

CBC Manitoba Probe Research Inc. News Release

MANITOBANS AND THE CROCUS INVESTMENT FUND

Release Date: March 22, 2007

This province-wide Omnibus survey was designed and conducted by Probe Research Inc. via telephone interviews conducted between February 28th and March 13th, 2007 among a random and representative sampling of 1,000 Manitoba adults.

With a sample of 1,000 one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/- 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been interviewed. The margin-of-error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Modified random digit dialling was used to ensure that all Manitoba adults would have an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that the age and gender balance correspond with the province as a whole.

MANITOBANS AND THE CROCUS INVESTMENT FUND

Winnipeg, Manitoba – Only one-in-five Manitobans are paying close attention to developments surrounding the Crocus Investment Fund, and even fewer say this issue will be strongly influencing their voting deliberations in an upcoming provincial election. These results were gleaned from a province-wide survey of 1,000 adults taken for CBC Manitoba earlier this month. Other research results show that, despite relatively low levels of public interest in the Crocus affair, a majority of citizens favour a public enquiry to shed light on the causes of the demise of this troubled fund.

Not Many Manitobans Watching Crocus Closely

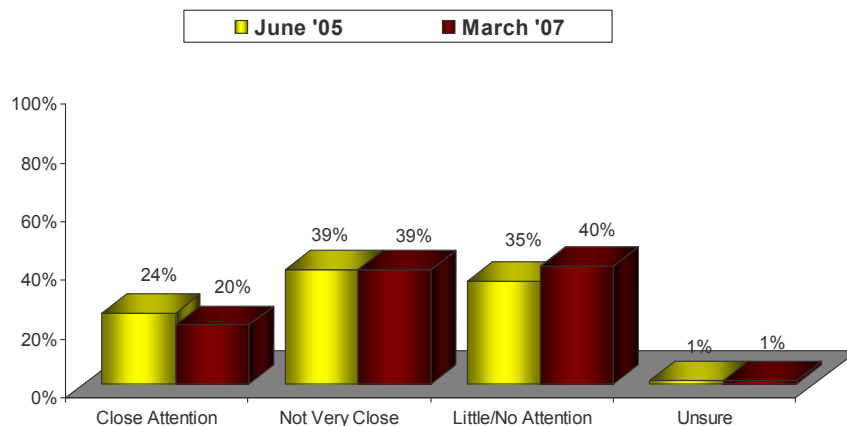
Respondents were asked if they have been paying *close attention* to news stories about the problems at the Crocus Investment Fund, *not following this issue very closely* or *paying little or no attention*.

Only one-in-five Manitoba adults (20%) indicate that they have been paying *close attention* to news items concerning the problems at the Crocus Investment Fund, with these news items being more likely to be of great interest to men (26% versus 14% of women), those aged 55 years and over (29% versus 8% among those aged 18-34 years) and households earning \$60,000 or more annually (28% versus 10% among those earning less than \$30,000). Four-in-ten indicate that they have been *not following this story very closely* (39%), while the same number admit they have been paying *little or no attention* to the Crocus affair (40%, rising to 63% among those aged 18-34). As illustrated below, the level of public attention paid to this issue has not changed significantly since June of 2005.

PRBE

Manitobans' Attentiveness to the Crocus Issue

"Issues surrounding the Crocus Investment Fund have been in the news lately. I'd like to know how closely you have been following this story. Would you say you have been paying very close attention to recent news stories about the Crocus Investment Fund, have you been following the story to some extent but not particularly closely, or would you say you have paid little or no attention to recent news surrounding the Crocus Fund?" (n=1,000)



Crocus Insiders Held at Fault for Fund's Problems

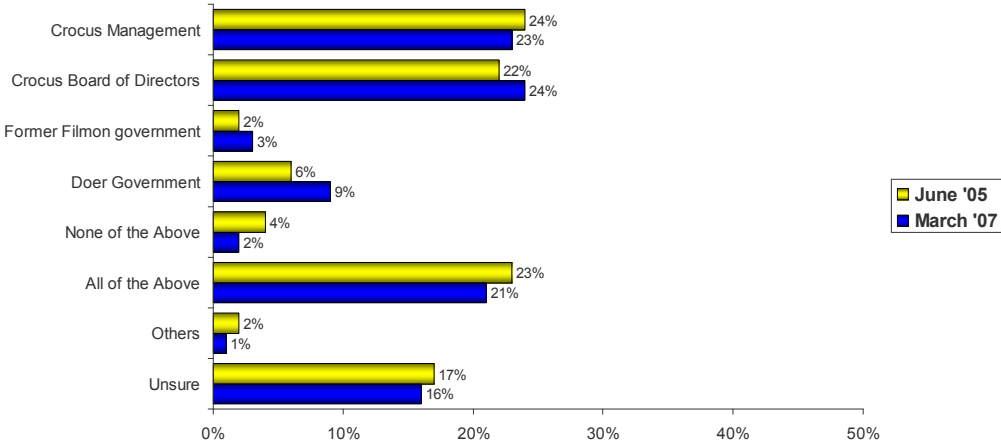
When asked which one group of persons should be held most responsible for the problems at the Crocus Investment Fund, fully one-half of Manitobans either allocate this blame to *the Crocus Board of Directors* (24%) or to *senior Crocus managers and executives* (23%). Relatively few Manitobans point to the current NDP government as being most responsible: only one-in-ten (9%, but rising to 20% among those paying *close attention* to this story) say that *the Doer government* should be held most responsible, and a mere three percent place responsibility on *the former Filmon government* who created the structure for these types of labour-sponsored investment funds. One in five Manitobans (21%), however, believe that there is plenty of blame to go around and that *all of these groups* should be held responsible to varying degrees.

As illustrated by the graph below, public opinion on this issue has not changed appreciably since Probe Research first asked this question in June, 2005, although citizens are marginally more likely to point the finger at the Doer government than was the case two years ago.



Perceived Responsibility for Crocus Investment Fund Problems

"Based upon what you have seen, read or heard about problems at the Crocus Investment Fund, which ONE group do you feel should be held most responsible for these problems? Is it..." (n=1,000)



Few Expect Crocus to Affect Vote Intentions

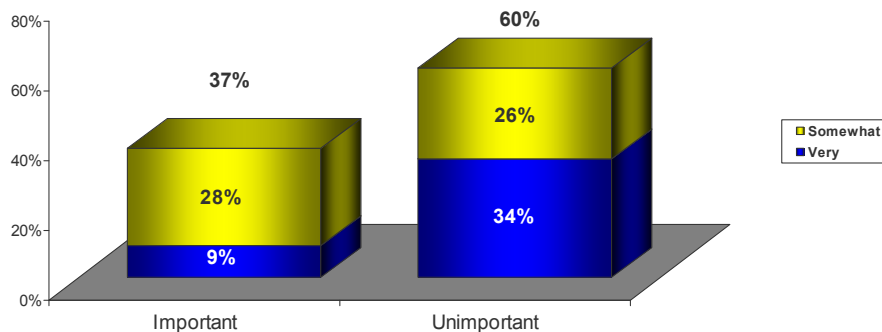
When asked how important issues surrounding the Crocus Investment Fund will be as voters make up their mind on their party support in the next provincial election, only one-in-ten (9%) indicated that issues surrounding the Crocus Investment Fund will play an *extremely important* role in helping them make up their minds on how they will vote, although just over one-quarter (28%) suggest this issue may play some role in their voting deliberations.

The more attention directed to the issue, however, the more likely Manitobans are to say that this will be an important factor in their decision of which party they will support in the next provincial election. Among those paying *close attention* to this issue, more than one-half say this issue will have a *somewhat* (33%) or *extremely important* (22%) effect on their vote. Current supporters of the Progressive Conservatives are also more likely than others to say the Crocus affair will be a *very* or *somewhat important* influence on their voting intentions (44%).

P R O B E

Anticipated Impact of Crocus on Manitobans' Voting Intentions

"How important will issues surrounding the Crocus Investment Fund be to you personally as you make up your mind on how you will vote in the next provincial election? Will these issues be..." (n=1,000)



Majority Favour Calling a Public Inquiry

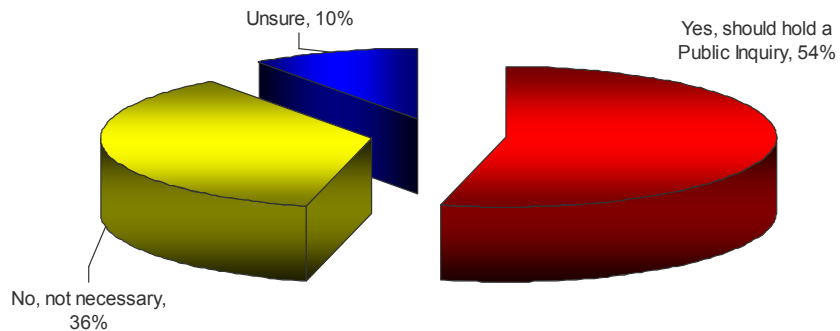
Just over one-half of Manitoba adults (54%) indicated that they would favour a public inquiry to get to the bottom of issues surrounding the problems at the Crocus Investment Fund. More than one-third (36%), on the other hand, were of the opinion that an inquiry was not necessary in light of the Auditor General's 2005 investigation into these issues. One-in-ten Manitobans (10%) were uncertain as to whether or not there should be a public enquiry into the failure of this fund.

A solid majority of PC voters (58%) call for a Crocus enquiry while current NDP supporters are split on this issue (48% in favour of versus 47% opposed to an enquiry).

PRBE

Opinions on Holding a Public Inquiry Regarding the Crocus Fund

"Now, I'd like to read you two statements concerning the Crocus Investment Fund, and I'd like you to tell me which of these statements comes closest to reflecting your own personal view on the issue. (ROTATE CATEGORIES:) Please allow me to read both statements before you make your choice. (Some people/other people) say that there should be a public inquiry to investigate issues surrounding the Crocus Fund, in order to determine all of the facts in this matter. (Some people/other people) say that since the Auditor General has already investigated issues surrounding the Crocus Fund, it is not necessary to conduct a public inquiry. Which of these two views best reflects your own personal view on this issue?" (n=1,000)



For more information on this study, please contact:

Scott MacKay
President, Probe Research, Inc.
850-125 Garry St.
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3P2
Tel.: (204) 926-6565
Fax: (204) 926-6566
Cell: (204) 955-9777
E-mail: scott@probe-research.com

- 30 -