

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, December 5, 2012 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

Withdrawal of written questions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of some changes which have been made to the Order Paper. Written Question No. 2, submitted by the Member for Riverdale South, has been removed from the Order Paper, as the final report of the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection has now been presented to this House.

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Also, Motion No. 335 and Motion No. 336, notice of which was given yesterday by the Leader of the Third Party, do not appear on today's Notice Paper, as they are now outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We'll proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of MacBride Museum of Yukon History 60th anniversary

Hon. Mr. Nixon: On behalf of this House, I'm pleased to rise today to pay tribute to the MacBride Museum of Yukon History in recognition of their 60th anniversary, celebrated this year.

From a small start, the museum has established itself as a respected leader within Yukon's museum community.

The museum has its roots with the collective efforts of a group of Yukoners who created the Yukon Historical Society in 1950. Led by Fred Arnot and William "Bill" MacBride, the group opened Yukon's first museum two years later in the Whitehorse telegraph office. Bill MacBride became an attraction in his own right, sharing stories about Yukon's colourful history with the visitors and championing the little museum as a must-visit location. Bill was also an avid historian and as the museum changed locations and expanded, Bill donated many books, photographs and artifacts to the museum's collection.

From its humble beginnings, the MacBride Museum facility has grown now to include the Natural World Gallery, the Taylor and Drury Room, the Transportation Courtyard, the Coach House and the Gold to Government Gallery. During the busy summer tourist season, MacBride welcomes thousands of visitors, treating them to lectures, special events and exhibits. During the winter months, the museum staff and volunteers are focused on community engagement and providing local programming to residents.

The museum's diverse collections include geology, paleontology, botany, archeology, ethnology and Klondike Gold

Rush history. Visitors can experience Sam McGee's cabin, take pride in the 19th century Chandler & Price printing press and learn more about the history of Yukon First Nations and the RCMP.

Since 2005, the Yukon government has supported MacBride Museum with more than \$2.1 million in funding to help them meet their commitment to share and celebrate Yukon's northern heritage and history with others. The energy, creativity and determination of Bill MacBride and the museum's other founders is still truly alive today. It's reflected in the character of the staff, society board members and volunteers who work to make MacBride a favourite stop along the Whitehorse waterfront. I know one of our current Cabinet ministers, the Member for Riverdale North, was a board member for MacBride just a few short years ago.

Mr. Speaker, we thank them for their continued commitment to the Yukon's museums community and to their vision to promote the territory's rich history, especially that of Whitehorse. Congratulations on the 60 years of community service, historical preservation and storytelling.

If all members of this gallery and this House could join me in welcoming visitors Hank Moorlag, the chair of the board for MacBride Museum, and Sheila Rose, a board member for MacBride Museum as well.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Archives

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again, on behalf of this House, I rise to pay tribute to the Yukon Archives in recognition of their 40th anniversary. Prior to 1972, there was no central facility for Yukon's documentary heritage and many official territorial records, which were moved to Ottawa, to be returned when a proper storage facility was in place.

Former Commissioner Jim Smith was the first person to champion the idea of a territorial archives for Yukon's historic records, and it was Mr. Smith who spearheaded the effort to have this built. The passing of the *Archives Act* in 1971 defined the role of the institution and the types of records it would hold. Yukon Archives opened officially in 1972 with a small office in downtown Whitehorse before moving to its own facility beside Yukon College in 1990.

The Friends of the Yukon Archives Society established themselves a few years later to assist and advise the archives on preserving the records of Yukon's past.

Yukon Archives has specialized underground vaults that provide the environmental conditions necessary for the long-term preservation of records in all formats. This includes records of every media imaginable — old technology, such as vinyl records and eight millimetre films, maps and plans from before the gold rush, and now digital records.

The Archives is the permanent home for territorial and municipal government records appraised for their value as evidence of governance, policy development and program implementation. The Archives also houses private records donated by organizations, families and individuals from all walks of life. The Archives holds words, images and voices created by thousands of Yukoners. Together, these records make up our unique and irreplaceable documentary heritage with its endless

potential for revealing our social, economic and cultural development.

I'd like to thank every individual, family and organization who has donated their records for their generosity and appreciation for the territory's history. I'd also like to recognize all of the territorial archivists and staff members, past and present, who have safeguarded Yukon's heritage and made it available to researchers over the last 40 years.

The Archives has always been staffed with dynamic, engaged people who are passionate about our Yukon history. The Yukon government shares their commitment to history and has committed nearly \$3 million for planning, designing and building a new vault to accommodate Yukon's growing collection. The project is currently in the design phase, with construction beginning in 2013.

As we look forward to many more prosperous years in the Yukon, I am very pleased that the Yukon Archives will continue to preserve the history for future generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of International Volunteer Day

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of our caucus, the Liberal Party and the Independent member today to pay tribute to Yukon volunteers, joining governments and non-government organizations from around the world as we celebrate our commitment and hope for a better world by recognizing International Volunteer Day.

There are so many stories that could be told about the impact of Yukon volunteers, both here at home and abroad. The differences that individuals can make are extraordinary, and in Yukon, they are, by no means, no exception.

A key organization is Volunteer Yukon, which celebrated its 10th anniversary earlier this year. Over the last decade, Volunteer Yukon has played an important role in matching volunteers to organizations, helping organizations recognize their volunteers and providing resources for volunteer managers, including skill development.

The Department of Community Services is very pleased to have provided funding to Volunteer Yukon since 2004 and is very pleased to provide continued operating funding as seen in this year's budget. Volunteer Yukon fosters a strong Yukon with a strong volunteer spirit. It helps with recruitment efforts for local organizations and provides important supports to volunteers in action.

There are many opportunities to get involved in our community, and Yukoners are indeed making a difference. Whether giving your time to support victims of crime; volunteering for local theatre, arts and music productions; fundraising for the Canadian Cancer Society; being involved with the Terry Fox Run or the Run for Mom; volunteering at Copper Ridge Place; volunteering with service clubs such as Rotary or the Lions; helping at-risk individuals; empowering youth; supporting women and families; giving time to young people with Big Brothers and Big Sisters Yukon; tutoring at Yukon Learn; helping out with local sporting organizations and associations, whether minor hockey, gymnastics or more; being part of the extraordinary efforts of the Yukon Hospital Foundation to raise funds for the purchase of an MRI machine and volunteering

with the Red Cross to help people in need, not only here at home, but also abroad in disaster-struck areas. Individual Yukoners are improving the quality of life for citizens in our communities, our territory and abroad. In fact, there are more than 600 non-government organizations and communities around the Yukon, and their success depends upon the contributions of Yukon volunteers.

Earlier this year, we saw an impressive volunteer effort that led to the success of the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. We couldn't possibly have held the games, let alone hosted such a tremendously successful event without the 2,000 people plus who donated their time and efforts in so many different ways. That's what makes volunteers one of the Yukon's most important resources. Their work greatly extends what governments and non-profit organizations can accomplish.

Volunteers support cultural, recreational and sporting events that are so important to our communities. They keep us safe by providing emergency services and support at times of crisis. With the help of volunteers, we have year-round access to music, dance, film and theatre festivals.

We have bike relays, marathons, curling, hockey, softball and the list goes on. Volunteers play a critical role in Yukon's tourism and economic development. Organizations in the territory such as the Northern Film and Video Industry Association, Yukon First Nations Tourism Association and Klondike Visitors Association all rely on the leadership and dedication of volunteers.

For the last 30 years, volunteers have worked tirelessly to build and develop the Yukon francophone —

[Member spoke in French. Text unavailable.]

Whether young, old, families, workers, retirees and no matter what their backgrounds, Yukon volunteers are at the heart of our communities. Acting together, volunteers make our communities healthier, more active and more vibrant places to live for all of us. Volunteers also make our communities safe and we are very pleased and very proud to have well-trained and equipped volunteers to provide emergency medical services, volunteer fire departments and search and rescue services. They are highly expert in their fields and are the product of strong individual commitments to ongoing and rigorous training throughout the years to continuously improve their skill sets.

Yukon has approximately 130 search and rescue volunteers in seven communities. There are 21 volunteer fire chiefs in communities across the Yukon who play an important leadership role, overseeing close to 300 volunteer members. Nearly 150 highly skilled volunteers with Emergency Medical Services provide important paramedic and ambulance services across the territory. Moments of heroic action by our emergency response volunteers are preceded by a great deal of training, tremendous commitment, care and dedication, and tremendous passion for the people they serve.

In Yukon we have small and tight-knit communities and volunteers wear many different hats. It takes a special person to bring not only the technical knowledge to the task but the sensitivity and people skills that build and maintain relationships. Their constant commitment helps build vibrant, healthy and

sustainable Yukon communities. Volunteerism is essential to the fabric of our society and I'm so very pleased and honoured to rise in recognition of International Volunteer Day.

Mr. Barr: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the Official Opposition, Third Party and the Independent member to pay tribute to International Volunteer Day, which is December 5 of each year. Yukon would be a very different place without our volunteers of all ages. Nearly every event we attend and every service we take advantage of has volunteer energy and commitment behind it. We see volunteers assisting in sports, the arts, in churches, in schools, in all governments through boards and committees and in causes such as health issues and Third World development, to name only a few areas.

Volunteerism has impacted all our lives positively through organizations and institutions that we deal with. More volunteers are always needed in our busy world. Only one in four Canadians is a volunteer, and 75 percent of all hours volunteered come from less than 10 percent of the population. Half of all volunteers are over 50, which indicates that people who are retired or who have more leisure time away from raising their children donate more of their time. Many people volunteer to develop skills; younger people who are looking to enhance their careers should think of volunteering in areas that complement their paid work. Many volunteer positions give on-the-job experience that can be listed on resumé.

Supervisors of volunteers can be approached for letters of reference and hours of volunteer work can give a person the edge they need to enter fields of higher education.

Apart from work-related benefits, volunteering allows opportunities to try something new, to discover talents, to learn, and to meet new friends. The self-satisfaction and personal growth that comes with volunteering, especially if it involves directly helping others, cannot be duplicated in any other activity. Supporting causes that bring about change in the community gives volunteers an opportunity to be directly involved in change or to give something back to an organization that has helped them in the past.

We want to bring special attention to the many non-governmental organizations that have volunteer boards and dedicated employees. Many NGO boards in the Yukon find themselves struggling to respond to the need in their particular areas of expertise. Employees of these boards carry out much-needed coordination, education, management and programs and the daily chores of running services without being paid what they would receive in government programs. Because of this, boards find recruitment of employees an ongoing problem. Turnover is great and money is scarce.

It is interesting to note that only about one to two percent of the territorial budget is dedicated to assisting NGOs. Having NGOs and volunteers are a good deal for government. Many services that would otherwise be provided by government are being mounted by our non-government organizations. Volunteers are recognized by governments with nominations and awards, but we should stress that the real support for NGOs and volunteers comes with a dollar sign.

Volunteer Yukon brings together people who want to volunteer and organizations that need volunteers. That service is free. Their website and printed resources hold a wealth of community information and helpful advice on working with volunteers. They hold regular, free training sessions on issues that volunteer organizations are always coping with, such as writing proposals, evaluating programs, legal considerations, training, and recognizing the contributions of many volunteers.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all Yukon volunteers, boards, committees and their employees for staying there through all the difficulties. Through their vital contribution, the Yukon is a much richer place and territory for all.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's my pleasure to introduce Ross Findlater, a tireless volunteer himself in our community, with whom I've had the distinct pleasure of working over the last year in his role as co-chair of the Anti-Poverty Coalition. I encourage all members to welcome Ross.

Applause

Ms. White: It gives me great joy to introduce my newest constituent — Ysabeau Bernadette Davis was born on November 24, and her very proud parents are Ian and Marlon Davis.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As Minister of Tourism and Culture, I have for tabling a letter to our Member of Parliament for Yukon, Ryan Leef, dated August 6, 2012.

I also have for tabling a letter dated September 14, 2012, to the minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Hon. Peter Kent.

I also have a letter dated November 13, 2012 to the minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Hon. Peter Kent.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have for tabling today the *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2011-12*.

I also have for tabling the *Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2011-12*.

Speaker: Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Hassard: I have for presentation the *Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees*.

Speaker: Are there any other committee reports for presentation?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 7 — response

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today to respond to Petition No. 7, which was presented to this House on November 21, 2012. Petition No. 7 urges the Government of Yukon to introduce to the Legislative Assembly legislation to:

(a) ban the use of hydraulic fracturing for the exploration or extraction of oil and gas resources; and

(b) ban the exploration or extraction of coal-bed methane;

AND to implement an immediate moratorium on:

(a) the use of hydraulic fracturing for the exploration or extraction of oil and gas resources; and

(b) the exploration or extraction of coal-bed methane.

I also tabled a government motion, as members may recall, in this House that consisted of three parts:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) respond positively to the joint request by the Yukon Conservation Society and Northern Cross (Yukon) for the Yukon government to work with the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board to improve clarity around assessment for oil and gas projects;

(2) conduct a full and rigorous scientific review of any proposed oil and gas project at each of the following stages of oil and gas development: exploration, production, and reclamation; and

(3) work with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and stakeholders to facilitate an informed public dialogue about the oil and gas industry, including risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing, also known as “fracking”, before any regulatory approvals or permitting allows use of this activity in Yukon.

This government motion was subsequently passed by the Legislative Assembly with the support of all MLAs except the New Democratic Party, which voted against it and voted against this public dialogue. Government is committed to taking the actions specified in that motion. This commitment to facilitating an informed public dialogue will give all Yukoners an opportunity to participate.

As I’ve indicated previously in this House, we believe it is appropriate since the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is the other government in this territory that has recent experience with oil and gas activities and has been involved in matters such as the YESAB process and, in fact, along with the Yukon government, jointly developed a decision document on this summer’s application by Northern Cross (Yukon) for exploratory wells. The appropriate place to start was with open-ended conversations with them about how to best design and best facilitate this public dialogue as well as involve other stakeholders. We believe that public dialogue that gives all Yukoners an opportunity to participate is a good way to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, as far as coal-bed methane goes, this government has, on several occasions, made it clear that we do not support the development of coal-bed methane. That has not changed.

Speaker: Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Hassard: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges Hammond Map Corporation to correct errors in a number of its maps and atlases which misidentify Canada’s tallest mountain, Mount Logan, as Mount Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

Ms. Hanson: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to:

(1) accept all the recommendations of the final report of the all-party Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection, and

(2) introduce whistle-blower protection legislation that is consistent with all the recommendations of the select committee in the spring of 2013.

Mr. Barr: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to recognize the contribution of Yukon volunteers by:

(1) implementing a coordination strategy for non-government organizations;

(2) reviewing its core funding policies for non-government organizations; and

(3) supporting Volunteer Yukon to operate to its full capacity.

Mr. Silver: I rise and give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to remove from the Order Paper or call for debate tomorrow, December 6, Bill No. 49, *Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Act, 2012*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to remove from the Order Paper or call for debate tomorrow, December 6, Bill No. 48, *Act to Amend the Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act*.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whistle-blower protection legislation

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the work of the all-party Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection has finally been completed. The need to protect public servants who report wrongdoing in government has been well-known for years. The Yukon Party committed to it in 2006, so six years later, it is fair to say that, although progress has been slow, persistence has paid off.

In February 2011 the minister responsible said, and I quote: “We look forward to receiving the final recommendations of the select committee, and we will move forward as government.”

The question is, now that we have them, when will the government bring forward whistle-blower protection that reflects all the recommendations of the select committee?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: First of all, I would like to thank and commend all the members of the select committee on the whistle-blower initiative for their hard work and efforts over the course of these last number of months, toward coming up with a set of recommendations on a go-forward basis to address whistle-blower protection for the Yukon government.

We received the report yesterday, so we will, in short order, be reviewing the contents of the report and moving forward.

Ms. Hanson: The Yukon New Democratic Party has long endorsed and championed the need for this whistle-blower protection legislation. Public servants must be able to report wrongdoing within government without fear of retaliation from co-workers or supervisors. This is especially important in light of the Yukon Party government's rejection of lobbyist legislation. Lobbying is a real growth industry. In Ottawa some private sectors are investing millions of dollars in persuading politicians and senior public servants. In addition to blocking lobbyist legislation, this Yukon Party government plans to restrict public access to information about government decisions. The need for whistle-blower legislation has never been more urgent.

Will the government commit to a clear timeline to bringing forward whistle-blower legislation by spring 2013?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: We received the report yesterday, just some hours ago, literally. As a government and as a caucus and as a collective, we will be reviewing the contents of the report and the recommendations and we will be moving forward in short order. We recognize the importance of whistle-blower legislation, as we do a multitude of other pieces of legislation.

With respect to the member opposite's comments with respect to lack of protections for Yukon government employees, I would just remind the member opposite that there is public sector legislation. There are collective agreements that also provide a variety of dispute resolution mechanisms available to employees who challenge the actions of the employer itself, so ranging from civil action in the courts, grievances, adjudications and again through the use of the Human Rights Commission. We are committed to upholding the various avenues to resolve dispute among Yukon government employees and we're very much committed to whistle-blower legislation as well.

Ms. Hanson: There are public servants who are fearful — fearful of their workplace that is not healthy. The minister can skirt around the issues all she wants and avoid answering the questions, but Yukoners want and deserve a straight answer.

We should have had this law in place several years ago; action is long overdue. Yukoners care and are engaged. They cared about the secret ATCO discussions. They want and deserve to know about oil and gas interests in the territory, throughout the territory, not just northern Yukon. Yukoners are collectively on the hook for over \$100 million off-the-book spending for Mayo B and for the two overbudget and behind-

time hospitals. The territory needs the balance that whistle-blower legislation will bring.

When will the minister responsible commit to tabling — not just talking about, but tabling — legislation to protect whistle-blowers?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you for the questions from the members opposite. Thank you to the members of the select committee representing all parties of the Legislative Assembly on a go-forward basis to come up with whistle-blower legislation. We received the report only a few short hours ago. As one can appreciate, there are many priorities on the docket for the Yukon government's agenda on behalf of Yukoners and we certainly are committed to whistle-blower legislation.

We thank the select committee for their recommendations and we look forward to moving forward in this very regard. For the public record, there are a number of protections already in existence for Yukon public service employees and we certainly take very seriously upholding those provisions, whether they be in legislation, in policy or in the collective agreements themselves. We look forward to moving forward with whistle-blower legislation in short order.

Question re: Ross River sewage treatment

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised with the Minister of Community Services the ongoing issue of this government's inaction on the Ross River sewage pit and the violation of its water licence number MN02-044. The minister gave three non-answers to my questions so I'm left to ask: Is the Minister of Community Services comfortable with sewage endangering Ross River's drinking water?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, the Government of Yukon — we on this side of the House — are very much concerned about drinking water quality and about treating our waste water. That's in fact why this side of this House has invested hundreds of millions of dollars toward upgrading waste-water treatment facilities and drinking-water treatment facilities. In fact, in the community of Ross River alone we have dedicated some \$1.5 million toward a new drinking-water treatment plant, as well as an additional \$4.5 million toward a new public works building that will house the new drinking-water treatment facility. So yes, this government will continue to honour our commitments and to follow the regulatory framework, whether that be in policy or legislation — and so forth. We are very committed to upholding our commitments.

Mr. Barr: We are not discussing the promised water treatment facility; we are discussing the failed sewage treatment pit, the health of Ross River's citizens and the safety of the drinking water, which is endangered by the sewage pit.

Mr. Speaker, I will take that non-answer as the minister being comfortable with sewage making its way into Ross River's drinking water. The government has been in non-compliance of its own laws for almost a decade. There have been no inspections, no monitoring, no annual reporting and the government has not acted on the order to build a sewage infiltration pit. This is shameful and is borderline negligence. It has been almost 10 years.

When will this government stop violating its water licence, ignoring its own laws and build a new sewage pit for Ross River?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, for the member opposite, as I have reiterated numerous times over the past days, the Government of Yukon has constructed a new water treatment facility in the community of Ross River, as we have in numerous communities throughout the Yukon, thanks to Building Canada investments — joint investments by Canada and Yukon — all of which, I might add, the members opposite continue to vote against year-in and year-out.

This particular facility is near completion. It meets the Canadian drinking-water guidelines, it removes arsenic, deals with the aesthetics; so yes, we are very much committed to working to address any and all deficiencies or problems as identified by regulators.

We will continue to work with our regulators; we will continue to address deficiencies throughout the Yukon in every community, not just the community of Ross River. We take very seriously our commitments to having safe drinking water and to ensuring that we are treating waste water.

Mr. Barr: It's clear the minister opposite does not seem to understand the situation. We are not discussing a water-treatment facility; we are discussing the sewage treatment pit. Ross River has been promised action on this risk to their water supply and to their citizens' health for almost 10 years now. This is just another example of promises made by this government and not kept.

It's also clear that, despite years and years of representation from Yukon Party MLAs, this community in the riding of Pelly-Nisutlin is not receiving good representation. We are talking about people's drinking water and their health and safety.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The personalization of debate by this member — Mr. Speaker, you have ruled, as have previous Speakers on a number of occasions, that all members are supposed to treat each other as honourable. For a member of this House, the NDP member, to stand and accuse another MLA of not giving proper representation to their constituents, I would think is contrary to that ruling and I would ask you to have him retract it.

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: On the point of order, I heard my colleague provide his opinion on the actions of the government and the consequences thereof. I would suggest that this is a dispute between members and not a valid point of order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: It is a dispute between members, but I'd ask all the members to once again — and I'm going to say it once again — stop personalizing their statements. The member did personally direct the comment at the Member for Pelly-

Nisutlin. He did not refer to the government as being delinquent; he personalized it. That I object to, but the essence of the point of order is that this is a dispute between members. The debate was personalized, and I've asked and asked and asked all members to stop personalizing their comments. It does not help the debate; it does not put individual members in good light. Please apologize to the member, and we'll carry on.

Mr. Barr: We were talking about people's drinking water and their health and safety.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I asked the member to apologize to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for personalizing the statement.

Mr. Barr: I apologize for personalizing the statement.

Speaker: Thank you. Please complete the question.

Mr. Barr: We are talking about people's drinking water and their health and safety. After 10 years, will this government stand up and deliver on its promises to Ross River and build a new sewage treatment pit?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: In response to the member opposite's question, again, it is and continues to be a priority of the Yukon government to ensure that all Yukon residents have access to a safe drinking water supply. That is why, in fact, the Yukon government continues to invest millions of dollars in water treatment upgrades, whether it's drinking water or it is waste-water treatment.

Again, when it comes to the community of Ross River — just through the Building Canada and again through gas tax funding, the Government of Yukon, in collaboration with the Government of Canada, has invested just under \$12 million. That certainly does not take into consideration the additional \$7 million in support of the new community recreation centre.

So again, the Government of Yukon is in fact paying close attention to our obligations. We continue to work with our regulatory agencies to address issues that are identified and resolve any and all problems.

Public safety is always the priority of the Government of Yukon, and we will continue to invest and we certainly look forward to the support of the members opposite in this regard.

Question re: Parks Canada funding cuts

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Government of Canada cut funds to Parks Canada. The impact of those cuts is being felt here in the Yukon. The collection of artifacts in Dawson will now be managed from Ottawa because staff has been let go. The *SS Klondike* will be opened only to unguided tours; the Dredge No. 4 will be shut down entirely. The first week of this sitting we passed a motion unanimously that called for the federal Conservatives to reverse these cuts. It has now been more than a month since this motion was put forward to the government's Conservative colleagues in Ottawa. The response has been deafening silence.

The much-hyped "pipeline to Ottawa" trumpeted by this government has produced nothing on this issue but silence.

Today I'll be very interested to read the documents tabled by the minister on this file, but can the Minister of Tourism explain why his federal colleagues haven't responded to the legislators' request to reverse these cuts?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, as the member is well aware, I have been very actively engaged on this file, speaking with our MP and corresponding via letters, which I tabled today, to the MP and the minister responsible, the Hon. Peter Kent.

I can assure the member opposite that the Government of Yukon shares the concerns of all Yukoners about the impact of these reductions on both the *SS Klondike* and Dredge No. 4 and others within the territory and truly across Canada. The Yukon government is actively taking steps, as I mentioned, to identify potential solutions to address the impacts of these changes within Parks Canada and on Yukon. I've written to the Hon. Peter Kent about this issue and department officials have been meeting with local Parks Canada representatives to also identify possible mitigations to these cuts.

Mr. Silver: I can appreciate that the minister has done some correspondence; however, this government has had little success so far in getting their federal colleagues to reverse their course and time is ticking here. We are months away from the tourist season.

Today is an appropriate day — the minister finished a tribute to Yukon Archives and a tribute to the iconic tourism sector entity known as MacBride Museum. This summer the Prime Minister was here as part of an annual tour of northern Canada. Why has the Government of Yukon, with its special relationship with the Prime Minister, been unable to get anything done on this issue to date?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I mentioned before, the Government of Yukon, myself and my colleagues on this side of the House all recognize that Yukoners are concerned that Parks Canada budget cuts and reductions may impact both the tourism activities as well as winter recreational activities. Having said that, I do want to give a shout-out to organizations like the MacBride Museum, like Yukon Archives and the plethora of tourism products that we have here in the Yukon. I think we're extremely lucky to live in a territory such as this that provides so many diverse services, from viewing the northern lights to canoeing down the Yukon River. These are things that my colleagues on this side of the House share and appreciate very much.

We also understand that the work of Parks Canada goes far beyond simply just managing parks. Parks Canada is an important partner in managing heritage resources and providing tourism activities, so with any other aspect of my portfolio, these relationships sometimes do take time, but they are important relationships to foster.

Mr. Silver: I don't think anybody on either side of the floor of this House is arguing the importance of heritage, but in general, we are opposed to these particular cuts. So are the City of Dawson, the City of Whitehorse — the mayor of Whitehorse has been very vocal in his opposition — the Tourism Industry Association, the tour operators who bring visitors to see these reminders of our history, and the list goes on. Our MP has re-

fused to publicly condemn these cuts, and this is of the utmost importance. The amount of money being wasted on the federal government's new regional office would probably fund these programs for the next two years.

The cuts at Parks Canada will affect more than tours of the dredge and the *SS Klondike*. People are losing their jobs. In Dawson alone we have lost a half million dollars in salaries. That's a lot of money to a small community. What is the government doing to stand up for Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I was mentioning to the member opposite in this House — as my time ran out on the last question — it truly is about relationships. My next steps as the minister will obviously be to continue to advocate on behalf of Yukoners for the important tourism products that we provide our tourists in Yukon. So I will be taking steps. I'm not sitting and waiting. I am actively involved in this file, as the member opposite well knows.

As I mentioned in my first statement, officials of the Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to meet with the local Parks Canada staff to explore possible approaches to mitigate the impact of the reductions. Parks Canada has always worked very closely with the Department of Tourism and Culture, and this working relationship is now refocused on addressing these reductions.

I've brought this issue to the direct attention of the minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Hon. Peter Kent. I've brought it to the attention of our Member of Parliament, Ryan Leef. I have highlighted the concerns that Yukoners have about the possible impact these reductions may have on our important tourism sector, and I'm confident that Minister Kent — with the relationships that we are fostering — and all of us will recognize the commitment of the Yukon government to find solutions that will enable us to continue to provide high-quality tourism experiences.

Question re: Water management strategy

Mr. Elias: Having a safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems and reliable water supplies for sustainable economy in our communities is key to Yukon's quality of life. Knowledge about the state of our water regimes at any given time needs research, partnerships and a strategy.

Yesterday in speaking to a water strategy, I heard the minister say that he looks forward to having that strategy coming forward in due course, and that's good news because it's going to be the first water strategy of our territory.

He also went on to say, "As I have indicated before, it will be based around a number of principles, which we'll be happy to consult the public on as they come out."

When can Yukoners expect the consultation program to begin, and what form will it take in the final stages of the territory's water management strategy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: An excellent question from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I appreciate it. As I have indicated previously in this House, we are committed to developing a water strategy for Yukon that ensures Yukoners have access to safe drinking water through the rural domestic water well program and by other means, including the development of community wells. We're committed to increasing data collec-

tion and information-sharing and continue to provide more water information on-line through sites such as www.yukonwater.ca. We are, of course, committed to upgrading drinking water and waste-water treatment facilities in Yukon communities to meet new standards for water quality. That's the basis upon which we went out to the public during the election and committed to developing a water strategy, and that's what will guide us forward. Now, work has been done already this year, and I'm not in a position to commit to a specific date for consultation, but I would say that this is a priority for this government; it's a priority for me as minister and I'm happy to hear that it's a priority for the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin as well.

Mr. Elias: It was almost four years ago to the day that I have been advocating for a water strategy, so it has been a priority for a lot longer than that.

Some of the goals in a made-in-Yukon water strategy should include ensuring that every Yukoner has access to safe drinking water and it is a human right; Yukon waters can never be exported in mass amounts out of the Yukon; critical aquatic ecosystems are maintained and protected; our water supply to be managed effectively to support sustainable economic development, and we promote the gathering of continuous water data through research so Yukoners and our partners have immediate access to that knowledge. We must ensure that our partners and bordering jurisdictions are empowered, informed and fully engaged in water stewardship in our territory, and we must have mechanisms to report and measure our success. The minister has committed to consultation, has met with stakeholders and has developed a set of principles that guide the water strategy.

Will the minister post the water principles he references to his department's website?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The work done to date on this file has been a focused stakeholder workshop that was conducted earlier this year — I believe it was in June — with other agencies that have water management responsibilities, including federal government agencies, First Nations and municipalities. That was integral to the scoping of a draft strategy, and the work that they did at that workshop provided that scoping for what will ultimately go into the strategy and what will form the basis for our next steps. Again, I haven't seen that work yet, but as soon as we are in a position to present it to the public, we'll do so, in due course.

As I've said, it's a priority, not only for this government and I, but indeed, it sounds like a number of members of this House are supportive of the initiative as well.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for his comments. The effects of climate change alone have the potential to drastically change the dynamics of our water system and the effect it has on our communities, environment and our economies. I've noticed a significant policy shift in the minister's climate change action plan that changes the territory's emissions targets from the territory-wide targets to sector-based targets. I'd like to know why this policy shift took place.

We must recognize there are limits to the availability of our Yukon water supply. I'll give but one example. Scientific research trends suggest that our glaciers are melting. Glaciers

feed spawning grounds for salmon. No glacial melt equals no salmon spawning grounds in some areas. When will the minister conduct a full and robust public consultation on our territory's first water strategy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the member opposite again for raising this issue. Climate change indeed has an effect on our water resources in Yukon — not just the liquid water resources, but permafrost and glaciers as well. So we know that climate change is going to continue to be a factor in the management of water resources in our territory.

So I certainly think that other members of federal agencies and municipalities and First Nations would agree that climate change is something we should consider in a water strategy, but again, until I have seen the work done by that stakeholder working group, I won't be in a position to comment explicitly on it.

The member also asked a specific question about our *Climate Change Action Plan*, which I hope I have enough time to answer. Ultimately the decision was made that, rather than committing to an arbitrary target based on estimated projections of Yukon's economic growth, the government is working with key players in the electricity, building, energy efficiency, industrial and transportation sectors to identify actions that will lead to realistic and measurable outcomes to minimize growth in Yukon's overall greenhouse gas emissions.

I hope that explains his specific question about climate change and I appreciate his comments about climate change in the development of the water strategy. We will most certainly take those comments into consideration when we go forward with the development of the water strategy.

Question re: Firefighter positions, pay and working conditions

Mr. Barr: This government made a decision, years ago, to treat volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel in our communities differently. Ambulance personnel receive standby pay, while firefighters only receive pay for being at a fire or accident. This discrepancy was justified by this government saying that ambulance personnel protect lives, while firefighters protect property. This of course is a ludicrous argument.

If there's a child in a burning building, firefighters would try to rescue that child. This is just a way of this government to save money on the backs of adequate fire protection. Why does this Yukon Party government support this double standard?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This government is very proud of the investments we have made in terms of structural fire. Just earlier this year in the month of May, in the presence of many volunteer fire departments, I was very pleased when we made an announcement of almost \$2 million of initial investment in support of volunteer fire departments, which helps double the capacity of our Fire Marshal's Office, which helps enhance the capacity in terms of our firefighting equipment — the training capacity — and it certainly enhances our ability to provide those life inspection reports that are so much needed in each and every community.

So in terms of our additional investment in structural fire, also earlier this sitting we committed to an additional \$2 mil-

lion over five years in support of volunteer fire departments by way of the comprehensive municipal grant.

So we are committed to delivering on behalf of our volunteer firefighters, as well as our volunteer emergency medical service attendants.

Mr. Barr: Volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel respond to highway accidents, fires, hazardous goods incidents and other situations. These men and women work together, side by side, to protect our communities. The fire marshal has spoken publicly about the need for more volunteer firefighters as our community fire departments struggle to maintain membership.

Do we want to risk another walkout of emergency personnel like we had four years ago, or will this government start to treat volunteer firefighters with the respect they deserve and have earned? Will this government properly compensate volunteer firefighters — the men and women who ensure our communities are protected?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: In 2010, the Yukon government actually did increase honoraria to our volunteer firefighters substantially, which is housed through a contribution agreement through the volunteer society which oversees not only emergency medical services, but also volunteer firefighters. In both cases, it was in fact the largest increase ever to their pay to be seen in Yukon history.

I go back to the investments that this government has announced and has certainly delivered by way of the supplementary budget. Unfortunately, the members opposite, the NDP, have voted against those very increases that would see the Fire Marshal's Office doubling in capacity, in terms of deputy fire marshals; in terms of doubling our capacity when it comes to fire equipment; in terms of doubling our capacity in terms of training, which is so very much needed and is prescribed through the occupational health and safety standards. In addition, the Government of Yukon has also allotted a \$2-million increase over five years in support of volunteer fire departments throughout the municipalities. So the government is very much committed to ensuring that we have healthy firefighters and certainly EMS workers when it comes to delivering public safety on behalf of Yukoners.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 247

Clerk: Motion No. 247, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to adopt the JJ Van Bibber memoir, *I was born under a spruce tree*, as part of Yukon's education curriculum.

Mr. Silver: It gives me great pleasure to stand here today among my peers in an attempt to solidify a commitment from this government to adapt JJ Van Bibber's memoir, *I was born under a spruce tree*, as part of the Yukon curriculum. My intent is part of a theme — a theme where we use local knowledge, experience and history as often as possible in our school systems.

I've taught here in the Yukon for 15 years, previous to taking office in the Legislative Assembly, and I have first-hand knowledge of what captivates a student and what motivates an individual to work harder — harder than they've ever worked before — and that thing is inclusion and also respect. Teaching in the Yukon has taught me something about people. I don't know if this is true in other parts of Canada, but it certainly is true in the Yukon, and it is absolutely true of my experience teaching our First Nation students — if you give an inch of respect to a student, you will get back a mile. This is one of the certainties that I've used in my teaching career and it has paid off in spades. Once you get that respect, you may ask, "What holds a student to a task?"

Well, the answer is inclusion. Students need to feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves, and that their contributions to the whole and to the community are valuable. It's a very simple formula but it works, full stop. I believe we need to have more locally developed curriculum in the school system for students to have a greater interest not only in just being in the classroom, but being an active participant, being able to relate.

I have yet to read a book that does this better than Mr. Van Bibber's memoir. I personally have devoured this book and I have seen a lot of people do the same. I think the Minister of Education told a story of how he loaned the book to our Sergeant-at-Arms in the House and he finished it in a matter of hours. I've done that as well, and I continue to see people relating and reading this book. The whole time that I read it, I could relate to the story. I related to the places that JJ and his family visited and the places that he stayed. I related by inserting my own personal experiences as an educator in Dawson to the overwhelming and powerful story of how JJ and his brothers came to attend school in Dawson and the abuses that they persevered through in pursuing an education.

Thanks to JJ's actions, both during his life — capturing these events of his life on film — and before his death, relating this amazing story to Niall Fink, this story is now a gift for us all. It needs to be cared for and it needs to be protected and studied. I can think of no better way than adding it proudly to our school's curriculum.

JJ Van Bibber was a great man who led a great life, a man who combined a northern traditional life with modern amenities. He was able to transition effortlessly from long periods trapping in the bush to town life in Dawson City and then back again. The book is a first-person account of JJ's life — of his youth a Mica Creek near Pelly Crossing, his numerous adventures and many vocations, his courtship and marriage to his lifelong love, Clara, and the time treasured with his family.

JJ was a passionate photographer. The publication is illustrated with images accumulated over several decades, and these

photographs recall an era where sternwheelers still plied the rivers and dogsleds were essential to supporting a hunting and trapping lifestyle. The book also featured illustrations by JJ's grandson, Shane Van Bibber.

It was a privilege to listen to JJ sharing his remarkable stories, all of which are life lessons. I had several opportunities to visit with JJ before he passed. On each occasion, I was told that we would have a quick visit. He was in his 90s for a few of the last visits. But once those photo albums were opened and once JJ got warmed up — and that expression can be explained in the book's prologue — you didn't want to leave. Then you would look at your watch and you'd see the time and realize that hours had gone by. You'd feel really bad, but what a great opportunity and what a great experience.

These photos, along with the oral history transcripts, have been preserved in the JJ and Clara Van Bibber collection at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government archives. I'd like to just mention, too, that I actually got to know JJ by voice before I actually ever met the man. I have a small home studio in Dawson and I do a lot of work in oral history, converting old analog tapes to a digital format. I did a few contracts for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage department and I'd spent hours listening to these tapes about Percy Henry or Joe Henry, and a lot of different tapes on the Roberts families. It was the JJ Van Bibber tapes that I just couldn't stop listening to.

As part of the job, you set your levels, and you can basically walk away until you hear the tapes finish, but I just couldn't do that because the stories were just so amazing, and it was a great opportunity. I remember the very first time that I actually saw JJ. He was in the Riverwest in Dawson and there was a man in front of me ordering, and I could definitely not — well, the voice was definitely something that triggered my memory from those tapes. I introduced myself at that time. We had a great conversation, and I developed a relationship with the man, and I'm proud to say that he recognized me and understood — we had some great conversations about his tapes. What a hospitable man, what a great, dry sense of humour and what a life. He had a great spirit for life. He was always happy, and he was always kind and very caring, with a very positive outlook in life.

JJ led a diverse and interesting life. He was a trapper, a homesteader, a store owner; he piloted riverboats on the Yukon and he ran heavy equipment, putting in roads through the northern Yukon. JJ also tried his hand at placer mining; he was an honorary Canadian Ranger.

During the Second World War, JJ joined the Northern Pacific Rangers, 38th company, which later evolved into the Canadian Rangers, as you know, Mr. Speaker. JJ was made an honorary member of the Canadian Rangers but, first and foremost, JJ was a family man.

He was known as a great storyteller. JJ loved to tell tales of his adventures from his younger years. It was a privilege to listen to JJ share these remarkable stories and adventures. During the summer, he could be found telling his stories at the cultural centre and at the Tombstone Territorial Park visitor centre. Visitors were treated to Labrador tea and a history lesson

on what the life of a trapper was like in the Tombstone Mountains more than 60 years ago.

One of his favourite stories he liked to tell was how he and his siblings came to school in Dawson. His father and mother put them on a log raft in Pelly, and they floated down river, with the oldest child being in charge. Ira, his father, always reasoned that there was no point in paying for boat passage when the river was running in that direction anyway.

I love that story, but all of this is in the book, and I really shouldn't spoil it for others who haven't had a chance to read it yet — but it is a must-read. I look forward to it hopefully becoming part of our collective memory, as part of our curriculum, because it's now our story. It's the history of the Yukon, and it's told from one man's perspective — a perspective of tolerance, of intellect and resilience that binds us all as proud Yukoners.

It teaches us to work hard and to love our families and to strive to be more than just an individual, which comes back to my original statement about how you invoke a student to try in the school system. You start with respect, and you teach them that their opinions and where they come from and their contributions are important. This lesson was taught to JJ by his father — about inclusion and community and culture. There's a great story in the book about how his father told him how to respect both sides of the fence that JJ lived on — to make sure he respected the First Nation communities and understood the equality — different but equal. It's a great story. Once again, it's a must-read for every Yukoner.

Locally developed curriculum is not necessarily where we want to see JJ's book. I truly believe that this book should be in curriculum and available throughout the Learning Resource Centre. I'd like to speak a little bit as to how that works, if I'm not mistaken — and I'm sure the Minister of Education can correct me if my wording is wrong here.

The way it works when new curriculum is added, is that it's listed as a designated resource for a specific curriculum. Any teacher of the course can then order a class set, with no associated costs to the individual school's budget. If additional copies are required later on, these costs have to come out of the local school's budget. This is the same as locally developed curriculum, as I understand it. For example, Robert Service School has recently added K'anächá, a book about residential schools from the perspective of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — a locally developed book. Robert Service School has added it to their social studies curriculum in Dawson. I will be speaking more about that in a moment, but my intent today is to get a commitment from the government, not only to have individual schools have to decide whether or not they can afford to adapt JJ's book into their local curriculum by putting it on to that local side of things, but rather allowing them to be able to order these class sets that I spoke about, directly from the department.

The Minister of Education spoke at length this session of the Legislative Assembly about some of the work that his department has done and has ongoing with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in Dawson City, and he referenced it as a partnership. I would like to read from *Hansard* where the

minister said — and I quote: “A partnership with THFN is a priority from the Department of Education. The model that’s been developed could well be a template that’s used in other rural First Nation communities. The Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in education director and staff are working with the superintendent, the director of our FNPP and the school principal on several projects ...”

I believe credit is absolutely due to the minister on his direction for the dual credit initiatives and the first camp credits as well. These projects have been discussed and worked on extensively on a local basis for years. It’s good to see the minister has spent the time needed to meet with the local education professionals to start implementing the educational initiatives generated at that grassroots level locally. The Rangers themselves never cared much about whether or not the Department of Education deemed their trips to the bush with Dawson youth worthy of a school credit. They did it and continue to do it because it’s the right thing to do.

It is traditional and integral knowledge shared by elders and community mentors for all students, yet developed and implemented hand-in-hand by Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and Robert Service School professionals. That’s worth remarking and pausing on. Since I’ve been in Dawson teaching, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in education department has never been exclusive. They have always initiated programs in education and support and community potlatches — and you name it — for everybody in the community. That’s one of the benefits of living in such a great community as Dawson City.

In my days as a teacher at Robert Service School, I spent some time as the acting principal. The local capacity to offer cooperative education is so very vast. One of the Rangers, Mike Taylor, would come in on several occasions when I was acting principal to share his ideas for cooperative learning strategies, working with those marginalized students who just need a place to feel smart. Whether it be in the bush or in the shops, too often the western education system caters to a very select segment of our population, and it doesn’t do enough to identify intelligence for non-university-bound students.

Mike was only just one example of a long list of positive role models in our community who had ideas for education. I believe if the department allowed First Nation governments and other locally based agencies to have a larger role in our schools, we would not see such drastic statistics in the schools with regard to enrolment and dropout.

The Minister of Education is very active on this file. He also mentioned in this House other discussions about embedding Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in culture in the school and how, in regard to alternative programming, Robert Service School is working on identifying issues students from Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and non-Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in families have in regard to attendance and school success problems and solutions.

I believe that the hiring process has started on an outreach coordinator position, assisting the Individual Learning Centre program that Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in is interested in pursuing. This is a .3 position, and the school had to do some shuffling to free up some of its time allotment on an already tight staffing allocation formula, but it shows the emphasis the local administra-

tion has on solving issues such as attendance and enrollment, and also their confidence in the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in education initiatives and their staff when they commit their staffing allocations to such endeavours. Hopefully, the Department of Education will show their faith in local education professional solutions and top up this position to a .5. But I digress. Maybe the minister can comment on that in the House today later.

I would like to speak of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s resources on the residential school experience. As an educator, I’ve used the Tr’ëhuhch’in Năwtr’udăh’a resource in my Planning 10 class — what a powerful experience. A local educator and mentor of mine, Freda Roberts, came in on behalf of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in with this book, and I’ve never seen a more engaged group of students in my career, really. I think a bit of that has to do with the fact that one dare not mess around when Freda is in the class. But I would say more so because of the connection that this book gave to local students on family and the history of residential schools. Comments from the students recognizing relatives in the pictures were very powerful. The brilliant methods that Freda used, using circle sessions and communications and sharing with the students — another amazing Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in initiative.

The Minister of Education stated that he was certainly committed to developing this particular curriculum. As I mentioned, he spoke of a partnership with the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. I know that he is aware that Robert Service School has already implemented this book into its own local curriculum. In fact, all week, educators at Robert Service School have been using the K’ănăchă book in a cultural inclusion exercise focused on residential schools.

The school used their local budget to purchase a class set of this book for use in the social studies grade 10 curriculum. Now here is where we need support from this government. Here is where the partnership still needs a bit more of a commitment. I’d just speak a little bit to that.

I say this with all due respect to the Minister of Education and I have faith that he will continue to see this partnership grow. I believe he can appreciate that we have an excellent model of communication and capacity between the Robert Service School, school council, Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in education and the Department of Education as well. I think the main point for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in would be that the partnership that the minister refers to would be best acknowledged through a commitment from the Yukon government to enter into an agreement based on the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in self-governing agreement. I’m not sure that the chief and council would agree that the partnership has been finalized yet even though they are clearly working toward this goal, so I believe that there is a need to kind of use this as a takeoff point to ensure that the minister endorses the agreement for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in.

This agreement will recognize the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s jurisdiction for the dividing and sharing of responsibilities for education based on the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in self-governing agreement and it will strengthen the work Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and the Yukon government and the Department of Education are doing to achieve the educational objectives.

It may be the first of its kind in the Yukon, actually — a significant move for Yukon to acknowledge and support the First Nation self-governing agreements' jurisdiction in other areas of education.

I told myself I wouldn't use an awful lot of time here, because I know there are a lot of people who do want to speak on this important initiative for getting JJ's book into the curriculum. I did want to make some references to other initiatives that are going on because, as I said in my beginning statements, getting JJ's book into the curriculum is part of a greater plan of inclusion of local curriculum. I'm looking forward to hearing my peers comment today, and I'm hopeful that we get a unanimous consent to adapt Mr. Van Bibber's memoir into the curriculum, and I hope that this is part of a larger trend to include local knowledge and tradition into the curriculum.

I would like to acknowledge at this time the excellent work of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in education team — Ashley Doiron the education manager, Ashley Bower-Bramadat, who is the CELC for the elementary at Robert Service, and also Julia Jennings who is the CELC of the high school. These folks were peers of mine in education, and I have to say that the rapport between elders, school council, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in education department, the teachers — everything is just working on all cylinders.

We have a perfect storm right now of capacity and ability, and it's a great opportunity for the Minister of Education to use this as he moves forward on locally developed curriculum.

Also, in regard to the JJ Van Bibber memoir, I can't sit down without acknowledging the hard work of Shannon Van Bibber. We wouldn't be here today discussing this book at all if it wasn't for her work and her personal sacrifice. She went into her own pocket to make sure that this happened — that this book came to fruition. Clara "Sis" Van Bibber spoke at the book launch about how hard it was to get this project off the ground from the beginning. You can imagine the enormity of this project. I don't know if members in this House are aware of the vast quantities of photos, and I don't know if anybody in this House has sat down and heard the number of stories from this man — the project of just getting everything compiled. Niall Fink was only going to spend a little bit of time in Dawson, and he ended up spending the whole winter, basically camping out with JJ, and he was adopted into the Van Bibber family. He's just thrilled. It was amazing to watch this guy during the book launch. You can just see on his face how extraordinary the project is, and how proud he is of his accomplishments.

But back to Shannon — once again, she orchestrated everything from the small details to working with the Minister of Education and myself to make sure that this is a topic — not only that the book get out there into the public's hands, but also into the curriculum. So I'd like to thank Shannon for her hard work and dedication. You really stepped up, and you know that JJ would be very proud.

With that, I'd just like to conclude and open up the floor to other comments, and I hope to get unanimous consent today.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'd like to start off by thanking the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward. When I heard him read it on the first day that he presented it to the House, I was very interested in it for a number of reasons. One of them is that I, of course, have a very specific and personal interest, not only in the study of an educational policy as it relates to the relationship between governments in Yukon, but also that relationship as a whole.

That's sort of what I would like to talk about a little bit today with regard to this motion and incorporating this book into the more general curriculum in the Yukon, which is the intent of the motion.

As I said, when it was first read, my first reaction was very general support. I thought it was a good idea, but upon consideration of it, I have a few questions and a few issues that I do want to raise on the floor today and have my colleagues give consideration to as to the nature of this motion and the specific initiative of implementing this book into the curriculum. I think the Member for Klondike made a very good point when he said this is, in and of itself, one issue, but it is part of a more general trend. His words were, I believe, "part of a greater plan." That is, I think, a general move toward something that the member noted, which is partnerships. I think that's a general theme that I would like to identify today — partnerships have become the norm for the definition of the relationship between Yukon government and First Nations governments, most certainly in the field of education.

I think that a very good point that the Member for Klondike made — and one that I would agree with wholeheartedly — is the need for culturally relevant programming and materials in the education system and in the curriculum. I think that's relevant for First Nation students, but I think it is relevant for Yukon students, on the whole, as well. We certainly know that there is somewhat of a divide between First Nations' educational outcomes and non-First Nations' educational outcomes in the Yukon. A number of different studies and processes over the years have indicated that a better job of including culturally relevant programming material into the system would improve that. I think it's relevant for non-First Nation students as well. I think the inclusion of culturally relevant programming and material has, in general, two effects. I think it's widely recognized that having material and programming in the school system that is relevant to the students, that they understand and can relate to has a direct link to educational outcomes. I think that if students are learning about things in a manner they can identify with, there's a clear delineation that that improves educational outcomes.

I also think there's another aspect to this we should also consider, which is the development of the territory's people as a whole. In the Yukon Territory, we obviously have a very distinct history and culture, and it's something we should celebrate. The history of the Yukon is something that, while those of us who were born and raised and went to school here feel it's all too familiar, for a number of Yukoners, especially in this day and age when a lot of new families are coming to the territory, moving here and making the Yukon home, it's important they understand about the Yukon's history, about the cul-

tural roots of the territory and about how we got to where we are today.

First of all, as the Member for Klondike noted — and he explained a few examples of what I discussed earlier, which was the idea that partnerships are indeed important in the educational field in this territory. It hasn't always been that way. We've come a long way in terms of educational policy in the Yukon and, in many ways, the educational policy — for good or bad — in this territory has been an interesting indicator of the relationship between the Yukon government and First Nations, as well as First Nation citizens and the state. I mean that more generally, both in terms of Canada and the Yukon.

While culturally relevant material is not the only important aspect we need to consider, it is one aspect of the broader education policy that is, as I said, so important in understanding the relationships that have developed over the years in Yukon.

As I said, education is specifically a policy that's worth evaluating and discussing, when we consider the overall relationship between the Yukon government and First Nation governments. There are essentially two reasons for that, which I'd like to discuss. The first is the role that the legacy of educational policy has played in the relationship between First Nation people and the Canadian state, as I said, and the second is the importance of educational policy to First Nation people and its centrality in the drive for self-government and the drive toward the final agreements which, of course, have become such a defining feature of our political landscape here in the territory.

Going back somewhat, I think it's well understood and we've discussed it quite often in this House — the role that historic policies have had on today's relationships and, of course, residential schools come to mind as one aspect that is particularly poignant here today. The historical legacy of federal First Nation education policy on the continuing relationship between the Canadian state and First Nation peoples has been particularly — I think it's fair to say — destructive throughout the 20th century. It has been widely acknowledged that the federal system of residential schools had a fairly disastrous effect on Canadian aboriginal people, particularly on their language, on their culture and on their sense of identity. Federal recognition and acceptance of these claims were made at the highest level when the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, provided an official apology for the damaging effects of the residential school system to aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

In that apology in 2008, the Prime Minister discussed the residential school policy that was a function of educational policy in Canada throughout the 20th century and he indicated that there were essentially two primary objectives of the residential school system and they were, if I may quote him "...to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal."

He goes on to say, "Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, 'to kill the Indian in the child.'" Again, still

quoting: "Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country."

So I think you see again at the highest level a very important symbolic gesture by the federal government to acknowledge the terrible wrongdoing and offer an unequivocal apology.

Certainly in that is the recognition by the Prime Minister that the legacy of residential schools has contributed to a number of different social problems that continue to exist in many communities today. I think it's relevant to note that there are even examples of this in Yukon.

Further to that apology by the Prime Minister in 2008, the federal government created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission specifically to document and better understand those effects the Prime Minister referenced in his speech and which I just quoted. The negative effect of this legacy on the relationship between the Canadian state and First Nation people cannot be understated. In the most negative sense, the relationship has often been characterized as colonial, and indeed the residential school policy has been probably one of the most damaging of the many elements of Canada's colonization of land and people.

As I said, I think there are examples of this in Yukon. Even before the residential school system began in this territory, what little educational policy that existed was — I think it would be fair to characterize it as negligent.

Probably one of the best — what I would recommend folks to reference when considering that period would be an excellent article by Ken Coates from 1986, which was titled "*A Very Imperfect Means of Education: Indian Day Schools in the Yukon Territory, 1890-1955*". I think it's relevant reading for members in discussion of this kind of topic. Essentially, Dr. Coates notes that Yukon First Nation people were deemed by the government to be — and I'll quote from Coates in his article in 1986: "... marginal people living in a marginal part of the country ..." and that they did not receive a workable education system. So we see that the history goes back even before the residential schools policy.

Once the residential school system began in the 1950s, the situation changed, but didn't necessarily improve. Yukon First Nation children became forced participants in the program of residential schools, and the resulting cultural and spiritual dislocation of residential schools has been suggested as a cause for a number of social problems, as well as educational shortfalls, that have plagued Yukon First Nation people — the Prime Minister certainly acknowledged this in his speech, and we have noticed today, in the statistical gatherings, that the Department of Education does.

As I said, there is another element of this that makes educational policy so relevant as an aspect of the relationship between the Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments, because of the role that education played in and of itself in the development and aspiration toward self-government agreements and final agreements. While the effects on individual survivors of the federal residential schools policy are troubling, they also created a more endemic challenge for aborigi-

nal peoples in Yukon. I don't just mean First Nation — when we say aboriginal peoples in this context, we refer to Inuit and Métis as well, but in the Yukon context, the First Nation is the primary group.

I believe the residential school policy explains that First Nation people have made control over education a central component of a more general campaign for political self-determination.

So, as I've said, at the core of the development of the movement toward self-determination, self-government and final agreements is education. That is certainly something that has been recognized, not only by groups in Yukon, but nationally by groups like the AFN, the national organization.

As I've noted, the history of federal education policy for aboriginal peoples is sown with seeds of colonialism and paternalism and is understandably a cause of the mistrust many First Nation people have toward the Canadian state. This mistrust has been translated into what two Ottawa-based academics, Martin Papillon and Marc Hanvelt, noted as a profound alienation of most aboriginal peoples from Canadian political institutions and Canadian citizenship. That theme is something that is prevalent in the academic literature about the relationship — the effect it has on the formal relationship between the federal government and First Nation people throughout the history of the relationship. I think it's worth noting, and Yukon's a great example, as I've said, of the centrality of education policy to the development of the drive toward self-determination, self-government and final agreements.

It was key to the development of First Nations' political mobilization in the 1960s and 1970s, which I think is probably best exemplified by the document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, of which we'll be celebrating the anniversary very soon — next year. In that document, demands for reform of the education system were at the core. Within the main body, a section devoted to education suggested that if real reforms were not made, First Nation students would continue to suffer.

In an attached appendix, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, which of course was the precursor to the Council of Yukon First Nations, outlined a proposal for a series of recommendations that they wished to see implemented within the Yukon education system. The intent of that proposal was to create — and to quote the Yukon Native Brotherhood in their document: "...a more workable system and render the development of a Separate Indian School System unnecessary..."

So you see that there is a drive for a better, improved relationship with both the federal and territorial governments.

So as I said, while education was obviously an important component of that document, it is probably best known for beginning the process of comprehensive land claims negotiations and the settlement of the historic final agreements that we have in the territory, as well as the commensurate self-government agreements. While education was at the core of that, it's clear that it was aimed at driving forward the desire for final agreements and self-government.

There hasn't been, in my estimation, a significant amount of academic literature devoted toward educational policy in

Yukon and the relationship between First Nation governments and Yukon government specifically in the field, so what we can often do in that case is rely on government documentation. There are often reports done by government throughout the years that can offer some explanations to the nature of the relationship.

As I noted before, the *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* document obviously pushed forward the drive for First Nation final agreements.

I think when we look at the *Umbrella Final Agreement* we see that education is certainly a key component of that. In section 24 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — specifically section 24.3.2, the UFA is clear that — and I'll quote: "For greater certainty, pursuant to 24.2.1, Government and the Yukon First Nation may negotiate the devolution of programs and services dealing with the following: Yukon First Nation authority for the design, delivery and management of" — to use the words of the agreement — "Indian language and cultural curriculum; Yukon First Nation authority for the design, delivery and administration of tribal justice; and the division and sharing of Yukon First Nation and Government responsibility for the design, delivery and administration of programs relating to" "(a) Indian student counseling; (b) cross-cultural teacher/administrator orientation; (c) composition of teaching staff; (d) early childhood, special, and adult education curriculum; (e) kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum; (f) the evaluation of teachers, administrators and other employees". So you see that education is certainly something that factored into the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and was seen as being important enough to recognize those specific passages that I just cited.

Throughout roughly the past decade or so, the Department of Education of the Yukon government has undertaken several exercises to investigate how to better involve First Nations in the education system. The most comprehensive of these projects was probably the education reform project, which was conducted several years ago and produced its final report in 2008. The education reform project consisted of an extensive review of past educational studies and made a number of recommendations, and also was based on consultations with First Nations, as well as further consultation with First Nations and other targeted partners, groups and individuals. Its executive committee, which guided its progress, was comprised of the Chair of the Yukon Chiefs Council on Education, Joe Linklater, the Chief of the Liard First Nation, Liard McMillan, and the Yukon's Minister of Education, who at the time was Patrick Rouble.

The commensurate *Education Reform Project Final Report* consists of background information about First Nation self-government and education, and a series of recommendations about how the system should be reformed.

While the parts of the report that deal with First Nation-specific issues are the focus of the report, it does naturally contain much more than just materials specific to First Nations, such as various community issues, support for teachers, administrators and students. They are obviously important issues for the education system, but I'd like to keep my focus to this policy.

When the education reform project concluded and came out with its final report, it was met with a fairly broad level of support. I'd like to quote Chief Linklater's comments on that from 2008: "This final report is an important step to further enhancing our education system for all Yukoners and it begins at the community level. Working in partnership, the Yukon government and Council for Yukon First Nations will be able to work with community members to make meaningful and sustainable changes in terms of how education is delivered in the territory."

Chief Linklater goes on to say that the education reform final report will help all education partners build on current successes and assist with the development of a common vision for the future development and delivery of education in the territory. So what you see there, Mr. Speaker, is a clear indication of a significant step forward in terms of the recognition of the need for partnership between the Yukon government and First Nation governments when it comes to education.

Based on that partnership, the Education Reform Project Final Report proposed a few new governance structures, which were intended to be a bottom-up participatory model. It had a number of characteristics that I won't get into today, but they're in the education reform project final report for any members who are interested.

What's important is that that recognized the need for focus on aboriginal and First Nation-specific material in the curriculum. I think that's an example the Member for Klondike referenced as being a part of the greater plan and a trend toward partnership between levels of government.

The inclusion of First Nation content in the curriculum is something that was noted in the education reform project, and it included a policy aimed at improving the academic achievement of First Nation students and reversing the decline of First Nation languages.

In discussing a new approach to the development of curricula, the report concludes that in order to be successful, it is necessary to include First Nation values and beliefs. To do this it recommends involving First Nation teachers, elders and leaders in curriculum development, so I think that direction given by the education reform project is well supported or this motion is well supported by that direction given by the education reform project when it comes to the incorporation of culturally relevant and locally developed curriculum.

When the Department of Education received their report in 2008, it of course responded in a number of ways, but probably the most important was the Department of Education's strategic plan, which was titled, *Department of Education Strategic Plan 2011-16: Our Commitment to New Horizons*.

In that report the government reiterated its commitment to the proposals of the education reform project and provided information about the implementation of those proposed recommendations. Throughout the document, particular emphasis was given to partnerships and collaboration between Yukon and First Nation governments. It points to initiatives like an MOU and action plan between the governments and the creation of the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee, which I think have been undertaken previously.

If we go to *Our Commitment to New Horizons* — you see in that document a recognition in the introduction of "The convergence of western and Yukon First Nations traditions brings both challenges and opportunities to deepen collaboration and partnerships with Yukon First Nations governments..." and communities in the public school system.

Further, many of the recommendations, comments and concerns brought forward through the development of a number of reports through the years, including that education reform project coalesced into a number of broad themes relating to Yukon First Nations — respect, and recognition of Yukon First Nations to represent the interests of their people, a call for improved achievement among aboriginal learners, and the need for the Government of Yukon, in partnership with Yukon First Nations, to initiate specific reforms of Yukon's education system to include First Nations to a greater degree.

Concerns regarding the gap in student success between First Nation and non-First Nation students are not only northern ones; the document goes on to say: "It has been recognized by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada that education should be a priority for First Nations across the country." In explaining the environmental scan of the territory's educational front, that commitment to the *New Horizons* report notes that over the next five years, the department will continue to prioritize resources to support First Nation students in feeling welcomed in all class environments, create new curriculum frameworks for Yukon First Nation languages and culture, continue to support experiential programs that integrate local First Nation traditional knowledge and to support Yukon First Nation teachers and administrators to grow into diverse leadership roles.

Improving outcomes for First Nation students requires holistic efforts to support the intellectual, social, emotional and cognitive development of each unique learner. So there's recognition in this document that's commensurate with the Member for Klondike's statements on his motion about the need for this to be part of a more general and broader plan and a trend toward partnership and collaboration.

The document *Our Commitment to New Horizons* commits that, "Over the next five years we will continue to emphasize collaboration with Yukon First Nation governments to improve student achievement. The department is working to make the public school system an attractive choice for all Yukoners while recognizing that self-governing First Nations have the right to assume responsibility for education. The department is increasing its support for community-driven initiatives and has invested in a number of initiatives to strengthen our partnership with Yukon First Nations and to ensure that the public school system meets the needs of all students."

Again, it's important to recognize that while there are certain powers allocated to First Nations in their self-government agreements, the key aspect of educational policy in the territory is that we, the Yukon government and First Nation governments, need to work together in collaboration and partnership to ensure that culturally relevant material is made available to students, both First Nation and non-First Nation. Again, I think this particular motion and the book — JJ Van Bibber's book,

which is the subject of this motion — is very relevant to this discussion.

The Department of Education has undertaken a number of initiatives so far in acknowledgment of those commitments and that direction toward partnership and collaboration. One of them I would say that is very important is the development of the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit within the Department of Education. That branch of the department was created by the Public Schools branch in the Department of Education in August 2006.

The First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit is dedicated to four goals: building productive relationships with First Nations communities; increasing the amount of First Nations perspectives in Yukon schools; improving the academic results of First Nations students in the kindergarten to grade 12 system; providing support to and enhancing First Nation efforts to revitalize their languages. It is espoused by that branch that these goals can be accomplished through meaningful and productive working relationships with Yukon First Nations, governments, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon First Nation Self-Government Secretariat.

The First Nations Programs and Partnership unit has several main responsibilities: First Nation education programs in Yukon schools; First Nation languages and programs in Yukon schools; the development of Yukon First Nation curriculum and resource materials — which I think we have an example of on the floor today — the development and maintenance of partnerships with all stakeholders involved in First Nation education issues; professional development for teachers on Yukon First Nations' perspective and cultural understanding; coordination of Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee and any delegating working groups; and ensuring that Yukon First Nation culture content is woven into schools.

So I think the First Nations Programs and Partnership unit within the Department of Education clearly has the task of going out and working closely with First Nations to develop relevant curriculum for students in the territory. As well, they also provide a number of other resources, which I think are worth noting.

They provide information for teachers who are new to the territory — information and resources for teachers in the territory about teaching in Yukon and a little bit about specific issues related to First Nation educational issues. One of the documents they put out is, as I said, a resource guide for new teachers. That document recognizes the values and uniqueness of Yukon First Nation history, culture and language. The Public Schools branch believes that all First Nation learners can experience success within public schools, so that's important to note as well. It does note that the challenge of a new teacher coming to the territory is to acknowledge the historical injustices and be a part of the solution as we strive to increase the success and graduation rates of our First Nation learners.

Included in that material are a number of suggestions and guidelines for new teachers to develop culturally inclusive educational material and it encourages teachers to take the time to learn a little bit about First Nations in the Yukon and their diversity throughout the various First Nations. It notes of course

that there are eight First Nation languages spoken in the Yukon and each language group has distinct dialects and many have more than one community residing within its larger nation.

It also provides materials to encourage and guide teachers to include the role of elders in teaching and provides the resources to teachers to understand how to properly and responsibly engage elders in a manner that's respectful to them and to the educational aspects they want to achieve. It also provides a community-by-community breakdown of suggested people to contact when they have specific concerns or questions about who to contact and when to contact them.

There are a number of other excellent initiatives that have been undertaken by the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit that are worth discussing and particularly relevant to this discussion today and the notion of including a specific book in the curriculum. The Northwind Books series is an example of an ongoing project to provide reading material that reflects the life and experiences of Yukon First Nation people. The books are used as part of the grade 1 guided reading program.

The books are developed collaboratively with the Northwind Books working group that consists of classroom teachers and an elder, with technical support from the Department of Education. Currently there are 19 books published. So I guess the reason for referencing this is we do have some precedent for including specific books into the curriculum and recognizing their important role in the education system. There are a number of books, as I referenced, that have been presented already, including these: *Making Tea at Grandma's*, which is a level 4/5 book; *Hunting With Dad*, again, a level 4/5 book, which was written by Patti Tetlich; *Kaska Day at School*, which is a level 8 or 9 book from Ross River school, featuring Melodie and Monica Johnny and Henry Nukon; *The Snowsnake Game*, which is a higher level book for the Ross River school, again featuring the same folks, Melodie and Monica Johnny.

There is *Raven Brings Light*, a play which isn't given a formal level, but is featured in the Elijah Smith Elementary School, and features Kerri Peters' grade 2 students. There is *Finding a Medicine Tree*, level 15 or 16, at the J.V. Clark School, which features the grades 1 and 2 students and elder Betty Lucas from the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation. There is *Ice Fishing Fun* from the St. Elias Community School, which features Mariah MacDonald and Jesse McCuaig and elders Mary Shadow and Rosalie Washington of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

There is *A Winter Camp*, from the Elijah Smith Elementary School. There is *Fishing at Simpson Creek*, which is a Johnson Elementary School book, featuring Aaron Chaput and Denetia Stone, elder Leda Jules and Kaska instructor Phoebe Lewis. There is *A Time for Bear Roots*, which, of course, notes a special thanks to elder Jimmy Johnny of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation and the J.V. Clark School in Mayo. There is *Rabbit Stew for Grandma*, which is a higher level book, again, that includes work from elders Martha Buyck and Walter Peter of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation.

Of course, there are a number of others, but I don't need to list them all. I guess my point there is that there is precedence

in a number of different ways for including specific books, that include work done by elders from the Yukon, in the educational curriculum in the Yukon.

As well, on top of the NorthWind Books series, the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit has several other learning resources including the Yukon First Nations 5 social studies unit. The Yukon First Nations 5 provides students with an understanding of Yukon First Nations governance in a pre-contact setting. This unit was distributed to all schools in August 2008 and is a required area of study for all grade 5 students. There are four themes to this: Yukon First Nation languages, Yukon First Nation clans, Yukon First Nation citizenship and Yukon First Nation traditional governance.

There's also the CHAOS program, which is the community, heritage, adventure, outdoors and skills program. That one is more commonly known as CHAOS and is an experiential, on-the-land program offered at Wood Street Centre School for grades 9 and 10 students. A model for the program is a Southern Tutchone phrase, which I won't be able to pronounce so I won't try, but in English it means "together we will learn". It is through the integration of the subject areas that students will develop an understanding and make connections to Yukon First Nation knowledge, traditions, skills and values and beliefs in the course content. This program maintains and enhances the standards of the B.C. curriculum.

There is the Old Crow experiential program, which has received a significant amount of attention in this House in the recent past because of the interest from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin in this program and his fairly strong support of it. In that program, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Old Crow school are in partnership with the Yukon Department of Education and have completed a northern strategy funded project on experiential programming.

Locally developed educational resources were created using a three-year theme and design for multi-grades delivery of both cultural and academic learning outcomes. The cultural camps were facilitated with elder and traditional teachers working alongside school teachers. The student booklets and teachers' guide will be made available to all students in template form so that language and cultural information can be added at the local school level. As well, I would note that language has received a fair amount of attention lately as a presenter recently in Whitehorse raised an example of another program — I believe it was the Language Nest that may be relevant to Yukon and First Nations as well.

Another important program is the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Southern Tutchone bicultural program. In 2008-09, the Education department and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations government, along with the St. Elias Community School council, initiated the partnership to develop, implement and evaluate a pilot project called the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Southern Tutchone bicultural program.

The purpose of this project is to increase and revitalize the Southern Tutchone language and culture from K to 2. Along with a daily Southern Tutchone language component, the pro-

gram is integrated into the overall structure and content of the English-based classroom.

There's also Yukon First Nations studies 12 — the Department of Education is working with Yukon teachers to develop a course called Yukon First Nations studies 12. The course is being adapted from the B.C. First Nations studies 12 course. It focuses on the diversity, depth and integrity of the cultures of the Yukon First Nation history and people. Students will acquire knowledge about First Nations people, relationships with the land, traditional settlement patterns and land stewardship, as well as traditional educational practices and learning processes. They will study the impacts of contact, religion and colonialism. Students will also have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of contemporary negotiations and agreements pertaining to First Nation self-determination.

As I've noted, a number of initiatives are currently being undertaken, and if we were to go forward with this motion as presented to the House, something we'd have to consider would be how we integrate this specific book referenced in the motion into the programming that's already underway. I think the Minister of Education will obviously have to navigate that process if it's ultimately decided by this House to support the motion and provide that book in the curriculum.

I mentioned earlier that relationships and partnerships with First Nations are the new norm when it comes to educational programming and policy in the territory. The Department of Education has worked with a number of First Nations to develop formal partnership agreements and accompanying workplans to move the desired programming of First Nations into Yukon schools.

The Department of Education has invested considerable effort in developing partnerships with Yukon First Nations. These partnerships tend to occur on two levels. Firstly, the Department of Education works with the Council of Yukon First Nations, supporting the tripartite MOU process, on supporting the Yukon Native Language Centre and on providing support for the Council of Yukon First Nations education branch. Secondly, the Department of Education works with individual First Nations to respond to identified needs in their communities.

I'm sure when he speaks about this, the Minister of Education will be happy and pleased to provide elaboration on those efforts.

Of course, as I mentioned before, there is the Southern Tutchone bicultural program that occurs in Haines Junction, in the Member for Kluane's riding, and that is a partnership between the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Yukon government. The three-year project, which I mentioned earlier, with the Vuntut Gwitchin, is another example.

I know it was mentioned by the Member for Klondike in his statements that the Department of Education has worked for a number of years with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to develop a workplan to provide programming for students at risk. Develop a trades program, enhance language programming in that community and provide more First Nations content in the curriculum. I think this motion and the book at hand that we're discussing could offer a model for how this could be incorporated as well.

Accreditation for cultural camps has been developed with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, and this process can be transferred so it can better support all Yukon First Nations in accrediting cultural camps and on-the-land programming.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in education director and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in staff are currently working with the superintendent for the area and the director of the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit and school principal on several projects as well, including dual trades exploration, where they work in partnership to explore the feasibility of a dual trades welding course, either through shop upgrades or the purchase of trades trailers; camp accreditation to accredit cultural camps and other on-the-land learning processes; alternative programming and of course, importantly, residential schools resource development. As the Member for Klondike noted, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been fairly forward-looking and leading the charge in terms of development of residential school programming. I'm sure the Minister of Education will provide some more meat to the bones there in terms of what his thoughts are on the next steps for that.

Of course, there are a number of other resources and programming initiatives that I think are worth noting here. The use of Yukon-based materials is essential to ensuring all students learn about the history, cultural traditions and the important role of Yukon First Nations in our history. Cultural inclusion funding has also been made available to all Yukon schools for the development and implementation of cultural activities, projects and programs.

Another important aspect of the development of educational policy with First Nations is, of course, the Yukon native teacher education program, which, based on recommendations from an external review of Yukon College's program, the college created a review action committee to determine the purpose, goal and vision for a teacher education program in Yukon. That is another example of work currently being done. I'm sure more information can be provided at a later date.

Now, in the specific case of adding material to the curriculum currently, one of the things that is worth noting, I think — for members in this House on discussion of this motion — is that it's not as simple as the Minister of Education simply snapping his fingers and something is included in the curriculum. There is actually a very clear and defined process for the inclusion of resources or courses to a curriculum. I know the Member for Mayo-Tatchun knows this all too well and is familiar with snapping his fingers and making something happen in his community. I'm sure I'll be interested to hear what he has to say about this issue.

When someone wishes to introduce a particular resource into a curriculum, a curriculum consultant reviews the resource. Once approved, it is then brought to Resource Services, which assesses whether or not the funds exist to purchase the resource. If the budget exists for purchasing that resource, it can be then added as a recommended resource. When a school wishes to introduce a course that falls outside of the regular curriculum, a course proposal must be submitted for review by the department curriculum committee. Once approved, it is called a "department authorized course". This most often hap-

pens at the secondary level, where credits are earned for course work. When an outside organization wishes to present to schools, the department must assess whether or not the presentation supports the curriculum. Once approved, the department looks at whether funds exist to support the presentation.

I think it is important to remember that there is an established process already for the addition of materials to the curriculum, and that's something that we'll need to consider as an implementation measure should this motion be accepted and approved.

One of the things that struck me about this motion when I first heard it from the Member for Klondike — my initial reaction was one of support, but I began to think: Why this book, in particular?

I have to admit I never met Mr. Van Bibber myself, but I've heard nothing but incredible and remarkable things about him throughout my time in this House and today from the Member for Klondike. I wondered why, specifically, this book would be so good in our curriculum. Obviously, I recognize the importance and need for culturally relevant programming and material, but I was curious as to — why this book, and why not others? I'm aware of so many remarkable books by local authors and by local experts in a variety of fields that I began to wonder why we would specifically pick this one, or why we would ignore other examples? There are a few great examples of books that were commissioned by this Legislature and authored by Linda Johnson, who's well known to folks in the Yukon Archives scene.

One of those is *With the people who live here: the history of the Yukon Legislature, 1909-1961*, which I think is a very important resource for those wishing to learn about the political and constitutional development of the Yukon Territory. That book commemorates 100 years of elected government in Yukon and honours all those — our predecessors — as members of this Legislature from 1909 to 2009. The development of this Legislature is documented in that book as a part of Yukon's fascinating social, economic and political history. It also contains biographical information about the members elected during the Yukon Legislature's first century. That's something that is a key resource for any student wishing to learn about the political and/or constitutional development of the Yukon Territory.

A key feature of that political and constitutional development is, of course, the Commissioner's Office. *At the Heart of Gold* is also a book by Linda Johnson that details the history of the Yukon Commissioner's Office from 1898 to 2010. The Commissioner, of course, plays an integral role in Yukon's political and constitutional workings, and the history of that book is an exemplary resource that can be used to understand the development of the territory.

The Member for Klondike mentioned a few books that are already — well, books and literature that are already part of the curriculum. Of course, authors like Robert Service and other famous Yukon writers have a role already, but I think that one that is often forgot about is William Ogilvie's book, *Early Days on the Yukon*, which I think is an excellent first-hand account of Mr. Ogilvie's time here in the Yukon during the gold

rush days. It is really an important resource for understanding Yukon's history. On the political side, there are several books that I think are worth mentioning from a variety of political backgrounds. Of course, our former and long-time serving MP, Erik Nielsen, wrote an excellent book about his life as an MP in his 30 years as Yukon's MP and some of the incredible lifestyle changes he experienced throughout his time in the Yukon and representing Yukon in Ottawa. Indeed, on the other side of the political spectrum the former NDP Premier of Yukon, Tony Penikett, has a book, although it is specifically about treaty-making in British Columbia.

There is a chapter devoted specifically to the development of the land claims process and his involvement in that in the Yukon Territory. That's another example of a local author who has put forward a valuable contribution to literature relating to the development of Yukon's political and cultural history.

I would be absolutely remiss if I didn't note Ken Coates. I did note a chapter in a book he had written earlier on pre-residential schools educational policy in Yukon, but, of course, he has too many books to mention in this House that are very relevant to Yukon's students and those who wish to learn about Yukon's history. I of course have to point out *Land of the Midnight Sun*, which was authored by Bill Morrison and Ken Coates. It was really, in my opinion at least, the best comprehensive history of the Yukon Territory. Dr. Coates and Bill Morrison give an excellent treatment of the entire spectrum of Yukon's history, going back thousands of years to issues that those of us will be familiar with even today.

In that book, the authors emphasized the role of First Nations people and the lengthy struggle of Yukoners to find their place within Confederation. So I think that's something that we have to recognize as being important as well. Issue-specific books obviously are interesting as well when it comes to understanding Yukon's history and understanding why we are here today, whether it be — I can't remember the gentleman's name who wrote the history of Yukon aviation that was recently released — Bob Cameron, I believe — or again, Ken Coates and Bill Morrison's *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia*, which of course was a seminal event in Yukon's history that is often forgotten because it happened so long ago and so much has happened since. But really, in the first half of the 20th century, I can think of no more significant change occurring as a result of a single event than the sinking of the *Princess Sophia* which was of course —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to thank my colleagues for reminding me that Lois is Bob Cameron's wife. I know that very well, so I'll say hello to Lois in the *Hansard* office.

As I was saying, the sinking of the *Princess Sophia* is an excellent example of a specific event in history that is integral to understand Yukon's history. When it comes to the more academic or technical accounts of Yukon's history and the development of the territory, I can think of no better example than the two-volume set of *The Yukon's Constitutional Foundations*, which is authored by Steve Smyth. That is an almost painfully accurate step-by-step account of the political happenings of the

Yukon Territory over the many years going back to the gold rush days.

I think it's worth quoting the former Clerk of this House in saying about that set of books that there is little doubt that it will stand as essential reference source for anyone with an interest in the Yukon's constitutional past, present or future. We can't forget other contributions to the body of literature around the Yukon Territory and the history that we're so interested in.

I guess my point here is that yes, there is a need for culturally relevant programming in our schools, and this is certainly an example of it. The book presented in this motion certainly is an example of that, but I do have questions about what sort of precedent we set by accepting one book into the curriculum and providing the support of the House to push it into the curriculum and not other very valid contributions to Yukon's literature and Yukon's history and culture. I say this not to disagree with the motion or to take away from it. I indeed anticipate supporting it. It's something that I would like to bring forward for members to consider in their comments and in the debate on this motion.

Indeed, the other thing that I think needs to be considered is that there are established processes for the creation of material and the inclusion of material into the Yukon's educational curriculum, and we need to recognize that those processes are important, and it's not as simple as simply saying, you know, make it so, and it will be done. So I think we need to probably consider providing some structure around how we are to include it in the curriculum — and even perhaps some timelines around what would be acceptable for a go-forward initiative of this nature.

So I guess to conclude, I'd like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward. I do have a few concerns, and I feel that I have outlined them today — there are a number of very relevant and very important books that we shouldn't turn a blind eye to. But there is no doubt in my mind, after hearing from individuals in my riding, on the floor of this Legislature and out the public, that Mr. Van Bibber's book is exemplary and perhaps stands alone in its very important relevance to Yukon's history from the perspective of not only First Nations but Yukoners in general.

The Member for Klondike noted that he himself was able to identify with that book and with some of the places and the people who are identified in it. That's despite the fact that he's not from the Yukon originally. So that's a testament to the fact that the book is of such a high calibre that it can incite those sort of feelings from someone outside of the territory.

So with that, I will conclude and say that I'm interested to hear what others have to say about this. I feel like the overall context shouldn't be forgotten, and I've tried my best to explain some of the context of educational policy in the territory and the effect it has on the relationship between Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments, how far we've come and how important going forward with partnerships and collaboration is.

I look forward to hearing from other members about this, and I will be listening intently to make a decision about whether or not to support this motion. Thank you.

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to speak in favour of this motion. I'd like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward and for all his endeavours to ensure the book, *I was born under a spruce tree*, becomes a part of the lives of children growing up in the Yukon.

I'd also like to commend and thank Shannon Van Bibber and the Van Bibber family for their support in championing this project. I would especially like to thank the authors, Niall Fink and Shane Van Bibber. I've been fortunate to live in Pelly Crossing and have often even swam in Mica Creek, which is near where Van Bibbers originally homesteaded. While in Pelly, I remember the commitment the Van Bibber siblings made to education in the school. I can remember conversations with Dan and Linch and Kathleen, and with Maria, who was married to George Van Bibber, as well as visits from Alex and Pat Sr., both around the community and in the school. They always made time.

While in Pelly I learned the importance of storytelling. I remember going to fish camps, sitting by the fireside, going on hunting trips and the elders, whether it was Tommy McGinty or Harry Baum, whether it was Rachel Tom Tom or Danny and Betty Joe, in the school and in the community, always emphasized the value and importance of sharing their traditions and world views through stories.

The Northern Tutchone, the Van Bibbers and the First Nation people of the Yukon had a unique and very successful world view, a world view that we have been warned is slipping away. Time is of the essence. Elders are passing, our children are growing up without the benefit of their knowledge. Some of this knowledge has been chronicled, yet much remains hidden and is in danger of being lost or forgotten. The elders and the pioneers of the Yukon have much wisdom to share with us. They have stories to tell; they have built our communities; they have built our schools; they have taught us to love our land and to work one with another as we go forward, for the benefit of not only First Nations but of all Yukon students.

The more widely I search and read, the more I realize how much our world needs those stories. The world has much to learn from these resourceful, innovative, wonderfully observant and knowledgeable pioneers, elders and seniors. They have been stewards of our land and they are part of the land and part of the water.

While I was reading the book, *I was born under a spruce tree*, it reminded me and reinforced some of the underpinnings and the values that I heard around campfires, that I heard in our schools. First is to take advantage of opportunities; second is hard work; third is to use ingenuity and adaptations to help us live on and with the land — the importance of family and community and the wondrous effectiveness of story telling in passing on our knowledge.

In Yukon we are very fortunate; it is rich in history, some of it recent, much from long ago. Through it all, the tradition of storytelling remains strong in our communities. Many an evening at a fireside a cup of tea is shared with a story. The second aspect of this storytelling is that for our elders, for our seniors

and for our pioneers, teaching of children is a priority. It is a responsibility they take very seriously, and many a classroom throughout the Yukon has been enriched by long-ago and present stories.

I remember one of the most successful activities that we did at Eliza Van Bibber School in Pelly Crossing was to get an old wall tent, put a barrel stove in it and Rachel Tom Tom — who was the native language instructor — the classes would go out there and she would make bannock and tea and share her stories with them. Yukon Learn supported that literacy tent and it moved over to work with the college and many elders shared their skills and crafts in that tent.

In the Yukon we are blessed. Not only do we have our elders and our pioneers, but Yukon is a unique place. We have geologists and biologists and anthropologists and historians who come to the Yukon to study and live among us. They know the value of our land and more importantly they know the value of our people. Much of their work has been chronicled. All of it needs to be made accessible.

I think of books that I read that were influential on me, like Julie Cruickshank's *Life Lived Like a Story* or Catherine McClellan's *Part of the Land, Part of the Water*. I know the people in Mayo are proud of and shared the *Gold & Galena*. The Mayo Historical Society published that.

Many of our visitors have left books and memoirs. Some of them remained in the Yukon themselves to be part of the Yukon. I think of Bob Hayes' *Wolves of the Yukon*; Michael Gates who has written history and continues to write history and historical novels. I remember reading Hugh Bostock's book, *Pack Horse Tracks*, about an early geologist who came in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s into the Yukon every summer on horseback and travelled throughout the Yukon. I remember visiting some of his old campsites. Some stories are just fictional; some are historical fiction. I remember one night reading one out at my place on the Pelly called *Murder in the Yukon* and it was an interesting book — very light reading. It took a couple of days to read, but it did set the stage for the building of the Dawson/Whitehorse trail in 1903 — that murder.

We learn about the Yukon through stories. Students have read Keith Halliday's novels, and Jack London, Barrett Wiloughby, Robert Service and Pierre Berton all made Yukon come alive and memorable through their stories. Sometimes it's kind of disconcerting, though, when we talk to the children in our schools and we talk to tourists, we realize that often German and Japanese tourists know more and have read more about the Yukon than our own students. But books and memoirs aren't the only way. In my first introduction to the Yukon, I stopped at the George Johnston Museum in Teslin. What a fascinating bit of history that was and how it enlightened my knowledge of the Yukon. The Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, government houses throughout the territory, First Nation centres, the Keno City Mining Museum, the Binet House in Mayo — I'm very fortunate to live very close to Fort Selkirk.

I've been over there many times. I've taken students there. It's a living, historical monument and an example of the collaboration between the Selkirk First Nation, the Yukon territo-

rial government and the Government of Canada that has lasted over 30 years. The information they have managed to collect and portray is invaluable.

The photo collections they have from Yukon Archives are fascinating and thorough. Libraries and Archives Canada has spent a lot of time collecting our history, and I must commend them for their endeavours recently to make this history more accessible. The MacBride Museum and the Beringia Centre were mentioned earlier. We have a wealth of knowledge — a wealth of opportunity.

One of the neatest things I've seen is that many of the First Nations have renewed interest in their history, and they're listening to their elders' stories. When I go into the Na Cho Nyäk Dun government building, it's a monument to their history, traditions and dreams. Their heritage department is a fascinating and informative collection of artifacts, ideas and short stories.

In the Yukon, much of our history is still young enough that we can visit historical sites. Last summer, I had the opportunity to go visit old Mayo. I've been to Stewart Island. Other places have been mentioned in different areas — unique and wonderful opportunities.

There is a wealth of information available. We can use it to study the past, and we can use it to build the future. We can interest our children in becoming scientists. We can talk to them about our relationships with the water and the land, with the wind and the sun. We can develop our renewable energies in a way that is compatible and workable in the land.

As I said, there are many stories to tell and many lessons to be learned.

Yet while teachers in communities have done much on their own, their time and energy is limited and the process must be formalized and connections made to current yearly curriculum and support must be provided to enable the integration of these units into widespread use. We need to develop a strategy whereby a book like *I was born under spruce tree* has a very viable path to become part of our curriculum. Let us ensure that *I was born under a spruce tree* does become part of the curriculum, that doesn't remain on the shelf as another developed unit.

I was glad to hear the Minister of Environment recognize the importance of local and cultural experiences in our schools. This has been known for many years. He referenced *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* of some 40 years ago. That was integral to what they were suggesting. In order to be effective, *I was born under a spruce tree* must be usable. It must be accessible and most of all it must be presented in a forum that makes connections to the students and to their community.

We need to have a teacher's guide and resources available for sharing of ideas and levels of connections to current curriculum and grades and units. In other words, there has to be a strategy. There is no excuse for not having a strategy to take the resources of the community and build them into our territorial curriculum. Otherwise we end up with a series of one-offs that don't really connect and involve the students.

The book, *I was born under a spruce tree*, and this motion challenges all of us — all Yukoners and the Department of Education — to get our history, get our stories, get our Yukon

to the forefront and into our curriculum. We need to develop a strategy that targets and sets goals for involvement. JJ Van Bibber, through his memoirs and book, left us a challenge, but he has also shown us the way. Take advantage of our opportunities, the elders, the stories, the collections, our heritage. Don't be afraid of hard work. Embrace it.

Use ingenuity. Adaptations for culture are not static, but ever growing. There are different ways, as we saw last night, to tell a story. Emphasize always a relationship to the land and never forget the importance of family and community, but most of all, tell our story. The final part to that: Do it now. Don't let somebody tell you it can't be done; take the example of the Van Bibber family and do it.

Once again, I thank all those who participated in the development of this book, and I encourage all Yukoners to get behind the move to bring the Yukon our stories, our hopes and our dreams to our children so that they can be well-grounded in their world as they venture forth into the wider world.

Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'd like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward. He and I do have something in common, a little bit, when it comes to JJ Van Bibber: JJ being from Dawson, and his brother Alex being from my neck in the woods — out in Kluane. So I spent a lot of time with Alex over the years with my Ranger patrol and, as the Member for Klondike alluded to, with the Ranger patrol in Dawson — I have spent some time with JJ also.

I just want to read a bit of a quote from the *Klondike Sun* about JJ Van Bibber, the "Master Storyteller and Photographer."

"While he lived the latter part of his life in Dawson, he grew up in Pelly Crossing and also lived in Mayo and Whitehorse as well as Dawson during his long life. His wife of 62 years, Clara, was a Dawson girl and niece-by-marriage Geraldine Van Bibber (Yukon's former Commissioner) says that was how he ended up spending his last couple of decades there. He was a registered member of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in."

"JJ was part of a large family that included seven boys and seven girls. Five of his siblings are still living. He and Clara had four children. One daughter and one son are still living. Remembered as a prolific photographer, JJ began taking pictures at age 13 with a Jiffy Kodak 616 camera..." I looked at images of that on Google image — it was a whole camera — "...that he bought at a shop in Dawson City.

"He donated this vast store of photographs to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in 2003, and 2005 saw some of them mounted as a summer display in the gathering room at the cultural centre. That display is now part of a binder that is available for viewing at the centre.

"JJ was also known as a storyteller. He loved to enthrall audiences with tales of his younger years. "I was born under a spruce tree (September 6, 1920), way up the Macmillan River, at Russell Creek," JJ told the *Klondike Sun* back in 2009. And I don't remember when Alex told me, but he told me he was also born under a spruce tree. "Whenever a baby was ready to be

born, mom (Eliza) just holed up for a week, and then put us on her back, and just kept on going.”

That was the way back then. The family did live on the land in the early days, and JJ spent many years trapping with his brothers. It was nothing for them to walk to Fort McPherson and back, and I’ve heard many tales of the Van Bibber’s trapping over the years.

One of his favourite stories was about how the children went to school in Dawson. His father and mother put them on a long raft in Pelly and floated them down the river with the oldest child being the one in charge. Ira and Eliza, known to all as “Shorty,” reasoned that there was no point in paying for a boat passage when the river was running in that direction. The kids would return by steamer when school was out. Geraldine Van Bibber says they stayed at St. Paul’s Hostel when they attended the Dawson public school, but that they didn’t go for very many years. She estimated that they only got as far as elementary school in terms of formal schooling, but they knew how to read and continued learning all their lives.

JJ met Clara Taylor at 12 Mile, and while his stories about just how they met would vary, he was always clear that he knew immediately that she was the one. They lived together until she died in 2004.

Besides trapping, JJ had a store in the Macmillan area. He ran heavy equipment, hauled trailers into the mining camps and took up placer mining in a serious way in the 1960s. When he was in his 40s, JJ had many interests in life. He loved curling, enjoyed watching hockey, either on television or at live games, and the family noted that he attended his first live Canucks game in Vancouver when he was 90 years old.

Alex had spoken to me a little bit about the Second World War. During the Second World War JJ wanted to sign up, but his brothers Alex, Archie, Pat and Dan signed up and they told him he had to stay home. So he joined the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, 38th Company, which has now evolved into the Canadian Rangers. He was proud of that connection.

During the anniversary of the *SS Keno*’s final trip to Dawson in 2010, JJ captivated audiences with tales of running timber rafts on the river and sometimes being a spotter on the steamboats.

JJ was a gregarious soul, and especially fond of having his family around. It was his wish to have family members present during his final illness, and Monique Van Bibber says that they managed to fulfill his wish.

I had the extreme pleasure to go to his book release last week. Some other members from the House were there. I was also in Dawson during the gold show when they released his book. It was very, very incredible. They played a video with JJ in it.

I just wanted to quote something by Niall Fink, who was the guy who went to Dawson for month and wound up staying and working on this book with JJ. He said, “The manuscript for this book was a collaborative effort between JJ and myself. Over the winter of 2010-11, I spent many hours listening to JJ’s stories and transcribing them and then later assembling his favourite narratives into a book-length memoir. Our goal was to keep his voice alive on the page long after he is gone. We were

fortunate to complete the book before JJ passed away last January at age 91.” It was very nice that Niall could come for the book release. He came up for that, which was incredible.

I’d like to speak a little bit about JJ. He lived during a time of immense transition in the Yukon Territory — and I’ve heard my fellow colleagues speak to this — and members from across the floor. He began his life hunting and trapping in the McArthur Range and, at age 12, was responsible for his own traps and dogs. As the fur market collapsed and the new roads and infrastructure forever changed the character of the Yukon, JJ made the transition to the modern wage economy. As he put it, he was on the fence, both between identities as the son of a Tlingit mother and a West Virginian father, and between the past and the present in the far north.

This history book is very incredible — the knowledge that’s in this book. In the Yukon, sometimes our history is forgotten — starting with the gold rush, and then the white man came, and the interactions and engagement with the First Nations. In the early years, when they started, the family’s life between the brothers, the dog mushing and driving, and then came World War I and World War II, trapping and hunting, turning over and looking at construction, and always making a living off the land.

I want to speak a little bit about growing up in the Kluane area. I did spend a lot of time with Alex Van Bibber, and I was very interested to see. I had never heard JJ being called “Grandpa Grandpa”, but most of the residents of Kluane know Alex as “Grandpa Daddy”, or “Gramps”, so that’s very interesting. With that, Alex and I spent many a time with the Ranger connection, as I know JJ did with the Rangers in Dawson City. When the Rangers were having parades, Alex and JJ would be invited to those functions. The patrols throughout the Yukon would gather together to celebrate the function but also the honorary colonels and chief of our units. Mr. Speaker, you will understand where that comes from.

One of the things that always amazed me about Alex was when he would tell me about being a big-game outfitter, when he would start at the Takhanne River on a 10-day hunt by horseback, guiding a big-game hunter, and he would wind up at Champagne and he would spend a day. He said, “I’d just shake it out, shake it off and jump on the horse and then guide another person back over the other direction.” Alex was an interesting big-game outfitter. Many people in the Hougens’ store probably had an opportunity to see the albino moose that he shot on October 3, 1968. That moose spent many, many a year on loan from the Hougens in the Dalton Trail Lodge where, if that moose could tell stories, I’m sure it would. I know I’ve had the opportunity on many occasions to sit with Alex beside that moose and tell stories. It moved its way into Whitehorse into the Hougens Centre now, and if that could tell stories — let alone Alex or JJ.

Alex was also a trapper instructor for the Yukon Territory. He was a trapper instructor for many years, and I can remember going into the Yukon Trappers Association to buy some skinning boards and Alex was in there. I said, “Alex, what are you doing?” He was in his mid-to-late 80s. He says, “Oh, I’m going to teach a course in Cambridge Bay.” “You’re going to fly to

Cambridge Bay? Right on. Good for you.” He said, “Well, I can’t find anybody else.” My Ranger patrol and the Junior Canadian Rangers — we had 18 in our Junior Canadian range patrol and Alex, as a trapping instructor, came out and did one of the courses.

We went up to Squirrel Creek, up the Dezadeash River, and we stayed at Squirrel Creek for five days with Alex.

The kids learned an immense amount from Alex, from his string trick — I don’t know if anybody has seen that — to actual living off the land. I can remember when we were fleshing wolves with Alex. We were out in one of the warm-up shacks, and we were fleshing away. One of my Rangers, Shane Oakley — who grew up with Alex too — and I — our hands got tired, so we decided we were going to go for tea in the cook shack. While we were in the cook shack, Shane looks at me and says, “We’d better get back out there. Alex is still fleshing.” He was 91 or however old he was. So we had to go back out there and apologize to Alex for giving up so quickly. He was sure a tough character.

When I read the book and then I read the motion from the Member for Klondike, I found it quite fitting that this would be something that would go into our curriculum or we could work on getting into our curriculum in our schools.

Growing up in Yukon — I went to school at St. Elias Community School for many years, my first few years in an ATCO trailer, and we slowly worked our way to something that they have today. I remember learning a lot about the French Inquisition, about the history of wars, and a lot of European history, but I don’t remember a whole bunch of local history. The local history that I learned was from my elders — from my grandfather. We owned the store, so we used to get a lot of history from the First Nation elders who would come in the store once a month to get supplies. I find that this is quite fitting that this would be something that we could work on getting in our curriculum, so that the youth of the Yukon can learn a little bit about our history.

When I first got the book, I started reading it, and I realized I have a few autographed copies. My son said to me, “I’m going to read that book, dad.” I said, “No, I think what we’re going to do is — if you can wait until this session is over, during the Christmas holidays, we’ll read it together.” That way, he can ask me questions, and I can explain things — because some of the stuff that happened back in the 1930s and 1940s a lot of the youth today have no understanding of. It would be nice to have somebody with a little bit of history to explain it. That’s why I’m so glad that we’re working on getting this into the curriculum.

Another thing I’d like to speak to a little bit, with this getting into the curriculum — I’d like to talk about my life as a guide in the Yukon. As Alex was a guide for many years, the conditions that I had to guide in were not anything like Alex or JJ in the day. I would guide a lot of European tourists, and when I would ask the European tourists, “Why did you pick the Yukon?” They would look at me and say, “Because we read about it in school, and it’s been my dream to come to the Yukon forever.”

Books by Robert Service, Jack London, Farley Mowat, Pierre Berton — those are the books that are in there and that get people interested and it brings people over. It’s a bit of a boost to the economy having them come over, but it also showcases Yukon as a special place.

One of the things I thought of when this book came out was it would be very, very, very, very important — I said “very” too many times, sorry, Mr. Speaker — but I bought a copy of this so I can donate it at this year’s Christmas concert when the school council raises money. I thought that would be a great gift that they could auction off. There are a couple of quotes that I caught in here that I would like to read in my final conclusion to this. JJ Van Bibber approached the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in in their Heritage department with a shoebox of black and white photos. With his wife, Clara, terminally ill, Van Bibber sensed a new immediacy and he wanted these photos preserved.

Sue Parsons was the collection manager for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and she also recognized the historical significance and it’s a very great thing that this came forward. I know that in my riding of Kluane — the White River First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — I’ve seen an interest in the history and a gathering of history in getting it put down with pen and listening to the elders.

Another thing I caught from this was that JJ Van Bibber would often be found telling stories at the new Tombstone Park visitor centre, and while the visitors were sipping Labrador tea, they would catch a glimpse of what life in the mountains around them was like more than 60 years ago when JJ Van Bibber trapped just west in that park. He would always say that this new building stands a short distance from the pond where 65 years earlier he trapped three beavers.

I think it’s important that we always afford the opportunity for our elders to be able to see areas that they grew up in and have that access to those areas. One of the things that also caught me was they presented him with a photo of himself at five years old. He immediately recalled why he was glowering there. He said, “Helen stole my moccasins”, he explains. “She hid them and I had to have my picture taken with bare feet. I was mad at her.” And to have that memory go back that many years is why this book is so important and I believe we should work toward finding a location for this in our curriculum.

Thank you.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak in support of this motion today and thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward. I would like to acknowledge JJ Van Bibber’s memoir as a profound gift to his community and to future generations. The lives and experience of his large and extended family, his beloved wife Clara, his brothers and sisters are also featured in *I was born under a spruce tree*. Many family members contributed to the book’s publication and deserve our thanks. I’ve been privileged to hear many Yukon First Nation elders speak about their life history and about the place we live in and call home and would like to acknowledge them for sharing their knowledge. I believe *I was born under a spruce tree* deserves a place in our school curriculum.

In supporting this motion we agree that the Yukon education system needs to use more local resources to deliver curriculum on the history of First Nation people and on the shameful history of the residential schools. The intergenerational effects of residential schools continue today and that is part of why it's so important to improve our education system by teaching our students about the past. The past is still with us.

As we discussed yesterday in debate on the Education budget, the graduation rate for aboriginal students in Yukon is only 40 percent. There are 42 First Nation teachers in our education system, less than 10 percent of the 480 teachers employed by the Department of Education across 31 schools, and that number includes Riverfront School, Wood Street Centre and the Individual Learning Centre.

The *Indian Act* was amended in 1884 to allow regulations for the compulsory attendance of status Indians under the age of 16 in Indian schools, but it was 1892 when the church and government formalized a partnership in education that would last until 1969. The arrangement was that government would build the schools and provide some funds for maintenance, school books, medical supplies and wages for staff. The church would manage the schools, hire and supervise the staff and make up the deficit of the school's budget to cover costs such as clothing, travel expenses and food. Chootla Indian school in Carcross remained in operation until 1969. The last residential school for Yukon students was in Lower Post and didn't close until 1975. School-aged children were forcibly taken away from their families, travelling from Dawson and Moosehide, First Nations kids stood in the back of an open stock truck and spent all day being transported down the road to Chootla school in Carcross, making two ferry crossings before bridges were built along the Mayo Road. Family members left behind were bereft. Parents and siblings and grandparents were heartbroken. As it was told to me, even the dogs were silent; the dogs stopped howling because the children were gone.

Those who remained behind in the villages often struggled with violence and addictions. Social workers told them they would go to jail if they didn't send their kids to residential school. On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered what many believe was a long-overdue apology. He said, "...the policy of assimilation was wrong..."

Mr. Speaker, what we as legislators have a responsibility to do is to dismantle that very wrong policy of assimilation — the policy of assimilation that remains embedded in our school system, our legal system and our social service responses.

To better understand and respect First Nations' past, we can turn to the pages of JJ Van Bibber's book and learn from his stories. JJ Van Bibber's stories cover more than one generation. His mother raised a family of 14 children. A very practical story that resonates follows in this brief excerpt: "When we were just pups, she would make a kind of a basket out of birch bark with a little seat on it, and she would carry us around in that while she would work in the bush. She would just lace you in there with a flannel blanket and where you would sit, she would put down some fresh moss on some birch bark. My brother, Alex, always said it was the Indians that invented dis-

posable diapers. She would just whip that birch bark and moss out and put in a new one like changing a coffee filter."

Under the *Indian Act* assimilation policies, children who went to residential school were not only separated from their communities, they were forbidden to speak their mother tongue. Boys and girls were strictly segregated; children were punished if they spoke to their sisters or brothers or any other family member of the opposite sex. JJ Van Bibber tells us about losing the ability to speak his native language. His older siblings — quote: "learned to talk Indian pretty good. That older bunch only went to school a year or two. From Archie on down, none of us could understand a word of Indian. We were the ones that went to school."

JJ Van Bibber speaks, as well, about how half-breeds were treated differently by Indian and whites alike. His father told him: "Boys, you're going to run into some rough obstacles in your life. One of them is being an Indian. You'll always be Indians too, all your life. You keep your head up and be proud to be an Indian." Yes, we were on the fence, you see." JJ Van Bibber's stories give a very personal flavour to Yukon residential school history: "We were always hungry. They knew how to feed you just enough to keep you alive. We lived on stews — tough, tough old meat." JJ went on to describe: "We were so hungry all the time. We'd drink lots of water to keep our stomachs full, but you drink that much water and sometimes you'd wet the bed.

"He'd beat you for that, Johnson did. For any little reason at all, he'd beat you to death. He was the head of the hostel. He beat the girls too, my sister Mary told me. Yes, Johnson had a piece of hose, stiff canvas hose a few feet long and he'd beat you, but never where anybody could see it." And JJ finishes that story by telling us about his brother and some of the older boys thinking it wasn't right that old Johnson was beating the little kids half to death.

"When Johnson took some little kid into his office room for a beating, they all went up there after him and sent Archie in and said they'd back him up. So Archie walked in on him and told him right there he should stop beating on helpless kids." JJ later describes how a bout of tuberculosis "got pretty bad with all the bad nourishment and the cold. They lost four children that year." A Mountie made a detour with his dog team to let JJ's father know that JJ's sister Helen was about ready to pass on. His father went to the hostel and brought Helen, who was nothing but bones, home to die. "And he pulled all of my brothers and sisters out of school and none of us ever went back."

In the prologue of the book, JJ Van Bibber gives credit to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage department for getting him started telling stories. They wanted all the stories to go with the pictures he had taken over the years, starting from childhood. The photos and illustrations add much to the book, especially for younger readers.

Another project launched by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens was the K'änächá Scrapbook Project, which resulted in an exhibit, "Where are the Children: Healing the Legacy of Residential School" and the scrapbook *Finding Our Way Home: Tr'ëhuhch'in Näwtr'udäh'a*. The scrapbook and legacy exhibit

were displayed at Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre. K'änächá/Taking Care of Ourselves group was started in 1998 by a small group of residential school survivors who were ready to break the silence in the community regarding the legacy of the residential school. Its aim was to help others understand and also to ensure that the stories of residential school were not lost over time.

I want to contrast two things. In 1885, the *Indian Act* was amended to prohibit religious ceremonies, such as the potlatch, dances, ceremonies and festivals, thereby oppressing traditional means of grieving, healing and celebrating and maintaining social structure. In contrast, in 2009, *Finding Our Way Home* was published and distributed by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. The K'änächá project model of leadership is rooted in the medicine wheel, an indigenous concept.

Emotional leadership — the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens acknowledge the impact of the government and the churches' actions removing children from their families and depriving them of their culture. One person saw a need for healing in the community; then many asked for, gave and received support for one another.

Mental leadership — Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage workers, lawyers and counsellors helped citizens with historical research and remembering acts of resistance. There were children setting snares for rabbits, speaking Han, parents writing to the bishop, the principal, or the Indian agent to ask for their children's return to their family and community. The project recognized the intergenerational effects of the denial of culture. The mental and emotional knowledge contributed, as well, to the physical and spiritual aspects of the project.

Physical leadership — collecting photos that turned into a book, published in 2009, creating the "Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential School" exhibit, which was displayed at the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in held a welcome home ceremony in May 2007 for all of the children who left Dawson to attend Indian residential school, a celebration to acknowledge healing in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory.

Finally, spiritual leadership — developing within the community a sense of belonging, honouring the strength and resilience of survivors, acknowledging that the denial of culture had an effect on all First Nation families, and holding ceremonies to acknowledge healing — not just the one in Dawson City, but the Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools conferences and the aboriginal healing conference.

Turning again to the school system, a very current example of an aboriginal model of learning is the new Elijah Smith school growth plan, which has been developed with the goal of building character education in the school. The school growth plan is based on a First Nation model of four core values: belonging, generosity, independence and mastery. These values set the foundation of learning conditions that are designed to improve social responsibility outcomes for all students. The values of belonging, generosity, independence and mastery also correspond to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual components of the medicine wheel.

Before I close, I would like to encourage Yukon's Minister of Education to look beyond the convergence of western and First Nations traditions, which the Member for Copperbelt North spoke about, to a bolder step. I ask the minister to support the concept of an aboriginal school model, informed by First Nations pedagogy and offering First Nations curriculum to all students.

There are a number of initiatives on the national stage that fit with the motion that we're debating and that fit with my support of an aboriginal school model. Over the past number of years, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada has focused resources on an aboriginal education action plan guided by three pan-Canadian objectives: sharing best practices in aboriginal education; strengthening the capacity for evidence-based decision-making; and addressing teacher training issues in aboriginal education.

The First Nations model informed by First Nations pedagogy and offering First Nations curriculum would be different from adding small bits of First Nations history and culture in a western-based school system. First Nations governments and First Nations educators point out that such an aboriginal school model would benefit non-native and First Nations students alike. Adopting JJ Van Bibber's book, *I was born under a spruce tree*, is well worth doing. It's a strong curriculum resource for any model of education. As I have spoken about in my brief time this afternoon, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in resource, *Finding Our Way Home*, is also a good resource as well as other books that members have spoken of, such as *Part of the Land, Part of the Water*.

I hope that all members on both sides of the House will support this motion and pass it unanimously. The Official Opposition will continue to advocate for an inclusive education model that is open to larger possibilities, which I've spoken about today, for all of our students to succeed at school. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion, and I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward this motion for debate here today. Of course, the motion itself is a relatively straightforward motion and very short in content, but it does allow us to have a broader discussion here today. I would like to thank the Minister of Environment for his input into the debate this afternoon. I know that First Nation education is something he is very passionate about, and I was pleased to allow him to take the spot for an unlimited amount of time to provide his insights. Again, I'd like to thank him for bringing that forward. As I did before, one day in the House here, I did lend my copy of *I was born under a spruce tree* to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and he quickly read through it, and earlier today I lent it to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, and he is just about to give it back to me.

So thank you very much for that to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. I'll get my copy back to you so you can complete it at a future time.

Maybe what I would like to start with is reading the dedication in this book. What that states — and I'll quote: "This book is dedicated to all the grandchildren, great grandchildren

and those yet to come. You are the reason for this project, for the sparkle in Grandpa's eye, the song in his voice and the breath in his mouth organ."

I mean, it's a very poignant dedication. I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to meet JJ Van Bibber but, of course, over the past while, I feel like I've had the opportunity to get to know him, not only from the words on the paper in this book, but attending a number of the launches of this book — I guess sort of a pre-official launch that happened during the Geoscience Forum and then the official launch at the Old Fire Hall that happened more recently.

I would like to echo some of the other members today in thanking those who contributed to and supported this project, starting with Niall Fink for his perseverance, patience and skill as the acknowledgments in the book say; Shane Van Bibber for the illustrations; Pat Van Bibber Sr., Steve Van Bibber and Clara or Sis Van Bibber for supporting Grandpa JJ's project.

A number of other individuals that I'm just going to take a moment to recognize — Laurel Parry, Jo de Beaudrap, Karen Dubois, Jackie Olson and Lulu Keating "who helped us to shape our family's vision for this project and for being enthusiastic cheerleaders especially when there was rough waters; David Neufeld, Teresa Earle, Yukon Archives, the community of Dawson City and a very special thank you was issued for those who provided generous financial support including the Klondike Placer Miners Association, Rob Carpenter of Kaminnak Gold Corporation, Steve Van Bibber, Sue Craig and Bill Harris of Northern Freegold Resources, David Neufeld and Joy Waters, Raymond Caley and Leo Twordick."

I think those individuals who were acknowledged in the book did a tremendous job of bringing this forward and just to repeat Shannon Van Bibber's contributions to this — I know that the copy of the book that I have that was presented to me by the Member for Klondike is autographed by Shannon and she is such a tremendous and enthusiastic supporter of this project that I can't thank her enough. I know when we were at the launch at the Old Fire Hall she came and spoke to the Member for Klondike and I and recognized the cooperation that we're showing between our two parties and two individuals in working together to make this book part of the Yukon school curriculum. So again a big thank you to Shannon for all of her hard work in making this book a reality.

When we spoke at the Old Fire Hall and I was joined — the Member for Klondike actually emceed the event and the Member for Kluane and the Member for Porter Creek South were also in attendance at that event. I had the opportunity to speak after a former Cabinet minister from these chambers, Mr. Archie Lang. It's always difficult to follow Archie when you're speaking, but I have to say it is one of the few times where I've stepped up to the podium and had to raise the microphone in order to speak, so hopefully Archie is listening and I know he took liberty to take a couple digs at me that evening, so I'll take a couple back with those remarks.

On the personal side, my wife and I did purchase a number of books to use as gifts, not only for friends and family, but I'll use them as well for visiting dignitaries. We actually sent the first one outside to our nephews; Thomas Leslie and Robert

Leslie in Calgary will be enjoying this book, and I know that they'll find the stories as interesting as the Yukon children find them. They are tremendous young men with a strong aptitude to learn, and as I said, I hope they enjoy the book as much as those in the Yukon do.

Some of the commitments that I've been able to make previously are, of course, during education debates with the Member for Klondike — every Yukon school library will have a copy of this book in it, and we have started the process for inclusion into the Yukon curriculum. Some of the stuff that I obviously do outside of the Legislature — I do a lot of research into what other jurisdictions are doing with their education — and I came across quotes from President Obama on November 4, 2009. He at that time said and I quote: "It's time to stop just talking about education reform and start actually doing it." I think that really epitomizes what my vision is for education in the Yukon, not just education reform, but when it comes to closing the gap that exists between First Nation and non-First Nation Yukoners.

Recently we signed the memorandum of understanding to develop an education action plan and that was a partnership between Canada, Yukon and a number of Yukon First Nations. Many individual chiefs signed on to that. I think it gives us an opportunity to move forward and honour what the U.S. President said where we have to quit just talking about these issues and start actually doing it and developing the action plans that we need to do. What this agreement with our partners provides for is a long-term strategic action plan for First Nations' lifelong learning process with priority on the kindergarten to grade 12 systems. Aspects of lifelong learning include early childhood development, post-secondary and adult education. No plan is worth the paper it's written on unless there are performance indicators. I think that is something very important that we need to incorporate into that document when we move forward on it.

I know many of my colleagues have spoken about some of the initiatives underway in the Department of Education. I'll touch briefly on a few of them. Of course, we spoke about the MOU. I'd also like to just backtrack a little to yesterday's education debate and some of the ideas brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin around *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* and celebrating the signing of the first land claims, and of course some of the UFA chapters that are entering their 10th year anniversary next year, including the YESAA — the implementation of YESAA and the development of the YESA board.

So 2013 marks a number of important milestones. I'm pleased that for Education Week we can put in a theme to celebrate Yukon First Nations and build Education Week around aspects that include that. So again, we're excited to move forward with that in April as the key theme to the Education Week for 2013 here in the Yukon.

Of course, partnerships with Yukon First Nations — the Department of Education has worked with a number of First Nations to develop formal partnerships, agreements and accompanying workplans to move the desired programming of First Nations into Yukon schools. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First

Nation partnership projects have been spoken about here this afternoon.

I know the Minister of Environment spoke about dual trades exploration and working in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Yukon College and Robert Service School to explore the feasibility of dual trades welding course and camp accreditation — in which school staff, First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit and the curriculum branch are working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in staff to create a course and assessment framework for TH camp courses, such as first hunt, first fish and plant use. Staff, of course, work through each course as it comes up and by the 2013-14 school year, students will be able to gain credit for this work.

Other discussions, again about embedding Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture in school, are also ongoing. I know the Member for Klondike referenced my commitment to that in *Hansard* earlier. Of course, alternative programming that's occurring — Robert Service School is working on identifying issues facing students from TH and non-TH families that are having attendance and success problems. These findings will be discussed with the staff, council and TH and short and long-term solutions will be identified and implemented as appropriate.

I guess one of the aspects, again, mentioned by the Member for Klondike on that has been the ILC, or Individual Learning Centre, resources that have been reallocated within the school to that. I'm excited about those opportunities and building on those opportunities as we move forward.

Residential school resource development — Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has developed some resources on the residential school experience and our First Nation partnership unit will discuss how this might be part of a course that we're looking to develop. I know we have spoken at length about what's happening with the residential school curriculum and my desire to have that in place for the fall of 2013-14 and, again, building upon the success that the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are enjoying today with their residential schools curriculum. I know there have been a number of discussions at the officials level on how we can build upon that work and adapt it to a Yukon-based residential school curriculum. Again, I think that's an important story that we need to tell and an important story that we need to tell all of our students, not just those of First Nation ancestry, but indeed all students who are in the Yukon education system.

We have a number of other initiatives that are underway within the Department of Education, such as the First Nations Education Commission; there is First Nation language research MOUs with Simon Fraser University and UBC. We spoke about the residential school curriculum and what has been done on that so far. There are plans for new resources and we're looking to roll that out. There are a number of different partnerships that take place.

One thing I don't think I've had the opportunity on the floor of this House to do yet is to congratulate the Yukon's winner of the Council of the Federation literacy award, and that's elder Doris Roberts, from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in Dawson City. I had the pleasure — and the Member

for Pelly-Nisutlin accompanied me — at that event to present her with that award in her home community in early September. For those members who don't know Doris' accomplishments, over a number of years — of course, most members would know the story of Chief Isaac and taking the traditional songs and stories of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to Alaska during the gold rush to preserve and protect them. Doris spent years traveling back forth.

My understanding is she's not all that fond of small planes but, nevertheless, persevered and travelled back and forth to Alaska to repatriate those stories, songs and dances. It was a tremendous privilege and honour for me, as Minister of Education, to present her with the Council of Federation literacy award. Again, that's something done through the Premier's office, and I thank him also for allowing me the opportunity to present that in Dawson City in September.

I have had the opportunity to review this motion. As a testament to the cooperation that I enjoy with the Member for Klondike, I have proposed an amendment, and I'm going to move that amendment now. I have discussed this amendment with the member opposite and, I believe, as of yesterday, we were both fine with it.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Kent: I move

THAT Motion No. 247 be amended by:

(1) adding the words "to explore options" after the word "Education," and

(2) adding the words "for the 2013-14 school year" after the word "curriculum".

I do have copies of the amendment for all members of the Legislature here today.

Speaker: Order please. We've made a small change to the wording in the amendment. The first one reads "... adding the words 'to explore options' after the word 'Education,' ..." It will now read the phrase 'Minister of Education.'"

It has been moved by the Minister of Education

THAT Motion No. 247 be amended by:

(1) adding the words "to explore options" after the phrase "Minister of Education;" and

(2) adding the words "for the 2013-14 school year" after the word "curriculum".

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'll be brief with this. Perhaps what I could do is read out for members what the motion as amended will read like.

"THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to explore options to adopt the JJ Van Bibber memoir, *I was born under a spruce tree*, as part of Yukon's education curriculum for the 2013-14 school year."

Why I've added that and worked with the Member for Klondike on the amendment is of course there is a process that we have to follow for adding resources or courses to a curriculum. When someone wishes to introduce a particular resource into a curriculum, the curriculum consultant reviews the resource. Once approved it is then brought to Resource Services

to assess whether or not the funds exist to purchase the resource. If the budget exists for purchasing the resource, it can then be added as a recommended resource. When a school wishes to introduce a course that falls outside the regular curriculum a course proposal must be submitted for review by the department curriculum committee. Once approved it is called a “department authorized course”. This most often happens at the secondary level where credits are earned for course work. When an outside organization wishes to present to schools, the department must assess whether or not the presentation supports the curriculum. Once approved, the department looks at whether funds exist to support the presentation.

As I mentioned earlier, the work has already started to introduce this book into the school curriculum. I know, as part of the 20 percent locally developed curriculum, a teacher the Member for Klondike mentioned from Robert Service School has already begun work on incorporating it into the local curriculum there.

I think we need to follow the process to guard against other books that aren’t appropriate being introduced into the curriculum. I think it’s very important that processes are set out and that we follow them. I know members of this House are certainly committed to doing this, and I want to just read again, briefly, from the book and some of JJ’s words in the prologue. I will conclude with this. This is a wish of JJ’s that I, as Education minister, want to ensure that we honour. I know the Member for Klondike feels the same. Just before I do that, I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward and for his commitment to this project on behalf of the Van Bibber family.

I have to say I have enjoyed working with him and learning from his experience on education initiatives, and I will enjoy continuing that work over the next year. Quickly, here’s the quote, and it starts here: “They’re making a book about me. Yah, it’s going in all the schools so the kids can learn about how we lived in the old days. They call it oral history. They want all my stories written down before I go.”

So it’s certainly my intent to honour those wishes of JJ Van Bibber and, of course, his family, and bring this into the school curriculum.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion as amended. I want to talk about Mr. Van Bibber as a person.

Speaker’s statement

Speaker: Members are speaking to the amendment, not the motion as amended. Please restrict it to the words of the amendment.

Leader of the Third Party, on the amendment.

Mr. Silver: I don’t have much to say on the amendment. Like the Minister of Education has already indicated, I was aware of this amendment, and I am also very aware of the minister’s intent here. I have no problems with the rewording of the motion, as the original intent of the motion is still valid and still intact. I am convinced of the minister’s intentions to get this into the curriculum, so I will support the amendment.

Mr. Tredger: I’m a little concerned at exploring options and also the timeline, and that might seem contradictory, but what is needed here — if I can paraphrase some of the stuff I learned while reading the book — is to take advantage of our opportunities. We don’t need to explore options. JJ Van Bibber and his family have given us a wonderful opportunity. That book should be — from talking to everyone — in the curriculum. What this points out is that for many years we have had good ideas. We stop and we explore options. We haven’t been taking the risks and we haven’t been taking the chances.

What is needed is a strategy that allows communities and schools and teachers to have input into our curriculum, so that when we come up with something it doesn’t become an ad hoc solution, but becomes integrated into the curriculum. I too have faith in the Minister of Education. I trust him. What this book needs, more than to look into the options, is a champion — someone in the system who will take a risk, who will put this book forth and put forward the history, meaning and intent of JJ Van Bibber.

This is an important point. We have an opportunity. Yes, it will take hard work; yes, it’s going to take some ingenuity; it may take some adaptation. But the process of putting this book into the curriculum will help other resources also get into the curriculum. The Minister of Environment mentioned things from 40 years ago. We have known for 40 years, since *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, that it is critical for our children to have our history, our culture and our values in our schools.

The First Nation people have been patient. The First Nation people have worked together. People in our communities have been patient and working. The Van Bibber family put this book together, with their energy and their resources. It is a gift. Let us take advantage of that opportunity.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I just wanted to speak very briefly today on the amendment.

Today on the motion I indicated a few questions or concerns that I had originally about the process and the Minister of Education did outline that process as well, so I’m quite happy to see this amendment come forward. I think it strengthens the motion and pays due respect to the existing processes that are in place.

I think it’s important for us in the Legislature to identify this as something that is very important and identify this as something that we want to see eventually end up in the curriculum, but it’s something that we are asking for, not dictating to the process. I think adding the words “to explore options” gives the minister the flexibility to engage properly in the process and respect that process so that those involved will be able to undertake the work they need to do to make sure that this enters the curriculum in a proper way.

Then again, the second point is that I’m happy to see that the 2013-14 school year is identified, because then we have some certainty for members through this Legislature that we can expect to see this in fairly short order as the 2013-14 school year is actually fast approaching. I think that this amendment

strengthens the motion and I hope that my comments about the process can somewhat assuage the Member for Mayo-Tatchun around his concerns about this amendment. This is about respecting the process and about providing a bit of a timeline for the minister to work with. As we've heard, the minister is committed to this. I appreciate the amendment he has brought forward.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just want to also — to my fellow colleague, the Minister of Environment — what he had to say. I just wanted to get across the fact that working together with the process on the friendly amendment — I like to see that in this House, so thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment?

Amendment to Motion No. 247 agreed to

Speaker: Does any member wish to be heard on the main motion as amended?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I was saying when I jumped up a little too quickly — I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the motion as amended.

I want to talk about Mr. Van Bibber as a person and I think it would be appropriate to talk about his memoir. John James Van Bibber, known by all as “JJ”, was born under a spruce tree on the banks of the Macmillan River on September 6, 1920. His mother, Eliza, a First Nation woman from Aishihik was on her way to Russell Post for supplies at that time. His father, Ira, was a prospector from West Virginia. Together they had 14 children — seven boys and seven girls, of which JJ was child number 9.

JJ is survived by brothers Alex and Pat, Sr., sisters Kathleen, Lucy and Linch. He was pre-deceased by brothers Abe, Dan, Archie, George, Theodore, and sisters Leta, May, and Helen. The Van Bibbers were raised on Mica Creek on the Pelly River near Pelly Crossing. The family did live on the land in his early days and JJ spent many years trapping with his brothers. One of the humorous stories I read about was how the children came to school in Dawson and members have spoken about this already. His parents put them on a log raft in Pelly and floated them down the river with the oldest child being the one in charge. The parents figured there was no point in paying for boat passage when the river would carry them there anyway.

I tried to imagine what it must have been like to spend three days with your siblings rafting down the river to Dawson to go to school, far away from your home and far away from your parents. As a parent myself, I cannot imagine sending my sons off like that — different times.

So indeed the Van Bibber children attended school in Dawson City where they stayed at St. Paul's Hostel. After what I can only describe as a terrible experience in school, including

the death of a sister, JJ left school at age 12. To subsist, he hunted and trapped in the winters, and in the summers he grew a garden and cut wood. He left home at 16 and got a job as a longshoreman, then drove Caterpillar tractors at Keno.

He was in the Dawson area cutting wood when he first met Clara Taylor, a Dawson girl herself. In fact, it was on the river where he met Clara Taylor, at 12 Mile. JJ would tell at least three versions of the story about how they met, but what is common in all of them is that he knew right off the bat that she was the one for him. Their marriage was indeed an inspiration to all. They had a true partnership together.

They were married for 62 years. JJ and Clara had four children; one daughter and one son are still living. Their clan has expanded to welcome grandchildren and great grandchildren. He is predeceased by his wife Clara of 62 years; his son, Pete; his daughter, Eleanor; his grandson, Reggie; father Ira; mother Eliza. He is survived by his son Steve; daughter Clara; grandchildren, Doug, Vince and Nadine, Andrew and Darwin, Steve and Shane and Shannon, Lori, Fred and Leane; and his great-grandchildren are Kathleen, Brandy and Jared, Shania, JJ, Dustin and Joshua, Jamie, Kirstin, Curtis and Alisha, Tannis, Isis, Dillon and Tamara and Kyle and Charles.

He later logged on the McQuesten River and then operated a trading post at Moose Creek on the Macmillan River. With the fur industry in decline, and the road network shifting traffic off the rivers, he again proved how adaptable he was. He worked at United Keno Hill Mines and tried his hand at placer mining on the McQuesten and later mined for Lorne Ross, then mined on Clear Creek in the 1980s.

During the war, as alluded to by other members, brothers Alex, Dan and Archie all volunteered. After a family consideration of the risks, JJ was asked to stay home. As his brother Dan told him, “No use in all of us getting killed. You stay home.”

So JJ stayed behind and looked after the family. He joined the Northern Pacific Rangers, 38th company, which is known as the Canadian Rangers today — the eyes and ears of the north. JJ was proud of this contribution throughout his life. At the age of 13, JJ got a small camera. It was a Jiffy Kodak Six-16 that he bought at a shop in Dawson, and thus began his love of photography. This would result in an impressive and compelling record of his travels, adventures, his way of life, and the people he met along the way. Clara also shared his love of photography and together their pictures reflect their active and amazing life together.

One of the quotes I read stated, “Seems like I only remember the stories I have pictures from.” Remembered as a prolific photographer, JJ began taking pictures at age 13. He donated a vast store of photographs to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in 2003, and in 2005 saw some of them mounted as the summer display at the gathering room at the local cultural centre. That display is now part of a binder that is available for viewing at that centre.

Among the many stories JJ liked to tell was the one where he was alone in the bush in the middle of a cold snap. He was travelling by dog team and was checking his traps. He got stuck near a frozen waterfall and thought, “Oh my, I'm going to have

to build a camp for the night.” With only the northern lights and the moon to light his way, he settled in to spend a cold night, but he eventually heard the yelps and traces of another dog team and was surprised and pleased to look up to see his brother Dan come into view.

This story symbolizes the Van Bibber way of how survival, love and skill intertwine as a way to live life to the fullest and appreciate each other. We are here to remember JJ and to celebrate his life and his legacy. He had the gift of looking at life as a series of adventures and opportunities that could be achieved through hard work and imagination.

JJ loved who he was. He was proud of his heritage, and his family was everything to him.

I think the Van Bibber name will live up to itself for years to come. There are many Van Bibbers living in Yukon today, young and old, making their own impact on the people they meet and the territory in which they live.

I have the pleasure of having a Van Bibber staff member working for us in Tourism and Culture. Shannon Van Bibber is not only an exceptionally dedicated employee, working very hard for us at Tourism and Culture, but she seems to have a profound belief in her family name and has worked tirelessly on JJ’s book launch. I suspect that Shannon is as solid a person as JJ was. I cannot think of a finer role model for young Yukoners. JJ, Shannon and the Van Bibber family represent those values that we would all do well to uphold: love, commitment, determination, perseverance in the face of adversity, hard work and reliability.

Last Wednesday evening I had the pleasure of attending the Whitehorse launch of *I was born under a spruce tree* — the recently published memoir of JJ Van Bibber. The Member for Klondike emceed the event. Previous Cabinet member and a friend of JJ’s, Archie Lang, said some very kind words about his conversations with JJ. It is so very clear to me that this man not only had a profound effect on the people he came in contact with but also on the entire Yukon. Several of my Cabinet colleagues were also there, including the Minister of Environment, Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Minister of Education. I want to acknowledge that the MLA for Klondike was also the master of ceremonies and the MLA for Mount Lorne provided music along with fiddler Boyd Benjamin.

As I mentioned earlier, JJ’s long-time friend and former Community Services minister, Archie Lang, was also there to share his memories of JJ and the family. For all of us there, it was an evening to honour and celebrate the life of JJ Van Bibber, who like his brothers and sisters, speaks for the generation of tough and self-reliant individuals who helped define the spirit of the Yukon.

The same can be said for JJ’s wife Clara, a remarkable woman whose strength, independence and beauty were an inspiration for JJ for 61 years. In a video produced by Northern Native Broadcasting that was shown at the launch, JJ spoke of his love for Clara and how after her passing he was at a loss.

What renewed JJ’s spirit was the interest in the photographs that he took throughout his life. Clara too was an avid photographer and, as I alluded to, fiercely protective of her camera. In JJ and Clara’s images we see one of the most amaz-

ing collections of historical photographs capturing a way of life most Yukoners can only imagine. The wonderful images combined with JJ’s words tell a unique and unforgettable Yukon story that is all the more compelling because it’s true. Part adventure story, part romance, part historical textbook, *I was born under spruce tree* is a compilation of JJ’s best storytelling.

At the launch I was reminded again of how enriched our lives are in Yukon by the stories of our elders. JJ’s book provides a record of the way people lived in the past — a time before roads and telephones, when people travelled by water, by foot or by dog sled.

JJ has left an enormous legacy to his family. His stories recount Yukon’s history, a life lived well and with purpose, a curiosity, a confidence and the knowledge that hard work and genuine appreciation for family and friends can help overcome life’s obstacles. With this book, JJ’s legacy extends beyond to the wider Yukon public. The book represents the past and the present; First Nation and European sensibilities. It exemplifies the Yukon spirit of exercising skills and acknowledging that wealth and happiness exists in terms of a life well lived. I can’t think of any other better reason for school students to read and enjoy this book.

JJ’s parents, Eliza and Ira Van Bibber, instilled in their children incredible self-confidence and self-reliance. JJ Van Bibber and his brothers were extraordinary men also with the inevitable ability to succeed at pretty much anything they set their minds to.

It’s important to note that trapping in the bush in winter and booming logs near Dawson City in the summer, the young JJ Van Bibber moved effortlessly from one line of work to another. The bush was home for the Van Bibber brothers and they thrived there, in spite of a few hair-raising tales of survival. What many of us would consider epic or extreme outdoor pursuits were all in a day’s work for JJ and his brothers.

JJ had abundant natural gifts, not only in the wilderness, but also in the world of modern industry and machines. He outwitted his boss, Ed Kimbel, while repairing a Cat for the first time, and had the innate ability to read the water so his log booms wouldn’t get trapped on sandbars.

JJ and Clara were flexible and accepting of a changing world and their ability to adapt to new economic situations was admirable. When the bottom fell out of the trapping market, JJ and Clara moved on to work in a wage economy. Along with this resourcefulness, the book also reveals JJ’s honesty and good humour. You get the sense that JJ did not suffer fools gladly but was fair and balanced in his assessment of people. He described his bosses at the Dawson sawmill as tight-fisted, but he also credits them for paying him a higher wage than average in recognition of his good work.

I was born under a spruce tree is told from JJ Van Bibber’s perspective as a person whose father was of European descent and whose mother was First Nation. While his family origin may have impacted how he was defined by social institutions — for example, by the education system and by Indian Affairs — it seldom affected his approach to life or how he viewed others. In fact, JJ would use his family heritage to his advantage. JJ says in the book, “We always played both sides

of the fence, whichever side was winning.” He had the gift of looking at life as a series of adventures and opportunities that could be achieved through hard work and imagination. He loved who he was and he was proud of his heritage and family.

For Yukoners, *I was born under a spruce tree* is a must-read for learning about the men and women who built post-gold rush in the Yukon. It was an era when sled and pack dogs were essential to survival and when the seasons determined how people made a living. JJ experienced great changes in the Yukon way of life — for example, when river travel transitioned into roads. This period is marked by incredible resourcefulness, innovation and strength and the Van Bibbers have these characteristics in abundance.

I was born under a spruce tree is important to understanding both our past and our present, and we can all learn from JJ’s honest and straight-forward optimistic approach to life. As Minister of Tourism and Culture, I’d like to recognize *I was born under a spruce tree* as an important contribution to Yukon’s social history. I also wanted to mention that the Van Bibber family is working with Yukon Archives to have some of their grandfather’s photographs donated to the archives. This will be a significant addition to the archives, where JJ’s photographs will be preserved and made available for researchers.

The photographs, together with the book, make up an invaluable cultural legacy generations of Yukoners will treasure for years to come. I support this motion as amended.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It’s a pleasure to rise here today in support of the motion as amended. I’d like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward. I’d like to acknowledge and recognize the work that was done — everyone who is credited with this book — and the work that Shannon Van Bibber and the rest of the family did in helping bring together JJ Van Bibber’s stories.

I think that really one thing that is notable too and should be recognized is that, while this is the history and the memoirs of one man who has a long history in the Yukon — has a very long life lived in the Yukon — it’s also about the history of a family who had a lot of influence on the Yukon, both from a cultural perspective and in terms of a role in its economy and its growth and also influenced it through a lot of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

This is also a book about the Yukon’s cultural and economic history from a perspective that is really, in some ways, very unique and, in some ways, very much tells the story of the breadth of Yukon society, because, as a few other MLAs have noted, the fact is, as JJ Van Bibber notes in his book, that he portrayed himself and his family as “being on the fence”, as being seen by First Nation people as being a white man and being seen by white people as being an Indian. I think this is a story really that should be told and should be read by Yukon students and Yukon schools.

One thing that I’d like to note, as well, in terms of the family as a whole — the Van Bibber family — particularly the children of Ira and Eliza, as many of them lived to a very ripe age and were very tough, long-lived and very knowledgeable about the things they had done. One thing I’d like to acknowl-

edge, without taking away from JJ, is the fact that while I didn’t, unfortunately, have the pleasure of knowing JJ well — I met him, but unfortunately never had a lot of time with him.

Spending time with his brother Alex — I had the opportunity to do so on a number of occasions, including one thing that I particularly enjoyed, was at one point in time Yukon College was offering, as part of the northern studies program for teachers and others — they had for four successive years — one of the options was a boat trip with elders down the Yukon River from Lake Laberge to Dawson. All four of those years, my family and I ended up with the contract for the boat services for that trip, and all of those years, Alex Van Bibber was one of the elders who participated along with others. Really, having the opportunity not only to hear those stories, but being out on the river in areas where Alex, in telling his stories — we were often in the area or nearby where some of these things had happened, and it really provides a unique perspective that I know I really enjoyed and appreciated. I think it’s fair to say that the others who participated in the trips also found it a very valuable perspective on Yukon history.

Another thing I think was a good example of the character of Alex, in particular, but also of his siblings, was that during those years we were going down the river, I believe, every one of those years, Alex was the oldest of the elders there. He might have, in one year, been the second oldest, although at that point he would have been, I believe, in his 80s. When the boat touched ashore, he would be the first one off the boat to grab the rope, and he would say to my father, whose boat he usually rode in: “Come on, Ned. Let’s get these old people off the boat.”

Another example of those trips that stand out is when we were travelling down the river to Ancient Voices — that being up the river from Dawson a bit and run by the Kormendy family — Alex climbed up what is a very high hill by the camp just so he could take a picture. There were many others who were intimidated by the size of the hill and didn’t bother taking that long climb. But he wasn’t quite old enough to be intimidated by a steep hill and, as the Premier noted, he still isn’t.

I want to acknowledge not only JJ but in fact all of the Van Bibber family for their contribution that they’ve played culturally and socially and genetically within Yukon society.

In looking through the book, I really also enjoyed — in addition to JJ’s stories and the very interesting manner that he had for telling them — looking at some of these pictures. In some cases stories that I had previously heard from Alex’s perspective about rafting down the river and when their father sent them off on a raft down to Dawson, as I recall Alex saying it, a few people criticized his father for it and wondered why he wouldn’t buy them passage on the steamboat. His words were that his father said, “Why would I pay for a ticket on the steamboat when the river runs for free?” At that point I think the oldest on that raft was 13 years old, and I think the fact that they not only survived the trip, but prospered for years afterwards really is illustrative of how tough and resourceful they were.

For those who haven’t read JJ’s book, I would encourage them to do so. It is touching in a number of places. It is funny

in others and it is interesting all the way through. I think it reflects a certain part of Yukon's history that really everyone should read.

In reading the book, there were a few excerpts that I had thought of bringing up in motion debate this afternoon. Considering the time and that I know there are other members who would like to speak to this motion, I will not read most of them, but I did find it particularly notable as I was looking at the picture of the Van Bibber children on the raft heading off to school down the river on their five-day trip, floating down the river to Dawson. I found it interesting that when Alex talked about it, he said that as they shoved off the one year when he was the oldest on the boat, his father started yelling to them as they left, "Alex, Alex. You might have to stop after a couple of days and come up to a log jam and add some more logs on if the raft starts to sink." Which apparently they then had to do.

The story from JJ in his book that I thought was quite interesting was his comments about his history with Pierre Berton at school.

Considering we've all tended to hear the stories of Pierre Berton and read his books and come up with a different perspective, I will read this one section. I mean it with no aspersions to Mr. Berton, but I thought the unique style in which Mr. Van Bibber relayed it was quite worthy of recognition. Mr. Van Bibber says: "We couldn't play with the white kids much either. But we'd play with them at school. Play softball with them and stuff. I used to play with Pierre Berton, you know, the Great White Author. Yeah. He was pretty close to my grade. He was a crybaby. I hit him with a baseball bat once. Not very hard, no. It was a privilege to carry the baseball bat, you see, and I grabbed it first. He tried to swipe it from me, so I swiped him back. He cried and I went to the principal's office. 'Did you hit Mr. Berton with a baseball bat' he asked me. 'Yes, sir. I did', I said. I never-ever thought that would be a big deal one day. But Pierre and I got along pretty good most of the time. Yeah. I only beat him up when he really needed it."

So that story, with a number of other parts of the book, is really a very unique and colourful element in Yukon history. The pictures in the book of them plowing the field with dogs hooked up to a plow, of taking a fairly large string of pack dogs hauling supplies, and the picture in the book of them lowering a sled down the face of a small glacier are examples that, for those who have had the pleasures and challenges of being out on the land, particularly in the winter, and facing challenges — they have an air of familiarity to us but there are also elements of it, with the equipment they had and the challenges they faced, that are beyond anything we've seen in recent times.

Many will be aware of the fact but it's worth noting for the record here in this Assembly that, as noted on page 124 and 125 of JJ Van Bibber's book, the Van Bibber family had owned the point at Pelly Crossing and, when the steamboats quit running and Selkirk died, their father stepped up and deeded all that point that Pelly Crossing is sitting on to the native people saying, according to JJ, "We don't need that land, there's gonna come a time when we're going to pay for keeping that land and we don't want it on our hands", so they passed it on.

It's certainly provided a benefit to all of the people who live in that area.

So noting the time, I will conclude my remarks. I'm sure the Member for Klondike wants to make some wrapping up remarks and perhaps some of the others wish to speak. But I appreciate this motion coming forward. While acknowledging and agreeing with statements that have been made that there are other pieces of Yukon literature that really should be in Yukon classrooms so that Yukon students are not unaware of those who have gone before them, I think this is a perfect example of the type of book that should be in Yukon schools.

I would like to, in closing my remarks, express my appreciation for the family and express my appreciation to Alex and to Pat Van Bibber for kindly autographing my copy of this book. I know I'm going to treasure it for years, and I know that my father, to whom I gave an autographed copy, also very much appreciated it.

So, thank you.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Silver: I'd just like to begin by thanking all of my peers today who have spoken on this motion and the amendment. Once again, the original intent of this motion is still intact, and I will continue, hopefully, working with the Minister of Education in developing local curriculum and to implement this particular book into the Yukon school curriculum.

We have heard some compelling stories and reasons as to why we should do a few things: develop local curriculum, to work on enrolment issues and also to use the resources that we have — our educational professionals in the First Nation communities and also other agencies as well. We also heard from the Member for Copperbelt North. I'm glad that he actually commented on the amendment, as it was really hard to tell whether or not he was going to support this motion to begin with. He spoke at great length, and I found it hard to sift out the relevance to the original motion. For the record, I just want to state that, yes, there are a lot of other books out there. There are truly a lot of other treasures, and I hope that we have an opportunity to hear from the Member for Copperbelt North, maybe on a motion to actually promote other books into the curriculum.

Also, a member opposite, once again, identified that I am not from Yukon. I'm not really sure how that is relevant to the motion. I also hope that when he attended school in my home town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, that the good people of Nova Scotia and the people at St. FX didn't keep making that distinction. I also wonder if, when he talks to his constituents, he makes such a big deal of where they were born. Certainly, the people of Dawson do not. So for the record, once again, yes, I am from Antigonish, Nova Scotia. I was born there. However, I do make my home in Dawson City, and I'm proud to say that that is my home now.

Also, basically, I think everybody here should be proud of their own heritage, including the Member for Copperbelt North, and he should embrace our differences, as I come from a

long line of Klondike MLAs who actually were not born in the Yukon. Mr. Nordick before me was born in Saskatchewan, I believe. Mr. Jenkins was born in Quebec. I can go on. Actually, I can't really think of too many premiers who were actually born in the Yukon. I have never felt segregated in Dawson, and I know that it never made any difference to JJ where I was born, either.

In closing, I would just like to thank everybody who is hopefully going to support this motion. I also want to do a few more thank yous that were missed today: Rob Carpenter from Kaminak. He is going to fly any of the Van Bibbers who want to the Roundup this winter so that they can attend the Yukon Night. I also want to thank Mike Kokiw from the Chamber of Mines who wants to work on setting up a kiosk at the Yukon Night to sell the books. Both of these gentlemen deserve a thank you here at this time.

Last and definitely not least, once again, the Minister of Education — he's a little modest when he said he bought a couple of books; he bought a box of books actually. So that needs to be put on the record as well. I really appreciate all the work that he has done on this file. If this motion does pass and if JJ's book is placed into the curriculum, then we can all share in a very important and historic progress in education and also in multicultural relationships and in locally developed curriculum.

I'm going to leave it at that as we're running out of time here. I'd like to thank everybody for their words today on this motion.

Speaker: I'm really happy the member was able to keep his final comments to the motion as amended and not stray from the subject at hand.

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

Motion No. 247, as amended, agreed to

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before I entertain a motion from the Government House Leader, in an effort to address issues in a timely fashion, earlier today during Question Period I made a ruling on a statement made by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. To clarify that ruling, had the member not personalized his comments, I would have ruled that it was a dispute between members and only a dispute between members.

I would like to thank the members who brought this to my attention and that I have the opportunity to make clear what my ruling was about, and I apologize for any confusion it may have caused.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled December 5, 2012:

33-1-59

Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report, 2011-2012 (Taylor)

33-1-60

Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board Annual Report, 2011-2012 (Taylor)

33-1-61

Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, Standing Committee on: Fourth Report (dated December 5, 2012) (Hassard)

The following documents were filed December 5, 2012

33-1-34

Parks Canada assets in Yukon, letter re: (dated August 6, 2012) from Hon. Mike Nixon, Minister of Tourism and Culture, to Ryan Leef, Member of Parliament for Yukon (Nixon)

33-1-35

Parks Canada staffing and service levels in Yukon, letter re: (dated September 14, 2012) from Hon. Mike Nixon, Minister of Tourism and Culture, to Hon. Peter Kent, Minister responsible for Parks Canada (Nixon)

33-1-36

Parks Canada: staffing and service levels in Yukon, adoption of Motion No. 240, letter re: (dated November 13, 2012) from Hon. Mike Nixon, Minister of Tourism and Culture, to Hon. Peter Kent, Minister responsible for Parks Canada (Nixon)