount of pain and discomfort that is caused because government has chosen to neglect that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that we need to approach it from a Manitoba perspective. What is in all of the children's best interest, no matter where they live in the province of Manitoba, is that we have to be more aggressive in promoting education and providing for services that are going to have a real impact.

* (15:20)

I think that we just in passing these two pieces, I understand Bill 5 might not pass today, but if this bill

passes today, I did want to put that on the record along, as I say, with just extending my best and congratulations to those who had taken the time to be there for the presentation in committee because it was just encouraging, it is always encouraging when you get a significant number of people. In this particular case, there was a significant number of young people. You could see that these are people who want to be able to continue to contribute in a huge way in terms of just dental care in our province. That is something which we need and support.

There was something that I had raised during second reading. That, again, and I will restate it in part, Mr. Speaker, was the issue of certification and accreditation. I know that there are countries throughout the world in which we do gain the benefits of having a fairly liberal immigration policy and Manitoba has benefited tremendously because of immigration. One of the constant issues that is raised is ensuring that the credentials that individuals bring from other countries do at least in part get recognized.

Whenever you create associations of whatever form that they might be, there is always a bit of concern from certain sectors of our community in dealing with, well, making sure that there is not going to be barriers put in place that would ultimately make it more difficult for someone to be able to practise what they have trained for from a different country. That is not just dental; you could virtually apply that to many different professions and trades. I just want to make a point of that issue. That is something that we have not forgotten about, we recognize, and I think that the professional associations and organizations need to at least pay that issue some attention.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we do not, at this stage, have any problem with the bill actually being passed. We just extend, as I say, as I have done, our wishes to those within this industry in being able to work out future issues. Working together, I think, is something in which we really have to encourage, whether it is the dental hygienists or the dentists, that these groups, in terms of trying to better define scopes and responsibilities, that as much as possible what we have to do is we have to leave it to those organizations to come up with what is in the public's best interest and, as we have faith in our professionals. This way we can avoid some of the controversy that we would have had, for example, with the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) on the engineers and architects. It is far better off, when you

have those professional organizations working together and are successful at coming up with recommendations as opposed to government having to constantly come down. I did also want to just acknowledge the efforts, I know my leader had expressed interest in both this bill and Bill 5 as two bills that are positive for the industry as a whole.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

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

The question before the House is the concurrence and third reading of bill number—*[interjection]*

You are going to speak to it?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I move, seconded by the member from Southdale, that debate on Bill 6 be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to moving on to the next bill, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us visitors from Saskatchewan.

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

Bill 8—The Official Time Amendment Act

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith), that Bill 8, The Official Time Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed. Thank you.

Motion presented.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, it seems a bit ironic, standing up here and talking about time.

An Honourable Member: As time goes by.

Mr. Reimer: As time goes—we have time to talk about time. That is one of the things that, as a politician, you have lots of time for is to talk about things that are of significance.

This bill here is an adjustment on daylight-saving time, and it is ironic that, Mr. Speaker, that we have people here from our neighbouring province

of Saskatchewan. I believe they do not believe in that and I do not believe they change their time. They stay with the same time year round. Year round they have the same time and here in Manitoba we are different. We not only have daylight-saving time, but we are now going to extend it so that we can even have more time on our hands because we want to be able to expand our way—

An Honourable Member: We both have an NDP government.

Mr. Reimer: One of my colleagues said they both have good NDP governments, but I think that that opens up a whole new different comparison. I think that the visitors from Saskatchewan are paying less tax than us here in Manitoba. We are now the highest-taxed province in Canada. They can take that back to Saskatchewan and tell all their friends that they have visited the highest-taxed province in Canada. Yes, those are some of the things that they will learn on their trip here to wonderful Manitoba. We have a lot of other good things, but we are now the highest-taxed province.

An Honourable Member: They can take some lessons.

Mr. Reimer: They can take lessons, that is true. They should be talking and they should be going out in the hall, meeting these people from Saskatchewan and talking to them about how much more money they have in their pockets because of their government compared to the government here in Manitoba. That is something that they can learn from but it will take some time. It will take a little time to talk to them and I will grant them the time to do this because we are extending time.

We are going to be extending time here in Manitoba because we need more time. The government needs more time to collect taxes too, Mr. Speaker. They need more time, they want all the time in the world. Give me that money. Boy, they want to get those taxes and they want to get more money from the people.

The people from Saskatchewan, I am sure if we canvass these people in the hall, they would be people from Manitoba. I bet you there is. I bet you they moved from Manitoba to greener pastures. Yes, they did. They moved and some of them have moved from Manitoba. The people that are close to the border, you know, those people that maybe live in Yorkton, Saskatchewan and close to Russell. They can see the difference.

They can see the difference and that is part of the time that these people will spend in Manitoba. They will learn these things. They will know that they left Manitoba, and now this government here is changing the time thing so that they can get more money and they can have more time to think up new ways to tax anything. They will look at anything they can get their money at. Anything to get money because they spend and they spend and they spend.

* (15:30)

I know that we are comparing two similar governments, but I have to give credit to Saskatchewan and Lorne Calvert. At least, he is going down the road of trying to give some sort of break to the seniors and the other people in Saskatchewan, trying to give them the ability to have more money in their pockets, more money in their jeans. Not like this government. This government wants the time to take more money out of it and so, that is one of the things, Mr. Speaker. I know that we have to be relevant and we have to talk about time. That is what we are talking about, the time for this government to get more money just because they are going to extend it.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the issue is that Bill 8 will extend the time, starting in 2007—

An Honourable Member: A virtual hand in the pocket.

Mr. Reimer: That is right. I saw that commercial too.

But the daylight-saving time, starting in 2007, will go from 2 a.m. on the second day of Sunday in March until 2 a.m. the first Sunday in November. That is a lot of time more. That is a long time more, Mr. Speaker, a lot more time to get these people in the government here in Manitoba to get into your pocket. In fact, they even have a commercial. My colleague pointed out this commercial where these fellows were after this person with his hands in the pocket. Well, that is just like our Finance Minister and our Premier (Mr. Doer). They love to have the hand in your pocket, and in your wallet too, because they will take it all out of there. So we have to be very, very careful.

So, Mr. Speaker, this may seem just like a small, innocuous bill, very minor, very minor bill here that we are looking at. Well, you see? See, this is it. The government, they want to pass this under. They want to sneak it through the night, just sneak this through. There is a lot behind this bill that this government is

not telling us. Oh, yes. They are sneaking this bill through. They think they are going to be just like Santa and give some sort of gift to the people. But we know what is happening here. We read into this bill what this government is doing. *[interjection]* That is right. They want to pull the shades down with the darkness, you see. Then they could skulk around, get some more money. Pull the sun down earlier. That is what they are trying to do.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade (Mr. Smith), he thinks this is a good bill. He talks about all the increased trade and everything. We rely on trade. We rely on a lot of trade here in Manitoba. We are a trading province, Mr. Speaker. We have great commodities. We have great industries. We have got to be able to trade with our neighbours down south who are in the process of changing their daylight-saving time.

So, Mr. Speaker, they are trying to harmonize this with their daylight-saving time in the United States. From what I understand, they will be changing it. So, in that sense, I guess we can look at it and say, "Well, maybe we better be in line with one of our major trading partners." But this government here will use that as a ruse so that they can still get at our taxes in a different manner.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are a lot of other members in the House here that were wanting to speak on this because there are a lot of key messages that they want to get to us. They want to tell us about a lot of the investments that they have got here in Manitoba. They want to tell us about how they are rebranding Manitoba. This is, I guess, one of the things they are looking at rebranding. They are going to rebrand the province to have longer hours here in Manitoba. They will be spending half a million dollars. They will spend half a million dollars to tell us that we have got blue skies and cold weather. My gosh, that is a great investment by the minister of industry, trade and mines, I believe it is.

They invested in a lot of other things. I know that one investment they put \$3 million into the Filmon soundstage; \$3 million they bought it for. Now, maybe someone says, "Well, that is a bargain." But, it was offered for a dollar, offered for a dollar, a dollar. But, I mean, after hard negotiations, hard negotiations they said, "No, we are going to pay \$3 million for it. We are not going to pay a dollar. We are going to pay \$3 million." So, Mr. Speaker, I am going to look for a bridge or a used car to sell

these guys because I think we can do a pretty good deal here.

But those are some of the things that, when we talk about the time to spend money, this government knows how to do it. We know what they do with Hydro. They raided Hydro. It cost Manitoba taxpayers \$200 million, the interest that involved, that is going to be over years and years and years. Our children, our grandchildren are all going to be paying for this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the people in Saskatchewan, "Enjoy your trip here. Enjoy your extra money that you bring to us from Saskatchewan because you will be paying it in taxes here. But welcome to friendly Manitoba."

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of other things that we could talk about in regard to the amount of time, but, you know, the time, my gosh, a lot of people say, "Well, maybe it is time for a change. Maybe it is time for a change. We got that time. We got to look at what the government is doing." We saw today how the Workers Compensation Board has been compromised to an extent because of some of the inaction of this government and their ambivalence to the red flags that were brought forward to them, and I guess, you know, it all comes down to the Premier's Office because he has often said that he is the ethics commissioner; the buck stops here. He is involved with all the financial decisions, so we cannot just say that he was not aware of it, that a lot of these things went unnoticed, especially with the Workers Compensation Board, which is involved with Crocus and the unfortunate 60 million, people that have lost some of their money, and everything like that. So these are a lot of the things when we look at some of the time efforts that have got put forward by this government.

But, Mr. Speaker, I really do not know. Like I say, it is a very small bill, a very innocuous bill, maybe one page in the Hansard in regard to its issues, but I think that, you know, we have to be always a little careful when we look at time, because I know in this House here, we can call it five o'clock. We can do that. We can really do that. We can do that because we have the power. We have the power. And now we are going to change time again but not only for a few hours, but we are talking from Sunday in March to Sunday in November. Now, that is a lot of time. I mean, where do we pick that up? Where do we pick up that extra time?

So these are things that I know when the bill goes to committee—

An Honourable Member: It has.

Mr. Reimer: Oh, it has gone to committee, yes. Well, then that is why we are looking at it. Maybe they will bring it back from committee, so we can speak to it again because it has created an awful lot of controversy, a tremendous amount of controversy out there about this daylight-saving time and how the government is trying to manipulate time because any type of manipulation this government has, it has always cost taxpayers money. It has always cost money.

But I know the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade (Mr. Smith) may have some closing remarks and I look forward to his dissertation and his explanation on time.

So, with those short words, Mr. Speaker, I will thank the House for giving me the time to put this on the record.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 8, The Official Time Amendment Act.

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

Bill 10—The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade (Mr. Smith), that Bill 10, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I am certainly glad I have the opportunity to spend some time today talking about Bill 10, the amendments to the Convention Centre act.

* (15:40)

Mr. Speaker, we have had this bill before us and it has gone to committee. I know that it is one of those bills that we have all taken the time to look at and go through quite thoroughly and I think a bill

that all of us can agree to. That does not always happen in this Legislature, but there are many, many pieces of legislation that do pass this House without too much controversy, and this is one of them, although the time bill was something that we all supported. I was interested to hear my colleagues comments on that.

Certainly, we have seen this government take a lot of time introducing legislation that is of a very small housekeeping nature. This is one of those bills, amendments to the Convention Centre act, and it does change the board composition, removing two city councillors from the Convention Centre board and putting two members of the public that would be chosen by the board onto the board. I think that is a positive move. I think the legislation went back to the days when there were 30-some city councillors and, now that the size of city council has been reduced by about half, it was appropriate, I think, for these changes to be made.

But, when you look at the agenda of this government in this fall sitting of this session, there is not very much substantive that has been introduced except some bills that are substantive but very ill-thought-through, one of them, of course, being Bill 11, which we certainly need to have significantly more debate on and more discussion. Members of the general public will need to be consulted and their views will need to be heard because very often we see, as with any piece of legislation brought in by this government, that it is a heavy-handed government that introduces legislation without consulting the public to find out what the public really thinks and what the public would like to see with changes in legislation. We do know that the public was aware of the time bill, and I think the majority of the public agreed it was the right way to go. I do not think the public would have any problem and did not have any problem with Bill 10. The bill that we are discussing right now was very minor, very much a housekeeping bill, but I question in the instance of Bill 11 whom the government consulted with before they introduced that piece of legislation. But we will get to that debate at another time and another date.

Mr. Speaker, before passing Bill 10 through third reading, I want to indicate very clearly my support for the good work that the Convention Centre does in the city of Winnipeg and for the city of Winnipeg. We know that it functioned very well, and we have seen lots of good things happen under

the old structure of the board. I do not think those kinds of things will change with the new structure. I think it will make it more workable. We will have more public representation based on members of the Convention Centre board choosing two additional members to sit on that board, so there will be greater public representation rather than elected representation. I do not think that that is a bad thing.

I want to say just in closing, Mr. Speaker, that I want to commend both the board, the former board, and the staff and those that manage the Convention Centre. I want to say to them thank you very much for a job well done. We have much respect for all the good work that they have done, their ability to attract conventions and activities in their facility that are second to none. I know I have had opportunity many times to visit the Convention Centre, whether it be at conventions or whether it be at dinners, and I know that they do a very professional job of ensuring that those that visit our province or those that live in our province are treated with the utmost of respect and to very good service.

So, with those comments, I want to say congratulations to the Convention Centre. Keep up the good work, and I have no doubt that under the new board structure they will continue to thrive and do the kind of job that will make us proud as Winnipeggers and Manitobans. Thank you.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading, Bill 10, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act.

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 4—The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading, Bill 4, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

**Bill 12—The Highways and
Transportation Amendment Act**

Mr. Speaker: Bill 12, The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina. Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: It will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

**Bill 13—The Conservation
Districts Amendment Act**

Mr. Speaker: Bill 13, The Conservation Districts Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing? Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

**Bill 15—The Emergency
Measures Amendment Act**

Mr. Speaker: Bill 15, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. It will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

Bill 16—The Corporations Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 16, The Corporations Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I have received briefing on this particular bill from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and responsible for consumer and

corporate affairs. I believe this is an act that updates The Corporations Act in a fashion that harmonizes our legislation with that of other jurisdictions, and I believe that opportunity, although I do see a few shortcomings that can be addressed through minor amendment to enhance this legislation—however, I would be supportive of this bill being carried on past today and moving into committee during intersession.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I did want to put a few words on the record before this bill passes to committee, and you know, it is very much a bill which has been requested that is relatively non-controversial. We do not have a problem with the bill ultimately going to the committee to see if there is any feedback in regard to it.

It is always interesting when you hear the word "corporation," Mr. Speaker. You know, all of us are kind of following the whole debate in terms of the federal election and what is happening. One of the things that I always find of interest is when you hear some talking about corporate tax breaks. It is interesting, you know, in the province of Manitoba, we have a provincial government that likes to gloat about the tax breaks that it is giving to big corporations, and yet we have a federal New Democratic leader who is actually talking about no to corporate tax breaks.

Anyway, I just thought this was kind of like an interesting thing to be looking at, when we see Bill 17 as a bill which is fairly much straightforward. I had opportunity to go through the explanatory notes and the content of the bill, very briefly on the content, but with the exception of the explanatory notes, Mr. Speaker, it would seem that the bill is quite okay to have it go to committee as opposed to taking a position on the bill other than just to say we do not have a problem with it going to committee at this stage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers? Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 16, The Corporations Amendment Act.

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

* (15:50)

Bill 17—The Securities Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 17, The Securities Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the honourable Member for Pembina, do you wish to speak? *[interjection]* No, okay. It has been denied.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise on Bill 17, The Securities Amendment Act. I also want to recognize that I have had opportunity to be briefed on this bill by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), who is also responsible for consumer and corporate affairs to which this act his portfolio falls under.

I recognize that, once again, this is an effort to harmonize our jurisdiction with others here in Canada to make certain that persons have been looking towards making investment in corporations that are going public for needed resources in order to have the investment in hand that will provide for economic activity, and to which all of us benefit, regardless of whether the investment is made in the rural of Manitoba or the city of Winnipeg or other cities throughout the province.

I will say that this act does have areas of concern once again. However, it is my belief that these shortcomings can be addressed with, once again, minor amendment as I have mentioned in regard to The Corporations Amendment Act. I believe that there will be positive support from the public, but I do believe that there will be some critiquing of this bill with the hope that the Minister of Finance and minister responsible for consumer and corporate affairs will bring forward those amendments.

Failing that, I will be prepared to bring forward an amendment to make certain that The Securities Amendment Act is one that we all want to see in

place for investment here in the province of Manitoba; also to recognize Manitobans that perhaps want to invest elsewhere in the nation so as to have access to that opportunity; also to have legislation that will provide the needed assurances that the corporations to which they are investing in are, in fact, legitimate and that the prospectus that has been provided for review prior to investment is in keeping with accurate figures and conforms to the business activity that the company is engaged in.

I will say, though, that in the overall business climate here in Manitoba I want to take this opportunity to express to my colleagues opposite in government that Manitoba is falling behind other jurisdictions here in Canada. It troubles me greatly that this government has not recognized the changes that are ongoing in other jurisdictions. I know the Finance Minister has risen on numerous occasions saying that his government has, in fact, lowered the corporations' taxation rate and increased the capital exemptions here in the province of Manitoba. Indeed, he has, but not to the same extent that other jurisdictions have been increasing the exemptions and decreasing the corporate tax levels.

I would like to encourage, as in the province of Alberta, that this Finance Minister look at all of the tax burden that our corporations endure here in the province of Manitoba and to seek out tax relief that will give the most benefit toward economic activity here in the province of Manitoba. With greater economic activity, in turn, the Treasury of Manitoba is the beneficiary, as more Manitobans will be engaged in employment and there will be spinoffs from that employment which all our service-sector businesses will enjoy.

I want to also make mention that this is a documented fact because the Province of Saskatchewan undertook a nationwide examination of tax burden upon corporations that are starting up their business activity. It looked upon the businesses in every province and territory in the nation, and it was found that Manitoba has the dubious distinction of having the greatest tax burden of any jurisdiction in Canada. That distinction, I think, tells all, and this government should recognize that fact and, also understand that that fact comes from a very extensive examination done by our sister province Saskatchewan which is governed by a New Democratic Party that is now heralding that they have surpassed Manitoba in being more attractive for business establishment than Manitoba. Wow, what an achievement. They must be feeling really, really

good about that, that one New Democratic Party has passed the other New Democratic Party that is in government here in the nation of Canada.

But I do not think that I would be standing and crowing too loudly because when one is comparing the jurisdiction of Saskatchewan to the jurisdiction of Manitoba where neither economy is on fire, in my own assessments, yes, our natural resources sector has been helping out with the price of oil and gas which Saskatchewan benefits from more greatly than Manitoba, but even here in Manitoba we have seen more activity in the southwest corner of our province where the oil drilling has been seeing more activity than it has in decades, Mr. Speaker. We should all be very pleased to see that because that area of the province has had to endure year after year of crop losses due to inclement weather. Now, whether it be drought or in this past year excessive moisture, the farmers in that area have been hard pressed to take in a crop and this year, with the low commodity prices, hit doubly hard from a poor crop and now that crop being worth less than it would have been worth last year.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to impress upon this government the real, true need to look at all the taxation and all of the regulation that is being placed upon our businesses here in the province of Manitoba. I will say that with the suggestion that you evaluate every tax to see if that tax were to be either reduced or eliminated, what would be the subsequent spinoffs from greater economic activity in the province of Manitoba.

* (16:00)

I will say that, also, Alberta has studied the level of taxation upon persons and businesses operating within the province of Alberta, and had they adopted the next ranking, as they are the first ranking in the nation as far as the least amount of taxation on individuals and businesses, the next closest jurisdiction with the least amount of taxation burden is B.C., and if they adopted, that being the Alberta government, the same taxation regime as B.C. has in place at the present time, Alberta would have to find a home for more than \$8 billion more, \$8 billion more, in taxation revenue. That is how far Alberta is ahead of the second ranking, and Manitoba is the tenth ranking as far as provinces go in the level of taxation upon persons and business. I just shudder to think what would take place if they had to find a home for how many extra building dollars if Alberta was taxing Albertans at the same level as this New

Democratic Party is taxing Manitobans. And then we wonder why Manitobans are leaving in droves to go to Alberta.

An Honourable Member: Wrong.

Mr. Faurschou: Well, I know this government says that that is wrong, but I encourage members opposite to sit down with the graduating students from the various educational institutions that we have in the province, whether it be community college or university, and ask the students, the graduating students, where they expect to be employed in the next year, two years, five years. I have. I sat down with 10 graduating nursing students who are taking their practicum at the Victoria Hospital, and I was absolutely astonished, Mr. Speaker, to learn that not one of those 10 graduating nursing students was going to be in Manitoba within the year of graduation. Not one. One student said she planned on staying in Manitoba for one year, waiting on her fiancé to graduate from the university, where he was then going to be taking a computer position in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I also was quite taken with where the students had planned on taking up employs. These nursing students stated that they were going to areas which they decided upon based on relationships with family and wants in lifestyle, that perhaps the climate of Manitoba does not offer, but two of the students were heading to Ontario, not so far away, in Dryden and Kenora. A couple of the students were planning on going to Minnesota and three students were planning on going to Alberta. Another couple were planning on going out to B.C. So it was interesting to learn first-hand, and that is why I encourage, before the members of the government side of the House dismiss what I say, that they take that same time out of their schedules and sit down with some of the graduating students and ask the exact questions as to where they see themselves in the forthcoming years.

So I want to impress upon this government that it is vitally important that, if we are going to see business activity and business establishment and our province prosper, we have to be conscious of what is happening in other jurisdictions in Canada. And I will say that we are very much a member of the global community when we look at where our products made in Manitoba end up. We have to, then, also be mindful of other jurisdictions and what is happening there.

Now, you just need to read in the newspaper and not so long ago we learned, and this is truly astonishing to me, that jackfish caught in Lake Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, are being shipped all the way to China to be filleted because we do not have a value-added processing for fish here in Manitoba that can accommodate the jackfish that are being caught in Lake Manitoba, and further astonishing to read on that these jackfish that are caught in Lake Winnipeg, shipped to China to be cleaned, are then being brought back to the United States, just south of the border. So we are seeing fish being sold in North Dakota, Minnesota and the Midwest out of Lake Winnipeg via China. Does that make a lot sense? Yet this government across the way does not recognize the need for value-added processing in the fisheries industry.

Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to meet with a number of fishers very recently because Lake Manitoba is just north of my constituency and many of my constituents fish for a living during the winter. They have expressed significant dismay that this government does not recognize the value of their industry.

Once again, I want to look across to members opposite because in the province of Saskatchewan, they took the same posture that this government, New Democratic government in Manitoba, is taking today, Saskatchewan took a number of years ago. They virtually killed their commercial fishing industry. Now, the government of Saskatchewan recognizes the problems in the industry that they themselves, as a government, created. They have invested more than \$5 million in attempting to restart the commercial fishing industry in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have a viable commercial fishing industry here in Manitoba that this government does not recognize needs help. We have to be able to sow the seeds in order to be able to reap. What this government needs to do is to recognize the need for a hatchery that does not release just the fry, but is modified so that the fry are grown into fingerlings, so when released are not eaten immediately and the hatchery production is lost. The fry are good eating for established fish. We know that we have to give them at least a fighting chance to grow to adulthood in order that we are able to harvest the fish and contribute to our economy.

I want also to mention that, if the members opposite have not been recognizing, the global

situation in the fishing industry is on the wane. The trawlers that are involved in the ocean-going fishing fleet are now in the area of the Indian Ocean, which is the last area on the planet that can sustain their activity. All other areas around the world, there is not sufficient enough fish stocks to warrant the trawlers' activities. Mr. Speaker, that speaks volumes of the situation as a global perspective on the fishing industry.

*(16:10)

We have to recognize that, now, I will say that here in Canada, per capita, the amount of freshwater, we lead the world, not just our nation, but we lead the world in the amount of freshwater within our jurisdiction per person. I understand that Newfoundland is saying that they may now be the holder of that record because, as you are all aware, that there a number of Newfoundlanders that have left that province for greener pastures, if you will, in Alberta and B.C. and Ontario. So their population is less today than it was yesterday. Only for that fact that they may, then, with a reduced population, have the record as far as the greatest amount of fresh water per capita of any jurisdiction in the world.

So, understanding that fact, then why are we not a greater or more prominent player in the fishing industry? I know that members opposite believe that perhaps this is a joking matter, but I believe it is a very serious matter and I think that this government should recognize that we could, here in Manitoba, be a leader not only just in Canada, but in the world, in the fishing industry, and everyone, I am certain, in this Chamber is knowledgeable of the fact that fish products are very nutritional and more and more people are putting fish into their diet for that reason—*[interjection]*

Well, I know that in Portage la Prairie we do produce a lot of French fries, so I will encourage also, during the consumption of fish, to have fish and chips. That way, then, my constituents will be very happy, producers and processors and shippers alike.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my comments on that note, because I think that there are others that would like to speak and, in closing, I would like to see Bill 17 receive second reading so that it can go on to committee during the intersessional period and the public can have input to provide some modifications through amendment to this bill. Thank you very much.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is agreement for the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House to meet at 4:15 this afternoon, concurrently with the House with no quorum calls or votes to be held while the committee is meeting?

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House to meet at 4:15 p.m., concurrently with the House, with no quorum calls or votes to be held while the committee is meeting? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Bill 17, The Securities Amendment Act. *[interjection]*

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Well, then, I am going to defer to the Member for Inkster.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the honourable Member for Southdale has now been recognized and defers the spot to the honourable Member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am just going to move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that debate be adjourned on the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 19—The Agri-Food and Rural Development Council Act

Mr. Speaker: We now call Bill 19, The Agri-Food and Rural Development Council Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: It has been agreed to. The bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

Are there any speakers?

An Honourable Member: Five o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, any speakers on Bill 19, The Agri-Food and Rural—none? Okay, when this matter

is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

* * *

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Is it the will of the House to revert to Bill 11, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Is there the will of the House to revert to Bill 11? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Bill 11—The Winter Heating Cost Control Act

Mr. Speaker: We will resume debate on second reading, Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: It will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, notes on the record with respect to Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, I would just like to note the debt that Manitoba Hydro had in 1999 was \$7.2 billion, and in 2005, it is \$9 billion. This is an increased debt of over 25 percent.

An Honourable Member: That is totally wrong.

Mr. Eichler: Well, that is what it says here. The member from Elmwood said it is wrong, but obviously, the figures do not lie, and if they are, then he can go and put them on the record if that is, in fact, not true. The interest on this debt has gone from \$411 million in 1999, to \$502 million. Despite this, it is a decrease in the interest rate by 2 percent. The total debt to the Province is now \$20.32 billion, and Manitoba Hydro makes up nearly 45 percent of Manitoba's total debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is understandable that the government is not the astute bunch that they make themselves out to be and they claim to be good fiscal, financial people, but we remember back that they tried to raid Manitoba Hydro and take some money out of that. They also tried to raid the MPI, but that backfired on them and now it seems as though they want to try and piggyback some of the cost that has been borne by the gas payers of the province of Manitoba by stealing money from Manitoba Hydro once again.

Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

We know that, on this side of the House, it is not of good benefit to the people of all of Manitoba. I know, in particular, when we think about the farmers within the province of Manitoba, the people outside the Perimeter, and we sometimes on this side of the House have tried to remind the current government that they have this Perimeteritis and they forget about people outside the Perimeter as the farming sector makes up a huge part of Manitoba, especially the economy of Manitoba. We know very clearly that within the province of Manitoba, not everybody has natural gas that they are able to access to.

When you go and you look at the rates of Manitoba Hydro, why not if they have been doing a good job fiscally and responsibly, why punish those hydro rate users only because they do not have access to natural gas? I know some of the crops in the past number of years have had to be dried and we know very clearly that that cost is going to be passed on to them through a rate increase. I know that the government is anticipating through the PUB, I believe it is a cost of 2.5 percent for the upcoming increase and another 5 percent later on, which would be a total of 7.25 percent, definitely something that our farmers cannot handle anymore with the low commodity prices, with the prices of the inputs going higher and higher each and every day. I know that anything we can do to try and help rural Manitoba, this would be a benefit which we would be able to pass on to our farming community with not having to hinder them.

The rates that Manitoba Hydro have should be set around the Public Utilities Board, not around the Cabinet table. That is what that board is encompassed to do and they need to be focussed on. That is also the same with Centra Gas. Centra Gas rates should be set by the Public Utilities Board, totally separate from Manitoba Hydro, whether they are under one Crown corporation or not. That is the way it was set up. It was set up that way for a reason and, obviously, the government of the time thought that it was—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross): Order. Member for Lakeside, you have already spoken to this bill.

An Honourable Member: Well, I want to speak again.

* (16:20)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Irvin-Ross): Unfortunately, that is not possible, but once it goes back to committee and comes back, I am sure you can speak again.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order, quorum call, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Irvin-Ross): There is no quorum—

An Honourable Member: We cannot have quorum calls, is that right? Because of the—*[interjection]* Then I take that back.

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Irvin-Ross): The honourable Member for Lakeside, on a point of order?

Mr. Eichler: Yes, for the record, could you tell me when we spoke to this bill?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Irvin-Ross): The records show on November 28 that you spoke to the bill.

* * *

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): Thank you very much, Assistant Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to participate in debate on Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. I appreciate the recognition from my colleagues of the House.

This is a bill that, I believe, is not in keeping with the best interest long-term for Manitobans. I know that it is something that may be viewed on the short term as the right thing to do, where many persons are facing the cold weather with the increase in heating costs and that this bill provides for prohibition, if you will, of increases in natural gas which our consumers from Manitoba Hydro, Assistant Deputy Speaker, that this bill does provide this prohibition perhaps to persons who are looking at this in the short term as being the right thing to do, as I have mentioned.

But I want to look always at the long-term effects of any legislation or regulation or policy that this Chamber is responsible for. In fact, we, as individuals elected to this Assembly, have that responsibility to look to the long-term interests of those who have placed their faith in us through their ballot. These are the changes that we are making or being asked to make through this legislation, which I say that is something that I believe is premature to this juncture.

As to say whether or not it was one that I can support or not support, I will say that I do not believe that many of the articles within this bill are ones that I can support because cross-subsidization between one product and another within any business is penny-wise and pound-fool, if you will.

Ultimately, at the end of the day, every product which a business is responsible for has to pay its own way; otherwise, why would you then be marketing that product? Even though Manitoba Hydro is a Crown-owned entity, it is not an entity to which we here in the Chamber should make through an act of legislation the responsibility of Manitobans to subsidize other Manitobans. If this government is wanting to recognize that the usage of a diminishing natural resource, such that natural gas is, that they want to encourage greater usage or more sustained usage of this natural resource, then perhaps it should be done in a different fashion.

I know I listened with interest to a number of colleagues across the way who hold themselves in a posture as being friends of the environment, which I would like to be in the company of because coming from a farm environment and nurturing what Mother Nature has provided and working in harmony with that is paramount in my mind. This legislation goes contrary to that because to encourage greater use of a non-renewable natural resource in light of lowering and making more costly a renewable resource, in my mind, is very folly. To hear the individuals who pride themselves on being friends of the environment speak positively of this bill really is confusing to myself. Why would one support such legislation?

Ultimately, I understand, though, that in the New Democratic Party, although it says that it is the new New Democratic Party with persons who pride themselves on democratic process and being responsible to those who elect them, the contrary is true in this regard because the individual who stood here and supported Bill 11 I know must be struggling with the fact that he is supporting this bill and putting comment on the record of the Assembly in support of Bill 11 when I know in his own heart it must be very, very difficult to do so. But that is the way of the new New Democratic Party. The whip, obviously, is on because there are many on the New Democratic side of the House who, I am certain, if given the latitude and opportunity to speak what really truly they feel is right, would be speaking against Bill 11 because it does indeed promote a greater utilization of a non-renewable resource in light of making more costly a renewable resource,

which is electricity generated from the water courses here in Manitoba that we, fortunately, are very blessed with.

Manitoba Hydro, I am certain also, as a Crown-owned company, if it truly was being operated at arm's length as the minister across the way says is the fact, then I believe that Manitoba Hydro would be looking to the energy sources which they are responsible for marketing and delivering to consumers in Manitoba. They would be charging the price which that commodity, that energy source, would be valued at and not cross-subsidizing in the normal course of their business practices.

* (16:30)

But, Madam Assistant Deputy Speaker, this bill is speaking volumes about this New Democratic Party government that is known for running interference with our Crown-owned corporations, taking those Crown-owned corporations, which are at arm's length and to be operated at arm's length—that was the reason for their existence. But this bill, as I say, runs interference and, in fact, I believe changes the mandate of that arm's-length operation and imposes upon a Crown-owned corporation, which I might say is one that I am extraordinarily proud as a Manitoban to say is a Crown-owned corporation because Manitoba Hydro is an entity that is known across Canada and around the globe as a leader in the production of hydro-electricity and we should all be proud of that fact. But this bill interferes with their operation, their mandate, and we should be gravely, gravely concerned about this bill and its possible passage.

I stand today to encourage members to stand up for what they were elected to do. Look to your constituents, not look to the party Whip as the reason that you are here in the Chamber. You are not. That party Whip is imposing upon you something that you stood during the election period as a reason why you wanted to be elected, and persons supported that position, one that you extolled as being the right position. The public agreed with you, and that is why you secured their support through their ballot. Today you are standing and betraying that trust, betraying the trust that the constituent has placed in you as their member of the Legislative Assembly.

Also, you are betraying yourselves, and in the future you will be regretful of your position on this bill because it is not something that is in keeping with being in harmony with nature and, in fact, promoting the use of a non-renewable natural

resource and contributing more to global warming which we all are aware of. I know this government does acknowledge global warming because there is a significant budget, in excess of \$1 million, allocated to the study, to the preparation and towards global warming, so that Manitobans are able to adapt and make the conversion that global warming will thrust upon us, so that we will remain a viable place to live and to conduct our business activities.

So it really truly flies in the face of all of that and I am extraordinarily dismayed that persons who pride themselves as elected officials, pride themselves as standing up for the rights of those individuals who supported them, would betray them in that respect.

So let us delve a little bit more into Bill 11. I have been giving a rather global viewpoint of this bill, but I want to say that this government is looking to the cross-subsidization that would not have been even available to the New Democratic Party if it had not been for the Conservative administration in acquiring Centra Gas and merging the operations of Centra Gas with Manitoba Hydro, that if Centra Gas had not been merged with Manitoba Hydro, then this bill would not be available and the contents of the bill asking to cross-subsidize one energy source to another.

But this government never acknowledges that. Was it a good thing or was it a bad thing that Centra Gas was acquired by Manitoba Hydro? All we hear from the New Democratic Party is that the Conservatives did no right. I believe now that they should at least stand in their commentary regarding debate on Bill 11 and recognize the fact that we would not have even this opportunity. We would not even be able to contemplate this legislation in the Chamber unless the Conservative government had acquired, through Manitoba Hydro, the operations of Centra Gas. They all want to say that we, as a Conservative administration, wanted to divest ourselves of Crown-owned corporations and not recognizing that during the decade-long Conservative administration that there was the same number of Crown-owned corporations at the end of that tenure as there were at the beginning. That fact is not ever acknowledged by this New Democratic Party. They all want to concentrate on Manitoba Telecom systems and the divestiture that occurred in 1995.

On that point, I do want to ask the members opposite if they have been able to follow the sister

Crown corporation in the telecommunications business, and that being SaskTel, and what has been transpiring to that entity in Saskatchewan because it is the only telecommunications corporation which is publicly owned in all of Canada. It is the last remaining Crown-owned corporation in that business.

Well, obviously, the members opposite perhaps have not been following what has been happening with SaskTel. But that corporation is financially troubled. It is challenged to the point of almost not being able to keep up with the investment needed with the advancement of technology. Even though base rates are less in some areas than here in Manitoba with a now-private MTS Allstream Incorporated operations for our telecommunications services. But the long-distance charges in Manitoba that Manitobans are subjected to are significantly less, I will say significantly less than in Saskatchewan and SaskTel customers in our sister province.

When one looks upon the services that we need as individuals need for communication, that it is a combination of local and long distance communication as well as Internet services and fax, and when one takes that basket of services we, here in Manitoba, should be very, very thankful that the former Conservative administration took that very, very bold step to privatize Manitoba Telecom systems.

I asked earlier, too, as to whether or not the members of the government side of the House, speaking so positively that they wanted to retain Manitoba Telecom system as a Crown-owned corporation, a corporation owned by the people, when asked the question if there was anyone on the New Democratic side of the House, as to whether they invested by purchasing MTS shares when the share offering was made public, did they take their own money that they were so willing to invest public in, whether they took the opportunity to invest their own money? Not one single individual on the government side of the House, member of the New Democratic Party ventured forward and said that they took their own personal money and invested in Manitoba Telecom systems shares.

* (16:40)

Does that speak volumes? Indeed, it does. Why would they risk public money, hard-earned taxpayers' money, tax money that is put in trust, why would they take taxpayers' money and invest it in an

entity in which they personally would not invest? That speaks volumes. "Do as I say, but not as I do," comes forward, and that is something that I would be personally embarrassed about. I will personally state at this juncture in time that I would not ever invest hard-earned taxpayers' money in a service or business that I would not personally invest in. That is something that I believe is a fundamental plank in the policies of the Conservative Party of Manitoba. That is why I am a member of the Progressive Conservative Party here in Manitoba.

Manitoba Hydro, in the election of 1999, when the New Democratic Party were scaring Manitobans that the Conservative Party, now that it sold and privatized Manitoba Telecom system, that Manitoba Hydro would be next on the auction block. Even though there was not even a single word of discussion regarding the sale of Manitoba Hydro, the New Democratic Party went out there and fear-mongered that possibility to Manitobans. And what did this New Democratic Party, when they got into office because they frightened Manitoban voters into the possibility of Manitoba Hydro being sold, being privatized, by the evil-doing Conservative Party, what did the NDP government do? They took Manitoba Hydro to the cleaners. They took more than \$208 million out of Manitoba Hydro. In their thirst for more money, they could not resist fleecing a well-run Crown corporation. They said it was a dividend. Well, Mr. Speaker, that dividend ended up costing Manitoba Hydro two, not one but two, downgrades by the bond rating agencies.

This government crows that the Manitoba government has increased its bond rating on the finances of Manitoba, but they do not tell you in that same breath that Manitoba Hydro has facilitated that by taking two downgrades in its own bond rating of its operation here in the province of Manitoba. That is really, really disconcerting to me and, I know, would be disconcerting to every Manitoban if this government was truly wanting to tell the whole story.

On that point, telling the whole story, when that \$208 million was taken from Manitoba Hydro as a dividend by the government of Manitoba, the First Minister of the New Democratic Party stated that this would not result, and I say again, would not result in any, in any, increase in hydro-electrical rates to Manitobans, not one percentage point, not one fraction of one percentage point, would be seen in increase, because at that time, Madam Assistant Deputy Speaker, Manitoba was on a roll. Manitobans were benefiting from, I believe, seven years of a

constant Hydro rate being charged. Not one increase in seven years.

But, no, this was only a fleeting promise, as so many of the New Democratic promises are, that within a year, that all changed. Why? It was not because the government took the \$200 million-plus from Manitoba Hydro; it was because of the drought experienced here in Manitoba, and that the water levels were diminished to a point where it curtailed the generation of electricity by Manitoba Hydro and, subsequently, Manitoba Hydro was unable to generate as much electricity, which resulted in significant losses to the corporation.

However, had that corporation not had to give up \$208 million, if that \$208 million was still in the bank account of the Manitoba Hydro, that would have warded off a significant amount of the loss which was over \$400 million. But another significant point was with the taking of the \$208 million and the two downgrades in bond rating that Manitoba Hydro endured, that their interest rates went significantly higher from outside agencies, that they were forced to apply to the Public Utilities Board for an increase in the rates charged for electricity consumed by Manitobans. But the rest of the story, as they say—

An Honourable Member: As Paul Harvey would say.

Mr. Faurshou: As Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story, not only did this government take \$208 million right out of the bank account of Manitoba Hydro, they more than doubled the water rental rates that, as a natural resource of the province of Manitoba, which the provincial government has clear jurisdiction over, charged the Manitoba Hydro more than \$100 million in water rental rates. Well, that is up to over \$300 million of the \$400 million in loss that Manitoba Hydro registered, then adding the significant amount of interest rates that Manitoba Hydro was forced to pay with the bond rating agencies' downgrade, there is one more blow that this New Democratic government placed upon Hydro. Because the debt of Manitoba Hydro increased, there was more of a call to secure that debt because Manitoba Hydro, as a Crown-owned corporation, the government of Manitoba must secure those loaned monies, that outstanding debt of Manitoba Hydro, to make certain that the taxpayers of Manitoba will come good on that debt. So, as being responsible for the security of the debt of Manitoba Hydro, the Manitoba government said to Manitoba Hydro, "Well, your debt has gone much, much higher, so,

therefore, we are going to charge you a lot more money just to cosign the loans that Manitoba Hydro was having to do."

So, instead of paying only approximately \$10 million a year for securing the loaned monies of Manitoba Hydro, as was charged by the previous Tory administration, no. Did it stay at 15? No, it went higher. Did it stay at 20? No, it went higher. Did it stay at \$25 million? No, it went higher. How high did it go? Over \$32 million, just to sign a cosignature on the debt of Manitoba Hydro. The Finance Minister charged over \$30 million for his signature to cosign for Manitoba Hydro's debt—*[interjection]*

* (16:50)

Madam Speaker, how much more time do I have? We want to get to that point because the burr under this honourable member's saddle, I am telling you, is what they say versus what they do. This government, when it took office, Manitobans owned over 23 percent, 23 percent, of Manitoba Hydro. So what did this government do? They decided to take all of the money that could possibly be taken from Manitoba Hydro. I have added up pretty close to \$400 million here, and that is not a stretch. I believe that, if they had not managed it as they did, Manitoba Hydro would not have lost any money, even though the drought took place and reduced the water volumes. Having said that, this government took office with Manitobans owning more than 23 percent of debt-to-equity ratio. What is it now today? I am asking our government members. Do they know what percentage of Hydro Manitobans own versus the Bay Street bankers?

An Honourable Member: Manitobans own it all.

Mr. Faurschou: Manitobans do own by title Manitoba Hydro, but Manitoba Hydro owes over \$9 billion up from a little less than \$6 billion just six short years ago. What does that mean? It means that right now Manitobans own less than 10 percent—less than 10 percent of Manitoba Hydro. The rest is owned by those holding the notes of Manitoba Hydro's debt.

So, Madam Assistant Deputy Speaker, I know that I have much more to say on this topic of Bill 11 and Manitoba Hydro; however, I am being indicated that my time has expired. But I do appreciate the opportunity to participate in debate regarding Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, an act that I do not believe that I can support because it goes

contrary to what I believe in as an individual conducting oneself in harmony with nature, and I cannot stand and support something that influences Manitobans to consume more of a non-renewable natural resource. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I rise today to speak to Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. This bill introduced in November was to prohibit any further increases in natural gas prices for customers of Centra Gas during this 2005-06 winter heating season and allows the government to limit price increases, but, Mr. Speaker, Gary Doer and the—*[interjection]* Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I retract that and say the Premier (Mr. Doer) and this NDP government continue to micromanage Manitoba Hydro and force hydro rate increases. The NDP continue to use Manitoba Hydro to bolster their political fortunes on the backs of the Manitoba Hydro users.

In 2002, the NDP raided Manitoba Hydro for \$200 million for their political slush fund and financial government programs, and, as a result, your hydro rates have increased by 7.25 percent. Now they want to extract further revenues from Manitoba Hydro and create a second slush fund for this NDP government's political activities. Any rate increase should be used to pay down the Manitoba Hydro debt that has increased from \$7.2 billion to \$9 billion under this NDP government.

Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, we have some issues with cross-subsidization as a tool for rate stabilization. It is simply poor public policy. Mr. Ed Schreyer has called the plan perverse and did so in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on November 18. He also called it "the most retrograde step the government could possibly take." He is arguing against the environmental implications of a non-renewable energy source subsidizing a renewable one. Now, this does not really make any sense to take a non-renewable energy source and use it to subsidize for a renewable one. This just flies in the face of whatever we are trying to do to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to be environmentally friendly in this province. On one hand, we have the Premier saying that he is taking Manitoba forward in environmental issues, and, on the other hand, he is encouraging people to burn gas. The rates should be set at the Public Utilities Board and not around the Cabinet table.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

There are several issues here. This bill encourages, as I said, it encourages the subsidization of Centra Gas with Manitoba Hydro monies. It only serves as a short-term solution, and while prices may remain low in the short term, at the end of the two-year term of the bill, there is no guarantee that prices will not dramatically jump up at that time. It is interesting that this bill has a time frame of two years on it, sort of to go past the point of the next election. Is this to provide a bit of a slush fund to be used at that time, Mr. Speaker? It seems that it could be.

In fact, I think that just on that note, the Saskatchewan experience, SaskPower was looking at a 42 percent rate increase after keeping their rates artificially low. So what we are going to see is rates to be artificially held low and then jump up after the next election when they are not in power. Is that what we are looking at here?

The Hydro debt, of course, is a major issue here. In March of 2005, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce printed that, according to Bob Brennan, even with the increased precipitation and rate hike, Hydro is still two years behind on their debt reduction targets. How is this going to be addressed? How is this government going to address this issue, Mr. Speaker? In 1999, as I said, the Hydro debt was \$7.2 billion, and now, in 2005, it is \$9 billion. This is an increase in debt of over 25 percent, a 25 percent increase in debt. Interest on the debt has gone from \$411 million in 1999 to \$502 million today. The total debt of the province is \$20.3 billion. This is a huge debt that we are going to be passing on to our children and their children. This government is doing nothing, doing nothing to address the debt. All they are interested in is creating this new slush fund with the revenues from Manitoba Hydro.

* (17:00)

Of course, the NDP has a history of inappropriate revenue draws from Crown corporations. *[interjection]* Yes, you do. They raided Manitoba Hydro of \$203 million in 2002, and Hydro had to borrow this money at a cost of \$276 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, if you would recognize that it is five o'clock in terms of government business, but would you ask not to see the clock in order to deal with House business?

Mr. Speaker: Okay. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Morris will have 22 minutes remaining. Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, will also remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

Is it the will of the House to not see the clock?
[Agreed]

* (17:30)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Rules of the House

First Report

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

Mr. Speaker: By leave.

Mr. Santos: By leave.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to present the report? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Meetings:

Your Committee met on Tuesday, December 7, 2005 at 4:15 p.m. in room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under consideration:

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

Committee Membership:

Ms. Brick

Mr. Derkach

Mr. Dewar

Hon. Mr. Hickes (Chairperson)

Ms. Korzeniowski

Mr. Lamoureux

Hon. Mr. Mackintosh

Mr. Schellenberg

Mr. Rocan

Mr. Reimer

Mr. Santos (Vice-Chairperson)

*Agreements:**Your committee agreed:*

THAT the Clerk may re-number the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and make other minor corrections that in no way alter the intended meaning of these Amendments.

THAT the Clerk may prepare revised Rules incorporating these Amendments.

THAT these Amendments will come into force immediately.

THAT these Amendments will be permanent changes to the rules.

THAT the Public Accounts Committee review the rule changes relating to their procedures by March 31, 2006, and report their conclusions to the House.

Amendments to Rules Considered and Reported:

Your committee agreed to report the following amendments to the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

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

(a) by replacing Rule 104 with the following:

104(1) Members on the PAC shall serve for a term that is equal to the duration of the Legislature.

104(2) Despite Rules 85(2) and 104(1) each caucus may make up to two membership substitutions per meeting.

(b) by replacing Rule 111 with the following, effective January 1, 2006:

Meetings and Hearings

111(1) After consulting with the PAC Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the Government House Leader shall call from six to eight meetings of the PAC per year. To the extent practicable, the meetings shall be held at regular intervals.

111(2) The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson must set the agenda for a meeting and provide a copy of the agenda to

the Government House Leader before the meeting is called.

(c) in Rule 114, by adding "and answer questions" after "provide advice and opinions";

(d) by adding the following after Rule 118:

Minister and deputy minister may be called as witnesses

118.1(1) If an Auditor General's report relates to a government department or agency, the PAC may call as a witness the minister currently responsible for that department or agency.

118.1(2) If an Auditor General's report makes a recommendation relating to a government department, the PAC may call as an additional witness the current deputy minister for that department, to appear with the minister. The deputy minister may be questioned on matters related to the Auditor General's report recommendations and related matters of administration within the department. Questions of policy must be directed to the minister.

118.1(3) If an Auditor General's report makes a recommendation relating to a Crown corporation whose annual report stands permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, the PAC may call as an additional witness the chief executive officer of the corporation, to appear with the minister responsible for the corporation. The officer may be questioned on matters related to the Auditor General's report recommendations and related matters of administration within the corporation. Questions of policy must be directed to the minister.

118.1(4) Despite subrule (1), if the report makes recommendations affecting more than one government department or agency, the chair and vice-chair, on the advice of PAC, may designate the current minister responsible for any of the affected department or agency as the lead minister. If there are areas not yet addressed by the lead minister or deputy minister, the chair and vice-chair, on the advice of PAC, may call as witnesses, to deal with matters not yet addressed,

(a) the minister of any other department affected by the recommendations and, under subrule(2), the deputy minister of that department; or

(b) in the case of a Crown corporation referred to in subrule (3), the minister responsible for the corporation and, under that subrule, the chief executive officer of the corporation.

118.1(5) The minister and deputy minister may bring to the PAC one or more members of their staff, selected by the minister or deputy minister, to provide advice to the minister or deputy minister on questions posed by committee members.

118.1(6) The minister responsible for a Crown corporation referred to in subrule (3) and the chief executive officer of the corporation may bring to the PAC one or more members of the minister's or corporation's staff, selected by the minister or the officer, as the case may be, to provide advice to the minister or the officer on questions posed by committee members.

THAT Rule 23(1) be repealed and replaced with the following:

Daily Routine

23(1) The daily routine of business in the House at 1:30 p.m., and at 10:00 a.m. when it sits on a Friday, is as follows, unless the House orders otherwise:

Introduction of Bills
Petitions
Committee Reports
Tabling of Reports
Ministerial Statements
Oral Questions
Members' Statements
Grievances

THAT Rule 23(3) be amended by adding the following before the last sentence:

For the purpose of listing Bills on the Order Paper during Private Members' Business, Concurrence and Third Readings shall precede Debate on Concurrence and Third

Readings, while Second Readings shall precede Debate on Second Readings.

THAT Rule 136(2) be repealed and replaced with the following:

Bill must be distributed before Second Reading

136(2) A bill must be printed and distributed in the House at least one day before Second Reading.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): By leave, I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that the First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules of the House be concurred in.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, these rule changes have involved very extensive discussions and negotiations and now lead to an era in Manitoba where the Public Accounts Committee will be empowered to call ministers, deputy ministers and, with respect to the Crowns that go to our standing committees, the CEOs of those Crowns, and with some checks and balances in place, but it certainly is enhancement of accountability in the province of Manitoba, and I thank the honourable members for all their co-operation and the work and for the staff members that have done much of the background work, as well as the Clerk's office. Thank you.

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

House Business

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on the following occasions: Wednesday, December 7, from 6 p.m. until no later than 9 p.m., to consider the Auditor General's report on the Crocus Fund; by leave, on Thursday, December 8, from 3 p.m. until no later than 6 p.m., to consider the Auditor General's report on the Crocus Fund, with no vote, no quorum in the House; on Friday, December 9, from 9:30 a.m. to no later than twelve noon, to consider the Morris-Macdonald audit; and, next, on Thursday, February 2, 2006, from 7 p.m. until no later than 10 p.m., to consider outstanding Public Accounts volumes. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on the following occasions: Wednesday, December 7, 2005, from 6 p.m. until no later than 9 p.m., to consider the Auditor General's report on the Crocus Fund; on Thursday, December 8, from 3 p.m. until no later than 6 p.m., to consider the Auditor General's report on the Crocus Fund.

Is there leave to have no recorded votes or quorum calls in the House during the time of the committee meetings? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Also, on Friday, December 9, 2005, from 9:30 a.m. until no later than noon to consider the Morris-Macdonald audit; also, on Thursday, February 2, 2006, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., to consider outstanding Public Accounts volumes.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: So the hour being past 5 p.m., this House will now adjourn and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

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