

Second Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good morning, colleagues. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 300?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 205?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Okay. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 211?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: All right, then. We'll call Bill 211, the personal information and protection identity theft act, sponsored by the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 211—The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I move, seconded by the member from Morden-Winkler, that Bill 211, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ewasko: Bill 211, the personal information protection and identity theft protection act, and the purpose of, again, of this bill, Mr. Speaker, this bill

governs the collection, use, disclosure and destruction of personal information by organizations in the private sector. It also establishes a duty for those organizations to notify individuals who may be affected when the personal information the organization has collected is lost, stolen or compromised.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was first introduced in November 2004—that's nine years ago—by a—with help of a renowned privacy lawyer, Mr. Brian Bowman. The more time that passes before this bill is passed, the more difficult the problem of identity theft becomes to address. Identity theft is a growing crime and one that is extremely lucrative for thieves, as we have been reading more and more in every paper of every country in every continent. It is a shame that a bill that would do nothing but good is continually ignored by this NDP government to the detriment of Manitobans who become victims of identity theft. Identity theft is a crime with an easy prevention; prevent information from being stolen and there can be no crime, and yet the NDP do not seem to grasp this notion. Even the Manitoba Federation of Labour has suggested that there is a gap in privacy laws.

Québec, BC and Alberta have all developed legislation very similar to scope to what Bill 211 represents, Mr. Speaker. This legislation would bring Manitoba in line with other provinces that are being proactive on this issue.

I'm hoping with today's conversations that are being put on the record from members on this side of the House and on the government side of the House—I'm hoping that they're going to be supporting this bill and moving it forward. I know that the government's record in the past has been more so, hang back, and see what other provinces are doing and come to the table either ninth or 10th in the country, Mr. Speaker. So, I'm hoping that today we are able to move this forward and follow some of the other provinces that are doing things proactively on this issue.

The NDP's so-called identity theft bill did nothing to fight identity theft and, in fact, made it easier for identity thieves to take over people's accounts. The NDP has seen this bill for nine years, and while they have—will not vote for it, they will not

even present legislation of their own that achieves the same goals. When will they wake up and pass this legislation so that Manitobans can be protected?

What I'm meaning there, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that there has been many really good ideas brought forward in the past 14 years on this side of the House, and I have seen it in the last year and a half that the government side has taken those bills or those ideas, turned them into their own ideas and have passed them. One example I remember, last spring we were talking about the firefighter licence plates that was brought in favour of—or from our member on this side of the House, the member from Lakeside. So I'm really strongly encouraged to hopefully see the government side maybe take this bill, if they do not see fit to pass it today, and move it forward, whether it's ours or theirs—it just—so that it does end up happening and get passed forward for the sake of many Manitobans.

The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act will offer a made-in-Manitoba solution to how personal information is collected, used and disclosed. The purpose of Bill 211 is to fill the gap in privacy legislation by providing a made-in-Manitoba law which would govern the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in a manner that recognizes both the right of an individual to have his or her personal information protected and the need of organizations to collect, use or disclose personal information for purposes that are reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, by enacting substantially similar legislation to the federal PIPEDA, we are creating a made-in-Manitoba law which would much more—which would be much more user-friendly for businesses in Manitoba, would clarify jurisdiction over personal health information and fill the privacy gap in Manitoba by extending coverage to all Manitobans.

Further, it addresses collection of biometric data, which is defined as anything that is a person, such as fingerprints, palm prints, iris or retinal scans, facial scans, blood type, DNA and other person-specific data. For example, instead of filling out or punching time cards, hundreds of employees in Winnipeg fast-food chain resident—restaurants place their hands in—on a hand punch. This device automatically takes a three-dimensional reading of the size and shape of the employee's hand and verifies the user's identity in less than one second. It records the exact movement when he or she arrives at work.

Although the restaurants say they will not use the information for anything else, PIPEDA does not prevent the information from being used for other purposes within the company. For example, what if a company decided to check fingerprints collected in this manner to see if employees have a record, a criminal record?

* (10:10)

Now, Mr. Speaker, how are Manitobans feeling about their personal privacy? In October 2003 the provincial Ombudsman at the time released a document titled "Respecting Privacy: A Compliance Review Tool for Manitoba's Information Privacy Laws".

The Ombudsman quoted the results of a survey. Six out of every 10 Manitobans believe that they have less personal privacy than just five years ago. Seventy-five per cent of Manitobans agree that there is no real privacy because the government can learn anything it wants about individuals. At least 1 in 2 Manitobans—that's 55 per cent—believe that it is more likely than not that they will suffer a serious invasion of privacy during the next two years. Approximately 6 in 10 Manitobans are vaguely or clearly aware of laws that place strict restrictions on how provincial government departments are able to use or share their personal health information—that's 26 per cent for vaguely and 35 per cent for clearly, Mr. Speaker. More than one in 10 Manitobans have withheld personal information from a health-care provider because of privacy concerns.

The Ombudsman also suggested the implications of a privacy breach or simply the perception of a breach have deeply significant consequences for individuals, businesses and governments. Privacy protection should be treated as a normal routine and fundamental part of corporate and operational planning. Privacy is a legal right and many believe that it is fundamental human right. It would be a prudent, good practice and in the public interest to ensure that the requirements of Manitoba's privacy legislation are better known, more fully considered and more systematically applied than is now the case.

Mr. Speaker, there's another type of antitheft device that's being used out there and that's the chip, and the actual word for that chip is the radio frequency identifier chip. This technology is highly specific identification method relying on data-storing devices called chips or tags and remote retrieving devices called transceivers or readers. The tag is a

small object ranging from a couple of centimetres square to the size of a grain of pepper that can be attached to or incorporated into a product, animal or person. RFIDs are used in enhanced driver's licences and enhanced identity cards. So these things are already being used and we should be, again, forwarding on this bill so that we can expand on those usages as well.

The Ombudsman has expressed concern about the use of this technology. RFID chips can be read from a distance enabling criminals who purchase a simple scanner online to read the information on the chip. If the chip contains personal information or links the individual to information in a database that person's privacy can be compromised.

RFIDs can be easily adapted to track customer purchases or identity—or identify them as they enter a store, bank or other establishment, providing the company a virtual purchase history of the customer and allowing them to know how much you just—or how much about you just by walking through the door. In 2004, Ontario, through their privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, issued regulations regarding the use of this technology and the dangers that it could present to the protection of privacy.

Allowing this technology to transmit personal information will lead to a great risk of losing our right to privacy, and once it is lost it will be extremely hard to claim back. Once information is made public, it can never be made private again, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned earlier, British Columbia, Alberta and Québec have each enacted legislation that is substantially similar to Bill 211 that essentially replaces PIPEDA in those provinces.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to not only hearing what a couple of the government members and colleagues on my side have to say in regards to Bill 11. I do look forward to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino) supporting this bill and helping to move it forward, and I will do nothing but—this will do nothing but benefit Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): As Minister of Consumer Affairs responsible to The Property Registry and Vital Statistics, et cetera, I'm very pleased to speak on this, and I appreciate the member

from Lac du Bonnet bringing this bill to the House and I appreciate his issues on this.

I was surprised that the member from Lac du Bonnet, although this bill is talking about the collection, use, disclosure and destruction of personal information including employee personnel information by organizations in the private sector, he spent about 25 per cent of his speech talking about government and the public sector. But that's okay. I always think it's always important to try to say somewhat on topic and somewhat on system, but that's the way it is.

Anyhow, I'm pleased to tell you what the government has been doing in this area, because I think it is important. I think it's an important sector, and I think the whole idea about 'identiffee' theft in information is very, very critical. And it's not just critical here in Manitoba, I think it's critical in the country and the entire world. And why I'm worried about this is that when identities are stolen and IDs are stolen and information are stolen, it's usually not just within our province.

In other words, sometimes we get a senior who's given a call. They are told that they win a trip, they are told all sorts of different things, and they give their information. They give their information because they're trusting. And what happens with that information, often it goes offshore and people abuse that information. They use the credit card, they use the identification to create new forms of—to get more money. And what happens is that that sort of behaviour is a concern. And it's a concern of mine in the province, in the country and around the world.

And I would like to, actually, give the federal government some credit on this, because they've started to work on it, where they start talking about some of these organizations that obtain huge amounts of information, whether it's from companies that get information using loyalty cards or just information that's gathered. And that information, sometimes, is sold to a third party. Sometimes that information is inadvertently sent to groups that misuse that information. And I've often gone to many seniors groups and talked to them about the worry about identity theft, inappropriate behaviour.

That's why I'm pleased that, as of 2006, we actually set a website up which includes access to the ID theft prevention kit, an ID checklist to make sure people have the information on file if something happens, FAQs, tips for reducing the risk of identity theft and contact information for a variety of

organizations, resources, that help people on this, because it is an issue, and it's a worldwide issue.

If you want, I can actually provide you—any member with the 'identit'—the website directions, and I think it's important that all Manitobans are encouraged to be cautious about giving out personal information, and give it only when it's imperative—ask the questions. And often, when they're providing information, actually ask the question of, is this information going to be held in a certain area, or whether it'll be disseminated for others or sold to other organizations. And then, again, every time someone handles it, there's a chance for theft.

Businesses, by the way, on this website, are reminded that they are responsible to protect customers' personal information under PIPEDA, which is the protection of information disclosures act. And it's really important to say that this is something that we have to work together, and so the Consumer Protection Office gives approximately 40 presentations annually on the topic to a variety of groups including seniors, newly landed immigrants, a few high schools, the YMCA, at the military base.

And many of the presentations are done in partnership with the RCMP to raise awareness on identity theft and what people have to do. The presentations are held in various locations throughout the rural and northern communities and in the city of Winnipeg, and so that we're talking about identity theft.

We're also talking about what we have to do as far as legislation. I'll let the member opposite know that the legislation currently protects Manitobans against identity theft. Provincial legislation, currently in place under The Consumer Protection Act, limits consumers' liability to \$50 when a credit card is lost, stolen or their credit card information is used to make fraudulent purchases. That, Mr. Speaker, has been in place for years, and it does protect people to a \$50-maximum cost if something happens.

The other things is, is the Vital Statistics has taken steps to ensure critical information, personal information, is protected, and fines up to \$50,000 may be imposed on anyone possessing or using fraudulent documents or using legitimate documents unlawfully. That's an act that I currently administer, and I'm pleased to say that up to \$50,000 should dissuade inappropriate behaviour.

*(10:20)

And MPI has also taken steps to ensure personal information is protected with the new driver's licence, which is photo ID, which are—which is good, positive photo ID, which I would like to let the member from Lac du Bonnet know that the Conservatives actually made fun of and said there was no use of. And I think that appropriate photo ID to prevent identity theft is good and is positive.

The other thing that people need to know is that it is not just a provincial issue. When we talk about this, as a country, I'm pleased, I said earlier, that the feds are engaged through PIPEDA. And in 2004, January, the federal personal information protection—electronic document act, has said that it's been expanded to the private sector and organizations throughout the entire country that collect user disclosed personal information in the course of commercial activity.

And it's interesting that the Conservatives are talking about dual—two levels of government regulating this one issue, rather than one. Usually, the members opposite start talking about working to get rid of red tape, not create more red tape. And so, I think it's important to say that we are working co-operatively with the federal government, and to have one set of regulations, that's understandable. And so, the federal government has started to move in this area, and we believe that one set of rules that encompasses all organizations across the entire country does make sense, Mr. Speaker.

So the federal government has been moving in this since 2004. They moved into this area and they have got comprehensive regulations on disclosure and use of personal information.

So I do believe that when I was minister of Industry, we did bring in BizPaL that got rid of regulations. I'm kind of surprised that the members opposite wants dual responsibility, and more regulations, and more red tape. I am pleased that we are working co-operatively with the federal government to do this.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the federal government. We also have to work with all governments, because what's happening, if the members would like to listen, is that offshore, more and more organizations and illegal organizations offshore, are capturing this information, creating credit cards or bank cards, and then using the process illegally. So it's not going to be captured by Manitoba regulations. It's not going to be captured by Canadian regulations. We then need to figure out

how to do it on a broader scale. And I'd like to let the members opposite know that we are engaged with this, in discussions on a national basis, on how to encompass all organizations that do this.

Now, in conclusion, because I only have about a minute less—left, I think what people need to know is that if they become victims of identity theft, they should contact law—local law enforcement agency, report the crime, cancel all the accounts and cards immediately, and make sure that they contact their credit organization in writing as soon as possible. They should also contact credit reporting agencies like TransUnion and Equifax. And this important because if someone is using your ID and then they build up all sorts of debts and all this, then they could be reported inappropriately to the credit reporting agencies which could cause issues with a person's credit in the long term.

I think that this is an important issue. I think that there's more to do as a Province as far as communication to people. I know as Minister responsible for Seniors, we actually have actively gone out into the community to talk about fraud and crimes, and what do people do on this.

I know that we've been talking about where we need to go in the future, and, Mr. Speaker, I think it was good that we've started on the process, we continue on the process and we're working with the federal government to make sure that things are more appropriate. Thank you.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this morning to get up and speak on Bill 211, the personal information protection and identity theft protection act, as introduced by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), and I want to thank him for bringing forward this very important piece of legislation. And I'm pleased to be able to put some words on the record this morning, in the time that's allotted to me, and I look forward to the other comments that will be made this morning on both sides of the floor of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the context is this: that we all understand that technology is changing the way we live and the way we work. Technology is changing the way we do things like access information. It's changing the way we bank. It's changing the way we receive our health care. It's changing the way we correspond with our children's teachers. It's changing the way we watch movies.

There used to be a day when you—when families would go out and buy out those very large sets of encyclopedias. And, actually, I have to confess to the fact that I am one of those individuals who—I am old enough to say that I was one of the individuals whose families went out and bought the big set of encyclopedias—*[interjection]*—and the member from Steinbach indicates he just got his last week. But, in any case, Mr. Speaker, that kind of thing our children would now just look with confusion and horror on the idea that we would collect these large books that would obsolete immediately and we would store the information there. I can even recall when World Book used to send out these stickers every year and then you'd be—you'd create these large addendums of information, and it would say, go look here for more information on this. And, of course, when those first Encarta CD-ROMs came out and said, you know, you could have your whole encyclopedia right here on this CD-ROM, we thought we had hit the jackpot. We thought this was incredible.

And we understand that in so many areas of our lives, even when we look back a few short years how cellphones and smart phones have changed the way we work, even in this place, Mr. Speaker, the way we work in this place because of the advent of technologies and the pace at which new technologies continue to be introduced and make a difference in our life. It's actually—it's shocking and it's frightening sometimes. We understand in many cases that kind of technology is designed to make our lives easier; sometimes that's the case, sometimes it's not. I understand that the age of computers were supposed to make printing of paper unnecessary. If my—if the top of my desk is any indication, that experiment failed badly. I find that I still use electronic means, but also paper means to do business and to read.

But as much as the technologies have created advantages to us and they have sped up the pace of society in doing many of the things we used to do, it has also raised important questions. Technologies have raised questions about how we store data, how we appropriately safeguard the data that has been entrusted by individuals to government, to business, to industry, to other sources. And it probably—it is probably accurate to say that many people have had a very naive sense of satisfaction in the past that, oh, yes, these records were being safeguarded. I think more and more we see in the media, we hear the debate about where technologies intersect with ethics. We understand that there are important questions to ask and there are important protections

to put in place to make sure that the information isn't out there.

And that's why I appreciate the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) bringing this bill out today and reintroducing it, reintroducing this same bill that was originally introduced in November of 2004. And I appreciated the comments that he put on the record this morning with respect to the necessity to safeguard. And he mentioned that once information is on the public record you cannot claw it back. Once it's out there you cannot claw it back. That's why it's important to have constraints placed upon government and placed upon industry and business and a framework—a framework—for understanding what is an appropriate way to store and what is not.

But more than that, Mr. Speaker, also, the public needs to have a far greater sense of assurance that when something has happened that they will be notified. And I'm just reading in the bill this morning and I noticed that just in the explanatory note it sets out that this bill would establish a duty for those organizations to notify individuals who may be affected when the personal information the organization has collected is lost, stolen and—or compromised, and that is critical.

*(10:30)

And it makes me think about an issue that came into the media about, probably a year or two ago, it had to do with a family whose daughter had been diagnosed with cancer and they were receiving treatment from CancerCare Manitoba. And in the middle of what is a tremendously difficult battle for any family to fight, to have a child with cancer and going through the system, it became known to the mother of that child that the system that had been charged with collecting and safeguarding her daughter's medical information had failed to protect that information. And it was really troubling to find out how the information—how it came to this mother's knowledge that the system had been breached and that, actually, people within the system had gone snooping for and gained access to her daughter's medical records.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Ombudsman reported—or investigated the situation. The Ombudsman made a report. I'm being careful not to disclose information about identity because that was never released, but I think what this infor—what this situation told us is that Manitoba Health and, indeed, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) owed a far

greater sense of safety to this family that they did not follow up on. I've looked and found out that in other jurisdictions across Canada, other jurisdictions have done far more—not just to disclose to an individual when their information might have been compromised, but then to actually issue sanctions against the individual responsible, the perpetrator, who, without authorization, accessed this information. And I found some headlines—this one was posted in 2011, and it have—it had to do with a Newfoundland situation. The title is: Worker sacked for looking at health files.

There's another one that's from Labrador-Grenfell here. It says: Two remaining health boards confirm privacy breaches. And there's a number of headlines I brought in that talk about what should happen when there has been a breach of privacy, and I think that this government has been far too slow to react, far too slow to get going in the right direction.

Only when this situation with this woman and her child at CancerCare Manitoba came to light because of that woman's hard work, her perseverance, her personal agenda that she set out to make sure other families would not be victimized in the same way—it was her legwork; it was her research that resulted in the Ombudsman's report which resulted in the minister's final statement that, yes, she needed to plug these holes.

Mr. Speaker, we need far more in terms of leadership in this Province, and as my colleague has pointed out, this government's own legislation on protecting privacy stopped far too short. It stopped short of actually creating sanctions and real penalties, that would do what? That would act as a deterrent; that would send a message that it's not appropriate, it's not ethical, but it's also indictable, that you can be—maybe you can be—maybe there'll be action with your employer; maybe you could be sanctioned; maybe you could be penalized; maybe you could be released from your employment. And into the private sector, as well, there should be clear penalties set out.

Mr. Speaker, wherever there is an opportunity, there's going to be activity. And when we talk about these technologies and breaches, we understand we're talking about far more than just the inadvertent release of information. We're talking about groups and gangs and things like that that would have a vested interest, that there'd be money involved, that they could use this information for their own gain. And we need to never lose sight of that.

I know my colleague has already put on to the record comments about the fact that we need these protections for individuals. I even think about the fact that even this last weekend, the ADTE health system was down at the Health Sciences Centre, and it makes me wonder what kind of—what was all down? Was the system itself down, or were the safeguards and protections around that information down? And, Mr. Speaker, it raises some very, very troubling questions that we need answers for.

I thank the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) for introducing this very necessary piece of informa—piece of legislation. I welcome the comments coming from the other side. We look forward to their support. We would like to see this bill passed for the protection of Manitobans.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of speaking to this particular piece of legislation. Unfortunately, as is often the case, the members opposite have confused some of the issues and have got some of the information wrong. I don't know what the level of research is on that side, but, gosh, in the last few weeks there's been so many wrong numbers—so many wrong numbers put on by members opposite, so many files confused. It's extraordinary, and I hope they can get their research act together in order to properly deal with some of these issues, because it's almost embarrassing.

You know, even the numbers that are put out by members opposite with respect to costs of hydro even if—even when I provided numbers to the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) in Estimates with respect to the costs of—that he put on the record, and I gave him the accurate number, then yesterday again he put the inaccurate number on, and then he talked about a—he confused two different trust agreements.

You can't even answer a question because you don't know what he's talking about. And we see that on all the files the way they—particularly on the Hydro file, where they completely misunderstand the—how Hydro functions and the fact that our exports to the United States, particularly those on the spot market, are money—are profit to Hydro, because otherwise that energy would—that sits in the dams would spill over and go for naught.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite don't understand even how Hydro functions, so when it comes to complex issues like privacy legislation and legislation dealing with identity theft, as well intended as this effort is, there's some fundamental

issues that the members opposite don't understand. First, with respect to privacy, with respect to private companies and how the information applies, we fall under the jurisdiction, as the minister indicated, of the federal legislation. And there are jurisdictions that have put in place provincial legislation, but unless the provincial legislation is manifestively akin or likened similar to the federal legislation then you would have two sets of legislation applying to private information of commercial interests, which would result in confusion and contradiction and difficulties in applying the information. So, it's—we have chosen to go with the federal legislation that was proclaimed and put into effect in 2004—that is the PIPEDA.

And, as I said, it's—some provinces have chosen to put in place substantively different information, but having had—having dealt with commercial private interests that have wanted to come to this province, and having talked specifically with these companies, and said, would it be easier for you if we had provincial legislation, we were told no, in fact, it would be more complicated. And though the interests didn't particularly like the application of the federal legislation, they said, we'd rather just deal with one jurisdiction than two jurisdictions having similar or dissimilar legislation applying to commercial information. Mr. Speaker, that's actual, on-the-ground companies, of the many companies that come through that want to set up in Manitoba, I've had specific dealings on those issues and dealings with privacy and commercial lawyers respecting that kind of information.

Mr. Speaker, now, having said that, it would be—in Manitoba's interest if it were possible to have jurisdictional information that applied to commercial interests in Manitoba exclusively applied to Manitoba companies. That probably would allow us to attract more companies to Manitoba, but that would be fruitless because of the ubiquitous nature of information and where it's located and how it's connected internationally and otherwise. So, I—the members opposite are just frankly wrong in their assertions both from a legal standpoint and a practical standpoint as it applies to commercial information.

Now, I want to touch briefly on something that's pretty—that happens regularly. Mr. Speaker, again, I want to talk about research done by members opposite, which isn't very substantive. So often the information brought to this House is by how? Freedom of information. Now, when we came into

office I was health critic for seven or eight years. I couldn't find out, for instance, how many beds were in a hospital. That was private. There was nothing provided. FIPPA didn't apply. And the minister used to stand there and say, I don't have that information. In fact, we had a FIPPA about waiting lists, and we were told that there were no waiting lists. They didn't have the information.

* (10:40)

So when we came into power we extended FIPPA to 300 organizations, hospitals, schools, other entities, so the members opposite could have fodder for question period. Good heavens, if they didn't have that and maybe if they read the paper they might have questions. Even at that they get it wrong most of the time

Now, we apply that information, and part of being a mature government is putting information out and saying, yes, there's a critical incident here or there's a critical incident here. And members stand up, and say, oh, someone died in a hospital. Oh, blah, blah, blah. People never died when the Tories were in power. Oh, no, no one ever died when they were in power. Oh, blah, blah, blah, someone died, Mr. Speaker. Because we provide that information. And why do we provide that information? Because in the old days, the old Tory hide it, bury the dead. In the old days, the Tories didn't provide that information. They hide it, so no one knew.

You know, let me talk about an incident that—I'm glad the Health critic's listening. There was a person who was killed in a personal care home. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? They didn't even make it public. Do you know who told—made it public? I had my contacts phone me and say someone got murdered in a personal care home. I said, good heavens, I've been talking about that personal care home in the House—and you know what? They didn't even provide it; they didn't even provide a critical incident—they didn't do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we provide that information, we put it on the record, and we'll take the criticism, because that's the mature way of dealing with the public in government. Yes, we'll put that information out there. We'll put the waiting lists out there. We'll be judged by that information—we'll be judged by it.

When 12 babies were killed—or died in the hospital, they hid and covered it up. The mothers had to phone me at home to get that information out, and the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) knows

that because she was in the Legislature. They hid that information; we provide it publicly, Mr. Speaker.

So, forgive me, Mr. Speaker, if I get a little bit emotional about this particular issue, because day after day, members stand up on issues that they find out from FIPPA, and they stand up like this stuff has never happened before. Well, the information was never provided before. We've extended privacy—we've extended FIPPA to over 300 organizations that the member covered—the members opposite covered and hide—hide and hid.

So, they get a lot of questions for question period, and that's fine. That's what a democracy is all about: the ability to compare and contrast and to see if we're improving. And we're improving at—and you can only be accountable, Mr. Speaker, is if you provide the information. You can only be accountable if the information's provided, and that's why we've done it.

That's why when the members opposite talk about hallway medicine, when people used to wait for weeks and months in the hallway, when they started putting in institutional into the hallway, when the member for Charleswood toured with the premier of the day and had a picture in the Free Press of her touring with all the patients lined up in the hallway, we said we're going to start counting. And you know, we're not perfect, but we're 99 per cent better by comparison. That's the kind of information we provide.

And members opposite, who never made anything public, stand by and say, oh, no one died when we were in government. No one was—no, no, no, no. Of course, no one counted, Mr. Speaker. They didn't have the information. It wasn't extended to those entities. They couldn't even answer the questions.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, I want to take—I want to use this opportunity to point out that members opposite—and I think it's only fair and right that we've been the most open government in the history of this province. We've extended miss-privacy—we changed Cabinet documents that are—sealing. We've required ministerial expenses to be tabled and posted annually. We've provided—created a privacy adjudicator with the power to make binding orders, a new—a pendent—independent officer of the Legislature. We've worked on all these things, and I know now members—because I'm sure I've got them cranked up—they'll stand up and say how wonderful the '90s were or find some other way of

criticizing, but you know in your hearts—you know in your hearts and in your minds how bad things were. And we know how much better things are, and we know that we here will work every day for all Manitobans to make things better so that kids can grow up in a better and a happier society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): That was quite a rant from the member from Kildonan. It showed his insensitivity for the people that—who are neglected in the ERs and who are neglected in the health system.

It also shows that he has no respect for Manitobans and, I guess, Mr. Speaker, if we just go back a little bit, just prior to the election of 2011, when they walked out on the streets and promised that they wouldn't do this and they wouldn't do that—and I'll refer to them specifically—we won't raise taxes, we won't raise the PST and we have now fixed the health care that we had promised to fix 13 years ago for \$16 million in six months. Hasn't been able to do it, hallways are still full, and here we are expected to believe anything that he says when he stands up in this House. Manitobans don't believe him; why should we believe him? Totally insensitive to the poor people that have been neglected, and it continues to go on and on and on.

The other misleading information that Dave has put—I mean that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has put on the record is that they care. They care; they stand up and answer all the questions. That's not true, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that we have asked questions time and time again and the ministers wouldn't stand up. We've asked questions of the member for Kildonan and he hasn't been able to supply the answers, and, unfortunately, the Auditor General says that we have in this province—do more FIPPA's than any other province in Canada, that we have to do that because we can't get any answers from these individuals, the members across the way. That's unfortunate. That isn't open and transparency at all. It's not accountability.

And to see this member from Kildonan stand up after he introduced the enhanced drivers' licences with everyone's information on it and no protection—no protection. The first thing he did was he outsourced the drivers' licences from another province because he didn't trust his own people to do the job properly in Manitoba. I just forget now how many mistakes were on those and how much that cost the Province of Manitoba, but it did cost quite a bit because he wasn't able to proofread it properly

himself. The cards have a lot of information on it that's not protected. It's not protected because of the RFID. He didn't understand that these could be read from as far as 10 or 12 feet away. This bill actually addresses these types of situations.

In 2004, the bill that they brought forward might have been adequate in 2004. I don't know that. But the technology from 2004 'til today has outpaced the thought process of the member from Kildonan. He just has not been able to keep up with technology, and he's refusing today and so are the other members opposite—refusing to address what technology has done in the last—how many years that would be—nine years. Nine years, Mr. Speaker, technology has moved ahead so, so far ahead of members like the member from Kildonan, and it's unfortunate that they won't address it.

They won't listen to people that have said to them, and I'm going to suggest the Ombudsman has expressed concern about the use of technology. RFD chips can be read from a distance, enabling criminals who have purchased a simple scanner online to read information on chips. If the chip contains personal information or links the individual through information on a database, that person's privacy can be compromised, and I'd like to ask that member, because he was the member that was responsible for introducing the enhanced driver's licence, what he did—what he personally did to guarantee the safeties of all Manitobans.

And since he won't answer those questions, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker: he did nothing. He did nothing to protect the privacy of Manitobans, and it's a shame that he would take the opportunity to stand up in this House today and then belittle—belittle the people who have been mistreated or not treated in our health-care system. That's a shame.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm pleased to put on a few words on the record regarding Bill 211, and I can tell you, you know, I listen carefully to the members of the Conservative Party address this bill and, in fact, the last two speakers said not one single word, not even one word about what this bill is actually about.

* (10:50)

This bill deals with the private sector, and every single word in the speeches of the last two members dealt with the government, with the public sector. So clearly they don't even know what the bill is about.

The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) clearly has no clue about anything to do with this bill. As a matter of fact, as the introducer of the bill indicated, this bill was brought in one of his—by one of his predecessors many, many elections ago: November 2004. Now, if you think back to November 2004, you know, that was just months before the federal PIPEDA laws came into effect. And if you recall back to those days, the federal government passed the PIPEDA legislation and they gave the provinces—*[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, I can hardly hear myself speak. The member from Emerson and the other members are howling.

But, Mr. Speaker, the federal government passed the legislation, gave the provinces a phase-in period, gave them a limited period running out January 1st, 2004, to bring in their own information—their own legislation. And we in the Province of Manitoba decided at that time that we did not want to create confusion and excessive regulation because this particular legislation applies to the private sector. And if we were to bring in our own legislation, then businesses in Manitoba would have to deal with not one, but two pieces of legislation dealing with privacy.

And so we were trying to eliminate red tape. We have a leader—we have a Leader of the Opposition who, clearly, is not even in control of his own caucus because he wants to reduce red tape. He claims that he did when he was in government many years ago in 2005. He claims he eliminated 3,000 pages of red tape. We looked at those figures. We can't find even one page that he's eliminated, and now, as Leader of the Opposition years later, not only does he not eliminate red tape, he actually wants to create red tape. He wants to add—he wants to—he has one of his members here, and maybe the member's a rogue member operating on his own. But he wants to add another 42 pages more red tape and further complicate matters for private businesses in Manitoba who are, I believe, reasonably happy still coping with the federal legislation. Any time governments bring in legislation there's a lead-in time to when people in—even in the industries become familiar with the regulations and the requirements.

It's been almost 10 years, and I would bet that there are a lot of small businesses in Manitoba, if we—if the members would take the time to actually canvass these business that they pretend to say they represent they would find that most small businesses aren't even familiar with the federal laws that have

been around 10 years and are probably violating, you know, sections of them. Now, what they want to do is saddle these small Manitoba—hard-working small Manitoba business with another hundred pages of regulations on top of all the federal regulations that they're still coming to grips with. Does that make any sense whatsoever?

And, clearly, they—you know, they lose some members after each election, and they pass around some bills and they give the bill to one of the new members, and the new member has no clue what it's all about. They give him some notes. They tell him to come into the Legislature and rant and rave at the government and, you know, if it's not in the bill, you just make it up. The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), his entire speech was just, you know, made up as he went along.

Now, I want to explain to the member for Emerson, give him a little bit of history about, you know, why identity theft has become such a problem in this country and the attempts that have been made by the governments, in fact, some of, you know, Conservative governments in the past, too, to deal with the issue.

In Ontario, in 1990, when Bob Rae was the premier, the government-of-the-day started to look into smart cards. And they were concerned about health cards. And they found that there were, like, you know, 8 million people in Ontario but there were 9 million health cards. So they start to do a study in Fort Frances, Ontario, and Windsor, Ontario, to see how many, you know, Americans were coming up and using the Canadian health-care system, to see how serious a problem it was. That's what motive—was the motivating factor for looking into the smart card system.

Now, it wasn't until Mike Harris became the premier, and you'd think you'd—the member for Emerson, rather than baying at the moon here and chirping to my right, would actually, you know, give me a minute to explain what his cousin in Ontario, Mike Harris, did. Mike Harris and, you know, got together with the banks and the banks were looking at bringing in a smart card system. And it made sense that the Ontario government would partner with the banks and so they would do the rollout together.

The banks, Mr. Speaker, were prepared to pay the losses that they get through the credit card system at—it's just small change to them. They were paying out I don't know how many millions of dollars it was

at the time, but it was cheaper to pay the losses than it was to bring in a smart card system.

So what Mike Harris did was set up a building in Toronto—actually, I toured the building—and had a—put a lot of money into the program to come out with a smart card rollout to—along with the banks—to make it more difficult for people to have their identities compromised.

And, you know, at the end of the day, they spent, you know, millions of dollars, sort of like SmartHealth Manitoba when the Filmon government was in power. They spent all this money, the program went over budget, it was out of control and at the end of the day even the banks are still, all these years later, still in the process of rolling out the smart cards that we have.

So we are not, you know, we are not opposed to smart cards and the rollout but, you know, we have to have a perspective here. And what this opposition is doing is rather than, you know, thinking about what it should be doing and bringing in bills and criticizing the government, it seems like it's, just, throw things at the government. You know, it's take bills that are, like, 10 years old, that—not even understanding what the bills are even about, and then getting—you know, why they aren't ruled out of order on relevance is just beyond me because, you know, normally in this kind of a theatre, you know, the members are brought to order when there is absolutely no reference whatsoever to be on a bill.

And that's what I got from the member for Emerson. Not one word. I'm looking for the one word that would bring him back to Bill 211 and what the bill was about.

So this government is at the forefront of consumer legislation for many, many years. We have rules that deal with the consumer's liability if a credit card is lost or stolen. We will be willing to take any action necessary to protect the privacy of people. But we are not going to bring in senseless legislation that duplicates and creates more red tape, just because they think it's a good idea and suits their purpose in the Legislature at this time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, could you seek leave of the House not to see the clock until this bill has come to a vote?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock until this matter has been—question's been put to the House?

Some Honourable Members: Sure.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

I believe the honourable member for Burrows was on her feet to speak to the bill.

* (11:00)

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the honourable member on her feet to speak to the bill?

Ms. Wight: Yes. Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows will have 10 minutes available to her to speak to this matter.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m.—and prior to moving to resolutions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today—I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from the Winnipeg Adult EAL program 64 adult English as an additional language students under the direction of Chris Bertram. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this morning.

Mr. Speaker: So the hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private member's resolution, and the resolution under consideration this morning is the one sponsored by the honourable member for St. James, titled "Class Size Initiatives".

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 13—Class Size Initiatives

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I moved, seconded by the member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun),

WHEREAS helping our kids succeed starts with quality education in the early years; and

WHEREAS smaller class sizes improve the quality of education in our province because students perform better with more one-on-one attention from teachers; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has committed to ensuring that Manitoba students receive these benefits through its Class Size Initiative, which will cap the number of students in kindergarten to Grade 3 classes by 2017; and

WHEREAS the initiative is being implemented in partnership with teachers, parent councils, school boards, superintendents and school business officials; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is providing funding to schools to hire more teachers and build more classroom space, including additional funding for \$4 million in 2013-14, bringing total funding to \$7 million this year; and

WHEREAS the cuts and freezes to school funding by the previous government led to teacher layoffs and terminations and increased class sizes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend those working in the education system for their dedication to reducing class sizes for Manitoba's students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to continue to support such initiatives in order to ensure the future success of our students.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for St. James, seconded by the honourable member for Rossmere,

WHEREAS our kids succeed—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed in today's Order Paper? [Agreed]

WHEREAS helping our kids succeed starts with quality education in the early years; and

WHEREAS smaller class sizes improve the quality of education in our province because students perform better with more one on one attention from teachers; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has committed to ensuring that Manitoba students receive these benefits through its Class Sizes Initiative, which will cap the number of students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 classes by 2017; and

WHEREAS the Initiative is being implemented in partnership with teachers, parent councils, school boards, superintendents and school business officials; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is providing funding to schools to hire more teachers and build more classroom space, including additional funding of \$4 million in 2013-14, bringing total funding to \$7 million this year; and

WHEREAS the cuts and freezes to school funding by the previous government led to teacher layoffs and terminations, and increased class sizes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend those working in the education system for their dedication to reducing class sizes for Manitoba's students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to continue to support such initiatives in order to ensure the future success of our students.

Ms. Crothers: I rise today to speak in support of the Class Size Initiative resolution.

You've heard it before on this side of the House that education is the equalizer and nothing is more important to our children's future success than education, and this starts with education in the early years. We are committed to ensuring that our children have access to quality education through this initiative and we are ensuring that we work with schools to successfully implement the Class Size Initiative by co-operating with schools and supporting them through this transition.

As someone who worked previously in a learning environment, I can draw from my own experience to attest to the positive impact that a student gets from more one-on-one attention from an instructor or teacher. While our teachers are well trained and able to give their best to larger groups of children, it is naturally more challenging to be able to provide as much of this one-on-one attention as may be needed when you're working with a larger group.

In 2011 we announced that we would begin an initiative to cap the number of students in

kindergarten to grade 3 classes, 20 students by September 2017. This initiative was developed in partnership with the Class Size Oversight Committee. That included representatives from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, Manitoba School Boards Association, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents and Manitoba Association of School Business Officials. In short, we're working with other groups that are invested in the impact that this initiative will have.

The committee continues to provide valuable advice as we move forward, and it is just this kind of collaboration that allows us to shape and implement changes in a practical, beneficial way. And we are supporting our schools and helping them implement this initiative by providing class-size funding in the amount of \$3 million to all school divisions to hire new teachers and enhance learning through staff professional development. Eighty-three new teachers were hired in 31 school divisions to reduce class sizes and we have committed \$85 million to build more class space and are currently working on a plan for the investment in partnership with the oversight committee.

The kindergarten to grade 3 Class Size Initiative complements other early learning and child-care initiatives that we have. We are implementing pieces that, when placed side by side, fit together, allowing for transition with support and oversight that will allow, for example, a pregnant woman to get the care she needs to deliver a healthy child, and that child will then be cared by family, in whatever shape that may be, that can access supports they may need to be able to meet that child's needs, whether that is through parenting courses, social programs or a need for training for employment purposes for the parents, so that this child can be raised in the best environment possible by that family. These pieces would continue to connect through child-care services and then into the early years at school where the class size reductions would allow the teacher to have more focus time with each child, to detect areas where further support might be required, or where progress might be experienced more fully by a child.

Some of these investments that we are piecing together are, for example, the play-based early childhood curriculum that we have, as well as programs and resources that give our children the best start. The provincial legislation now requires child-care centres to be included in schools whenever a new school is being constructed or is undertaking

major renovations. And we have committed to also making sure that schools have the classroom space they need to implement the initiative—by also requiring that classroom space—the initiative cannot take away from child-care facilities—sorry. These are important pieces that all work together. Sorry, I should have numbered those.

I can clearly recall learning to read myself. I was an extremely shy child and found the act of struggling to read in front of my peers, even at the young age of 5, was excruciating. I was asked to work through some words, as were other children, but couldn't bring myself to say them. And I can clearly remember the book that was used. I'm dating myself here but, it involved a red Labrador named—retriever named Sandy, and a little boy and girl whose names I believe were Jimmy and Irene. I don't know if anybody else had to learn with that book.

But times have changed. While my lack of confidence got me into the slow starter group, which is what they did back then in Ontario, what I really need—needed was a little extra time and attention to help me get those first few steps down pat, and to help me build my confidence, so that I could continue with more self-assurance. I know this is the case because within a year or two I became a voracious reader that would happily spend a Saturday morning in bed reading instead of watching cartoons or running around outside. I wish I could do that today.

However, I believe that this initiative is designed to make sure that children who need a little extra help are going to get it early, so that they can move forward in a more confident fashion and find their footing earlier.

In closing, I'd like to say that we're building for our children's success, and we're doing this by working with parents, with school divisions, with principals and teachers, to find ways to help Manitoban children experience their ability to build on the growth that they would get from experiencing confidence and, ultimately, experiencing successful learning.

On this side of the House, we believe that success starts early. It's built one step at a time, and that's what we've been doing with many of our programs. We're creating a pathway to exceptional learning opportunities and independence that is accessible for all Manitoban children. This is part, an important part, of what will ensure the success of our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

A pleasure to speak to this resolution this morning, Mr. Speaker, here in the House. I want to agree with, certainly, part of the resolution, in particular about the great teachers and professionals that we have in our schools in the education system. I've had the opportunity in this House to talk for a few hours, actually, and I'll probably have the opportunity to speak for a few hours more about how I appreciate the teachers in the education system, have a new appreciation, having a son in the public school system and dealing with the great teachers in that school, and some of the great professionals in that school as well.

* (11:10)

So we certainly agree with this portion of the resolution that commends those who are in the education system for the great work that they do with our students, with our young people. We know that's not easy work, but it is important work. We know that they are shaping the minds of our future—just of our future. They're ensuring that they will be ready to be the next leaders of Manitoba. And so, whether it's the teachers of today who we want to give credit and recognition to or the teachers of yesterday, the retired teachers, and they're represented by the Retired Teachers' Association, we want to thank them, as well, because they've contributed to what Manitoba is today, to the leaders that we have, not contained within this Chamber necessarily or exclusively but really throughout Manitoba, whether that's in business and social services, in health care and in a lot of other fields. So we commend them on this morning, and that's an important part of this resolution.

I was disappointed, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that the resolution didn't speak more to the challenges that are happening. Unfortunately, it's a government that could probably strain an arm patting themselves on the back here in the Legislature. I know that there are those in the education system, and I would include parents within that, who would say that there are many challenges within education, whether that's results that students are getting or different challenges in the education system, and this resolution completely ignores that. It's as though if we were to pass this resolution that we'd be sending a signal to those in the community, in the education field and beyond, the parents that it was mission

accomplished that we could hang up the mission accomplished sign and there wasn't anything more to do. [*interjection*] That seems to be the opinion of the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), who seems to feel that everything is rosy and as good as it could possibly be. And I want to—because I know he's an honourable fellow, I want to educate him on a few different things that we've come across when we look at how Manitoba does compared to other jurisdictions in terms of outcomes within the education system.

We wouldn't have to look much further than the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program, Mr. Speaker, which produces a report, it looks across Canada, to see how we rank in terms of educational outcomes. We see that in the most recent report that Manitoba comes in last in issues of proficiency when we talk about math scores. Now, that's something that is important to talk about, and I'm not sure why this was absent from the mover's speech. I'm sure that if she had an additional four minutes to speak she may have wanted to include that and wasn't able to for whatever reason. But I'm sure had she been given the time or taken the time she would have included the fact that Manitoba, compared to other provinces, our students don't do well when it comes to math outcomes, and that's a concern. That's a challenge that the government doesn't seem to want to address, doesn't want to seem to take on, and that's unfortunate.

Because when I talk to those who are in the post-secondary system, Mr. Speaker, they continue to say that the students who are coming into the post-secondary system, many of them, don't have the basic skills to do well and to succeed in the post-secondary education system. Now, not every student who leaves our public school system, our K to 12, or in the independent schools, will go on to post-secondary education. That's not everybody's goal, and people have the choices to do other things, as they should, but, those who want to go on to higher education, we're finding more and more from those who are in those institutions that those who are coming out of the Manitoba school system don't have the skills that they need to do well.

And there's either a lot of uptake happening within the—from the professors that are having to try to bring people up to speed in terms of what they consider to be the standard they should be at coming into entry level in university or college or we see a high dropout rate. And, certainly, when I talk to people in some of the colleges they're concerned

about the initial dropout rate that they see within that first year. Now, some of that could be attributed to the fact that it's a different lifestyle, that you have different—it's a different time. Maybe, ultimately, some students go into it and realize it's not exactly for them, but it certainly doesn't attest to why the rate is as high as it is. There's obviously an issue of students not entirely being ready for that on an academic level, and that was missing from the member's comments.

I wouldn't want to rely specifically just on one report, so I'll turn to the PISA report, the Program for International Student Assessment, Mr. Speaker. When you look at that particular report it shows that from 2000 to 2009 we've had a significant decrease in the outcomes and the standards of our students within the math performance index. We also see that within the science performance index there's been a significant decline from 2006 to 2009 in terms of how our students do rank to other students in, not just the province, but around the world. So this was missing from the member's comments, the member's resolution.

Now, maybe we could have a friendly amendment come forward and we could insert within the resolution the challenges that exist within the education system so people would know that the government just simply isn't patting themselves on the back. We could indicate how poor our math assessments are compared to other jurisdictions and provinces. We could indicate how poor our outcomes are compared to other provinces and jurisdictions on science, and then we could strive to improve, because, ultimately, we all want to see that. We want to ensure that when our kids, if they choose to go to post-secondary education or go into a trade, that they succeed and they do well and they have the skills coming out of the public education system.

Unfortunately, because this government is more concerned about inputs in terms of dollars going in and not as concerned about output in terms of performance, that doesn't happen. How the minister measures success in education is simply by dollar figures, how much money is going into the system. That's her measurement of success. It's all she speaks of in the House, Mr. Speaker, in terms of a measurement of success, is the amount of money that is going in. But we don't hear, unfortunately, are—how they're addressing the fact that we're not doing well compared to other provinces or jurisdictions when it comes to math, science, literacy and other skills. Those are the sort of things that we want the

government to address and that, frankly, it's not just us that want the government to address; that's what parents want. When I talk to other parents, whether it's in my son's school or parents across the province, they say ultimately the true measure of education isn't how much is being spent, it's what's being learnt by their kids. And I think that most parents have the best interests of their kids at heart and they want their kids to succeed within the school system. So they don't walk around saying—and this will come as a surprise to members opposite—they don't walk around saying, well, the government is pouring X amount of dollars into this, that, or the other thing.

They're saying, why are we not getting the outcome that we want or the support that we want for our children on this or that? In fact, we have many different students who need special support who don't get that special support within our school system. This is a government that once passed legislation that said that all students were entitled to an appropriate education, and yet they don't provide and ensure that there is the additional support for those individuals because, ultimately, for the government, it's about how much money is flowing into the system, not about what they're getting for that money.

So we're concerned from that perspective, and I would hope that perhaps if we sat down with the member we could add those concerns into this resolution about the fact there is not outcomes, about the fact that the government simply is talking about input in terms of money, but not outputs in terms of how our kids are doing and how they're doing in post-secondary education or how they're doing in other aspects of life, Mr. Speaker. We could consider that a friendly amendment, and perhaps this resolution could pass today.

But, ultimately, we want the government to focus on what's important and what parents say that's important, in fact, what teachers say what's important, what's important to those who are in the education system and who have an interest in the education system as how are our kids doing, how are they doing compared to other jurisdictions, how are they doing within their individual schools, so that when they leave the schools and they leave grade 12 they have a full set of options. If they choose to go to post-secondary education, they can do that and they can do well and they can succeed. If they choose to do something else, they have the skills to do something else, because it's about equipping our kids with those skills, not simply about pouring money

into an education system and not being worried at all about the results.

So I leave that as a suggestion to the member who brought forward this particular resolution. She may want to have discussions with us about these amendments. She probably sees the wisdom of this. That's probably why she left additional time so we could bring forward these suggestions, and I look forward to having those amendments put forward in the resolution.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I'm certainly pleased to have the opportunity to put some comments on the record in regards to the MLA for St. James' private member's resolution, and I'm certainly pleased to be able to put a few comments on the record after the MLA for Steinbach spoke. I see that he's not interested in having that dialogue or discussion in the House, which is unfortunate, particularly after he put so many comments on the record in regards to the previous speaker.

* (11:20)

I want to just congratulate our education partners in regards to the work that they have done with us in regards to the Class Size Initiative that we announced just prior to the last election campaign. This was a very, very important announcement for us, because we all know that early intervention is absolutely critical for young people in our public education system. And we know that reducing class sizes has been experienced by other jurisdictions, particularly Ontario, who, by the way, have done very, very well on their PISA and their PCAP scores, and we have kind of taken a page out of their book in regards to what they experienced in Ontario in regards to reducing their class sizes. And we have made two announcements since we announced initially our Class Size Initiative and strategy in regards to providing funding to school divisions to reduce their class sizes.

Now, I know the MLA for Steinbach seemed very concerned about the fact that we spend money on our public education system, and I'm quite sure, Mr. Speaker, that—you know, I find it quite interesting that he thinks that that is a problem. And I'm sure he thinks it is, because we know what happened in the previous government when they were in power—the five years of funding cuts that went on and on and on and the reduction in teachers.

On this side of the House, we believe that we need more teachers in the classroom and we believe that we need to have a cap size of 20 students in that classroom, because that's critical to our young people having more time with teachers and having the opportunity to succeed. And I also know that we have made huge progress in the first two years of our Class Size Initiative. We know that students in smaller classes, they perform better, because, of course, teachers have more time to plan lessons, students have more ability to participate and get individual attention. And, of course, these are the core skills, their reading, their writing and their math skills, if they are falling behind and they have more of that one-on-one time with the teachers that's of course a real benefit. The other thing that we know—it's not just about the teachers at the front of the room; it is also about professional development. And we are working with our oversight committee to use some of that money, as well, for teachers, because professional development is so important, particularly in the early years. Because there is a lot—there are a lot of resources and there is a lot of material—out there, and it's an opportunity for our teachers to look at the latest pedagogy and know what the latest interventions can be for young people that may be slipping behind. And we know that it's important to get them up to grade level very, very quickly so that they can succeed.

In the first year of our funding announcement we made a \$3-million announcement, and then this last year we included another \$4 million. So we're up to \$7 million of funding that we have been distributing to our school divisions across this province so that they can reduce their class sizes. And we're doing that, once again, Mr. Speaker, in consultation and dialogue with our oversight committee that has all of our education partners on it, and I think it's a testament to our government that we work with our education partners, unlike what happened in the previous government.

In the first year—in the last couple of years with this additional funding, there are 69 full-time teaching positions in school divisions across this province, and we know, Mr. Speaker, that this is incredible progress that we're making. We have seen a 20 per cent reduction in the number of kindergarten to grade 3 classes with 24 or more students, and that is very, very important to us. We've also seen an 11 per cent increase in the number of kindergarten to grade 3 classes with 23 students or less and a 13.7 per cent increase in the

number of kindergarten to grade 3 classes that have 20 students or less. And we are going to continue to invest in our children and in the future prosperity of our province with this Class Size Initiative, because we know that early intervention in the early years gives our—the youngest children in our classes the early start that they need to succeed in their life and in school.

I do want to mention that the MLA for Steinbach was mentioning math, and I hope he was able to hear the CB—the interview on CJOB the other morning with Dr. Gerald Farthing, my deputy minister, and Anna Stokke and Robert Craigen. They—we have released the math document. Officials in my department have been working hard with our math consultants and partners, in regards to looking at the WNCP math curriculum that came out a few years ago, and there were some problems with that. That became clear to us. And I want to thank Anna Stokke for saying, on CJOB radio, that she really appreciates that our government and the officials in my department took those issues and those concerns that they were raising very, very seriously. And she is very pleased with the document that has been produced in consultation and in dialogue with our education partners and stakeholders.

I'd also like to mention, in science, we are—we have—we are—we've rolled out a science strategy here, in the province of Manitoba. And we are renovating science labs all across this province right now, because we know young people cannot participate in the global economy unless they have some of the best state-of-the-art science labs in this province.

And I do want to remind the MLA for Steinbach, who is the Education critic, that our grad rates have skyrocketed in the last 10 years. They have increased substantially. And there is absolutely no question that that is a testament to the work that we have done in our public education system because, quite frankly, we believe that education is absolutely critical.

We believe that young people, if they get an education, they can go on to participate in our society and participate in our economy, regardless of their previous background, regardless of their socio-economic status. Education is the equalizer. And we believe in our public education system, and we believe in working with our partners. And this is a prime example, a Class Size Initiative in reducing our class sizes, of how we can make a public

education system even more meaningful for our youngest people.

And I'm sorry that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was in Selkirk, you know, doesn't agree with us. He said, you know, that he didn't believe that class size was an appropriate strategy for our young people in our public education system. And he talked about off-loading onto school divisions, and we're really not sure what he was talking about. Perhaps someone across the way could expand on that. We'd like to know more about that because I have not had one school division come to me and talk to me about this.

In fact, yesterday I was at the Manitoba School Boards Association, meeting with the executive of the Manitoba School Boards Association, and that executive has people on it, representation from every region of this province, and we had a conversation about class size, the initiative, and how pleased they are with it. And we also talked about the investment that we are going to be making in capital across this province, so that we have the facilities and the space.

And, of course, we made a great announcement last week in Brandon, at a school in Brandon where we're building a new gymnasium, and the old gymnasium is going to be refurbished into class sizes for our youngest students. So talk about a win-win-win. Mr. Speaker, we're going to have a new gymnasium—young people are going to be fit, learning, healthier young people—and at the same time, the old gymnasium, they're going to turn it into class sizes for our youngest students.

So this is very, very exciting, and I just wanted to make sure that the MLA from Brandon across the way knew about it because this is part of our investing in our young—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak this morning on this resolution about the class size cap in Manitoba and put some comments in the record, and I thank my colleague, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), for speaking to this motion, as well, and putting words on the record.

* (11:30)

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years we have seen that this government has concerned itself with a—they got a preoccupation, it seems, with the

idea of uniformity, that somehow if everything looks the same, that that is a—that has a lot of merit. And there is some merit in uniformity, but I think that they've been overly occupied with the idea of uniformity, and it seems to apply in a lot of areas of initiative that this Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) has brought forward.

I think about the report card format, and a while back this minister brought in a new report card, and it seemed to be that the major idea behind it, that the principal attraction that she had with this document is that it would be the same. And I'm not sure exactly why it is that that held so much promise for her, but when you look at what school divisions were already doing across the province of Manitoba, you see that school divisions were making sure that their reporting procedures were appropriate, that they contained good information for students and for their parents and their caregivers, that they were understandable, that they were clear—and they were doing a lot of that work.

But, no, the Minister of Education brought in this new report card format and she heralded it as being something that would have—it would be all the same across Manitoba. And, actually, what we find now is that it doesn't contain as much useful information as it possibly could, and across the province what we actually find is that teachers are having to go back to spreadsheets and prepare those and bring them into reports be—report card settings, because the report card format itself lacks information that you need to have in order to have an appropriate and well-rounded conversation.

That same preoccupation with uniformity applies when the minister talked about the TIG program. There would be this one tax incentive grant that would go to all school divisions. The only problem is that the formula to work that out was confusing. It ended up being the case that some school divisions were eligible for it and some weren't, but she wanted that one TIG 'accry'—applied across the board to all school divisions.

As a matter of fact, what ended up happening is because some school divisions would receive it and some wouldn't, and the criteria about who could actually receive it kept changing, well, then the minister had to make sure that there were some fancy equalization payments being made to those school divisions that weren't receiving it. The trouble, of course, the whole way along, is the fact that it all amounted to an operation that would fund school

divisions outside of the formula, and that creates trouble. But then, I guess, when it all came down, the minister realized, well, even though she wanted to have that uniform approach, she decided to abandon it. The only problem is, along the way, as she was abandoning the approach, well, she decided to entrench that funding of the TIG into a school division's base funding. The problem with that, of course, was that it left some school divisions with more and some with less, and it's been a bit of a mess.

Well, we see the same kind of principle of uniformity here with the minister's—how she progresses on the issue of the class size cap. And I want to make sure that it's clear that all of us in this Chamber and all of us in Manitoba want students to succeed. We want them to do the very best that they can. We want school to be a place in which they learn, that they gain confidence, that they have an understanding of their world, that they have skills that they can take forward into their life, that it's an important springboard for them to go on to other pursuits, whether they go to university or to a college, whether they move into a trade. Whatever they decide to do, we want them to have the skills and the abilities that they need to go forward. That is not in dispute, and neither is value for money in dispute. This minister says, well, it seems like the—this side of the House is against spending on education. Nothing could be farther from the truth, but I think this minister has to answer for her record. I believe, at this point in time, she—that Manitoba is the jurisdiction that spends the most money per pupil on education, and yet we don't find that we have results that are commensurate with that level of funding and that degree of investment.

So, really, Mr. Speaker, we need to understand at the start that investing means value for money. It doesn't just mean throwing money at whatever. It means careful investments in activities and a constant ability to measure again what you're investing in and saying, is this working, could we do this better. And that's the kind of approach we wish the minister would have taken with respect to the class size cap, to, first of all, acknowledge all of the good work that is going on in Manitoba schools, led by school divisions driving down the number of pupils in the classroom.

But, again, the problem with the approach of the minister is that, even though she really values the uniform approach, all school divisions are not created equally in this province and all school

divisions will not implement this kind of strategy with the same measure of success, because school divisions are dealing with great differences in terms of immigration in their communities. Some school divisions are declining in enrolment; others in places like Brandon and Portage la Prairie and Steinbach and Winkler and Morden and some areas of the city of Winnipeg find that enrolment is growing and growing. Now, for those school divisions, implementing a class size cap is a whole other kind of calculation than school divisions where you have static enrolment or maybe declining enrolment. It becomes much easier for a school division to find—to be able to implement this successfully if they have no upward movement in the number of students.

I can tell you, in the area that I represent, Morden-Winkler and the rural municipality of Stanley have seen a combined growth rate, according to Stats Canada, of 21.7 per cent over the last five years. That is enormous growth, and that kind of growth is welcome because it feeds very important industries and ag industries. Employers are looking for workers, but it's also—it creates, of course, a challenge for school divisions that need a commitment from government to understand, to recognize that growth and to reconcile it by building new schools. It took a long, long time for this government to get interested in building schools in southern Manitoba.

As a matter of fact, I believe it was finally aerial photographs taken of Garden Valley Collegiate that were sent to the media that finally shamed this government into saying, oh, my goodness, that number of portable huts in that community, it looked like some kind of refugee camp from the air. And, finally, we were able to focus the attention and saying, yes, it is exactly as school divisions have been saying for a long time, which is this is not sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, this whole preoccupation with uniformity means that the minister is not calculating in her costs what she measures of the cost of this enterprise, the true cost of what it would mean to growing communities to get this job done. And it—there is a very, very good chance that this kind of initiative could amount to communities, could amount to school divisions having to pick up the costs that are left behind. The minister has said, this is what I will allocate for this thing, and then she tells school divisions, now go out and get it done. And that raises question marks for school divisions and parent councils and communities, saying, well,

we have to increase our taxes in order to get this done.

Some of the challenges, Mr. Speaker, include things like when the minister says, well, there'll be—you must get down to 20 students. And we know that right now the average number of students in K to 3 classrooms is 23. Well, that means, by doing a little mathematics, that for every seven classrooms that a school division has that are operating at that average of 23 students per class, it means another classroom has to be built. And some very, very honest questions need to be answered by this minister. Those questions include things like, is this money only going to be to provide teachers? Are we going to build classrooms? Are we going to build schools or are we going to build more portable huts? And should we, in fact, be looking at, then, whenever we get to a certain threshold or cross a threshold, should we be actually building new schools? And the minister has been silent on a lot of these issues. She hasn't actually indicated the strategy.

Mr. Speaker, in the small amount of time that I have remaining, this minister today referenced the experience of Ontario, and in Ontario, I would want to remind the members in this House that Ontario, who made this whole idea of the class size cap a key promise and went about trying to implement it, we know that the Drummond report came back a year ago and said that they—that the whole class size cap initiative showed little statistically significant impact on learning, and, of course, those jurisdictions were really paying attention to issues like literacy and standardized testing and publishing of results. There is clearly much more work to be done here, more questions than answers, and I would welcome the comments of my colleagues as we continue to talk about this resolution.

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today to speak in support of this resolution that was brought forward by the member from St. James, and as a teacher, I can speak from personal experience and from observation how critical smaller class sizes are for learning.

* (11:40)

When I was, certainly, teaching, smaller class sizes had a lot of benefits, and in my time I certainly have had some very large classes of 35. And if you can imagine what teaching 35 students—grade 9s, art for a number of years—that was certainly quite challenging. So smaller class sizes are definitely something that are important to our students'

learning. To spend time with individual students, get to know them, build relationships, you can discover what their strengths are. You get to know them, and you can suggest how they can improve on their areas where they do need support. Smaller class sizes allowed me to discern the best learning styles for students. And in those classes of 35, I can tell you that it was definitely a challenge to try to make the classes very interesting and to meet the needs of all 35 students in that class.

So, I'm very proud to be part of a government that is recognizing that, especially the early years, small class sizes are absolutely critical. The early years research has shown this—are absolutely the most important years in developing, learning, as well as brain development. And as teachers, and I know I share this with a number of my colleagues on our side—that the Manitoba Teachers' Society and certainly the Canadian Teachers' Federation have been active for many, many years in advocating the need for smaller class sizes. And it harkens back to the 1990s, where I along with many of our teacher associations were very active in bringing forward initiatives to reduce class size, and we did this through putting together collective bargaining packages that included areas of class size and composition.

However, in doing so we encountered great resistance from the Conservative government of that time. And our theme from MTS at that time was our teaching environment is our students' learning environment, and I give credit to Jan Speelman, who was the president of MTS at that time. And, certainly, those words were very, very important in recognizing that class size and composition was very critical to the learning in the classes. We began intense negotiations, and class size and composition was certainly the key element of those bargaining days and supported by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and the research that they had conducted in terms of class size as well as composition. But as a number of the associations came closer to arbitration, which is certainly something that brings fear to the hearts of school divisions, and certainly it did to the government at that time, the outcome ended up being that legislation was brought forward. And I believe it was Bill 72 that stripped our collective bargaining rights and removed the ability for us to consider anything beyond salary. And they dealt with that, as well, in terms of reducing teaching days, which we affectionately call Filmon Fridays, as well as

reducing funding over a period of a long number of years.

As well as the—as well as making sure that we could not bargain class size and with the cuts in funding, one of the things that began was just a real concern about the effect that this was having on programming and the ability for school divisions to provide an appropriate education. And there were certainly many people who were criticizing the government at that time. And I do recall, which was rather interesting—is that the punishment was meted not just against the teachers and the teacher associations, but certainly the students as well. Because for every day that a teacher was out of the classroom not teaching, that was also a day that students were not in the classroom learning. So, certainly, over that period of time students lost many days of the opportunity to learn.

One of the things that I do recall, and if I'm not mistaken, it was a caption in the Free Press at the time, was that with the concern with all of these cuts, that this was having a dramatic effect on special needs, on our students that were most vulnerable, and the Minister of Education at that time—if I'm quoting or paraphrasing, was something to the effect that, well, there's only so much room in the lifeboat. And that was certainly something that caused us great distress as we heard those words that—certainly indicating that, well, we can only do so much and if there are some students that are lost along the way, so be it.

So when our members announced that they were prepared to cut all the departments by 1 per cent, it certainly brought back those chilling remarks to me and recalling my days as part of the Manitoba Teachers' Society and the work that we did to try to reverse that and to bring about a balance again—into education.

So, I mean, for us it is absolutely imperative that education is an investment, that our students are not relegated to which ones make the lifeboat or not, but that everyone has access to education and quality education and appropriate education. So I'm very proud to have put a few words on the record in support of the member of St. James, and certainly that we will continue on this move to make sure that all of our students, especially in the early years, have the optimum education that they can have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today and put a few comments on the record. And I appreciate the member from St. James bringing in this resolution today because it is an important resolution in regards to class sizes initiatives. I know that myself, still being a teacher and have experienced—have had 17 years of experience in the education field, I take a look at this resolution and there's parts of it that, even though initiating class sizes and putting caps in place is definitely a good start, but that's not where it ends.

I was taking a look at the resolution, and on the very first page of the resolution we have: Whereas helping our kids succeed starts with quality education in the early years—absolutely correct. That's definitely a line that I know—I'm hoping that people on both sides of the House are in agreement to that. It absolutely starts at—it doesn't necessarily just start at early years, though, Mr. Speaker.

As I know the member from Steinbach and the member from Morden-Winkler had commented on, that there are many, many discussions with post-secondary leaders and educators that basically tell us on—in various meetings—myself as a past guidance counsellor, we would go to post-secondary institutions for counselling—counsellor updates and information days at the various post-secondary institutions, and they all say that a lot of the students who are coming out of the high schools in the province of Manitoba are lacking certain skills. And so now that we're in this position, Mr. Speaker, as far as a representative of the Legislature, it gives me great—it gave me great pleasure to come into the House and encouragement to actually work with the government side and tweak and work with some of their ideas and to help out our students within the province.

But it doesn't look like there's much willingness to have an open dialogue as the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) had alluded to in her comments that she put on the record in regards to this resolution as far as a dialogue goes. I know that there's not that openness on that side of the House. From what I've been seeing in the last year and a half, more and more of what I'm seeing is a top-down dictatorship, and there's no communication. It's more so this is the way it's going to be and, so, too bad, so sad.

With this resolution, again, class sizes, Mr. Speaker, is an important part of what can contribute

to the expansion of our kids in Manitoba, is their knowledge base. But it's not the only thing. I also see in the resolution, the second line, it says: Whereas smaller class sizes improve the quality of education in our province because students perform better with more one-on-one attention from teachers.

* (11:50)

Well, I know, Mr. Speaker, that that's true as far as an experiential philosophy. It just makes common sense. Now, is that the only thing? Is it only class sizes? I mean we on this side of the House recognize that the quality of teachers are required in the system to be successful. As such, the teachers need to be fully supported in order to address the unique or individual educational needs of their students.

But it's not only the teacher standpoint, Mr. Speaker, there's far more people within the education system that contributes to the well-being and the growth of our young people. And that is the—you know, in most communities in the province, it's the bus drivers who see them—see the kids when they first get going towards their education journey for the day, and they're—and the bus drivers are also the last people that the kids see at the end of the day.

We then talk about the teachers' aides. You know, I note that the minister and the member from St. James mentioned specifically about class sizes and the student-teacher ratio, as far as capping it to 20, but there's other people that are involved. The teachers' aides—I know from dealing with student services for quite a few years when I was teaching, Mr. Speaker, that the levels of funding in regards to the various degrees of special needs for the students—the hoops or the so-called—the red tape continues to change, and some of those bars in regards to meet the funding requirements, somehow keep getting a little bit higher.

So I know out our way in the newly amalgamated Sunrise School Division, which was—which is the amalgamation of Agassiz and Springfield—Transcona-Springfield, and now we are the Sunrise School Division. I know that since the amalgamation and even before that, we would have many, many, many families that are trying to escape the confinements, I guess, of the city, and come out and hope for a better life, because we were definitely a leading division in student services for dealing with students with special needs. And I like to pride myself on saying that I was part of that team in the Sunrise School Division and dealing with students with special needs that encouraged—and not only

encouraged, but many families within the province saw that leadership out in the eastern side of the province and they came out to live and to raise their families.

So, again, back to the teachers' aides, Mr. Speaker, it's not only, again, the teachers; it's the bus drivers, teachers' aides, administration staff, the librarians and the custodians also, that all contribute to the well-being of our young people.

Now, we, on this side of the House, feel that the teachers and students should be supported to their fullest, Mr. Speaker, but when we do get to some of the announcements that the minister prides herself on and pats herself on the back. I know that she often stands up here and does that and always is in comparison to, you know, the previous governments. But, instead of, again, as our leader—and many members on this side of the House have mentioned in—before, is that we should be looking towards the future and not always looking at what happened in the past.

When we're talking about capping class sizes to 20 for kindergarten to grade 3, there is going to be a problem, Mr. Speaker, and that problem is going to be, so what happens for the students who are going to be in grade 4? So what is the plan? There's going to be a bottleneck, we're looking at increased—lowering the class sizes, which is great, but then that means that you're going to have to expand school space within the school. So where are those spaces going to come from? I know that the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) had mentioned that she wanted some examples of how they are downloading onto school divisions. Well, that's going to be some—those are going to have to be some major decisions as far as what is going to be happening come grade 4 in regards to the bottleneck.

Class sizes down to 20—I know that Sunrise School Division were one of the leaders in the province as far as trying to bring that class size down. So, again, the minister stands up, pats herself on the back to be applauded for initiating these class size caps, but, in fact, in reality these things have been going on for years and years, Mr. Speaker.

The people who are actually working in those school environments are actually working. They're taking the students' best interests at heart and so when the minister stands up and continually, again, pats herself on the back, it's sort of one of those—it's a self-gratitude thing I guess is what she needs, Mr. Speaker.

The smaller class sizes as well, Mr. Speaker, is going to require some newly hired teachers. I know that this year the dramatic school property tax hikes the provincial government increased to school divisions, \$27.2 million, 2.3 increase per cent, which doesn't even cover the salaries—and I thank you for that time.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this resolution and thank you to minister from St. James for initiating this. I would also like to say that the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), I'd like to acknowledge her leading the forefront on education in this province. Coming up with tough questions that I think, being a former teacher and also the fraternity of teachers in here, we realize there has to be changes.

Education is evolving as we speak. One of the ministers of the opposition talked about encyclopedias. I, too, come from that era where, as a teacher, if you had one set of encyclopedias, you were good; if you had two, you were really good; and three sets were—you're excellent. Well, now, like I say, the last one I was teaching at an alternative school, we would talk about the Holocaust, you just had to go in your computer and see actual pictures. So education's changing all the time.

But getting back to this resolution, I think it's so important. I've taught from grade 4 to grade 12, and my wife was a kindergarten teacher. And sometimes you start off with a class of 30, and some of these kids are very needy and are left behind. And I—in grade 2, when I went to school, was one of those kids. We had a very large class, and I was lucky that the teacher was pregnant. She left at Christmas and I got an older teacher, one that was able to take advantage of my skills and taught me things.

But, anyway, speaking about the bill, I think it's a direction that education has to go to because it's dealing with the students, and I think the Minister of Education on Bill 18 is dealing with the students. It's something that we have to realize that is evolving, and it's something that I have to hand to the Minister of Education.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, a pleasure to rise this morning and speak to this resolution on class sizes, and I do want to commend my colleagues for their thoughts this morning.

You know, clearly, the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) and the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) certainly have teaching experience and certainly appreciate their kind words, and I know the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) certainly has an interest in education. His child attends school in Steinbach, and I know he's certainly interested in education and certainly as critic, he is.

I—we have a lot of discussion around our table at home, dining room table, about education, Mr. Speaker. My wife's involved as a grade 5 and 6 teacher and has been for quite a number of years, so obviously, as three boys who went through school—we have one left in high school—we still get involved in some pretty lengthy discussions about, you know, where the government's headed in terms of education and where we think things should go in education. And clearly, classroom size is an ongoing discussion

we have, and certainly parents around the province have.

And the actual size, and in terms of numbers of a classroom, is certainly one topic for consideration, but as my wife, as a teacher, points out, it's not about the—necessarily the number of kids in the classroom, but it's about the makeup of those kids in the classroom. And numbers alone don't always present challenges, although they can, but the makeup of the students certainly can cause concerns for—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Spruce Woods will have eight minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

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