



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 2, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 2, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today as a parent of a child with autism and on behalf of the Legislative Assembly in recognizing World Autism Awareness Day.

World Autism Awareness Day shines a light on autism as a growing global health crisis. Every year, autism organizations celebrate the day with the Light It Up Blue campaign with the goal of bringing the world's attention to autism, a pervasive disorder that affects tens of millions of people globally, including my son, Jack.

Autism spectrum disorder is otherwise known as ASD and autism. They are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. ASD is characterized in varying degrees by challenges in social behaviour, verbal and non-verbal communication and repetitive behaviours. They include autistic disorder, Rett syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, Asperger's syndrome and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified.

ASD can be associated with intellectual disabilities, difficulties in motor coordination and attention and physical health issues such as sleep and gastrointestinal disturbances. Some persons with ASD excel in visual arts, music, art and mathematics. Autism is now recognized as the most common neurological disorder affecting children and one of the most common developmental disorders. ASD now affects approximately one in 88 children. Some statistics reflect an estimated 80-percent increase in reported prevalence in the last seven years. By way of comparison, this means more children than are affected by diabetes, AIDS, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and Down syndrome combined.

There is no medical detection or cure for autism. ASD is incredibly challenging for both the individual who is diagnosed with the disorder and their families. It can also be quite challenging for the professionals working with a person with ASD. I can't thank them enough for their continued support, their persistence and their dedication.

It is clear and evident to me that an early diagnosis translates to an early intervention, which can mean a better life and greater educational and social opportunities. My son is a perfect example of this. Signs of autism are usually

present by three years of age and it is four times more prevalent in boys than it is girls.

In Yukon, the Child Development Centre coordinates the diagnosis of ASD in preschool children. Through family supports for children with disabilities, the Department of Health and Social Services supports children with ASD and their families. The department works with families to ensure support and funding for a range of services, including respite care, family counselling and specialized interventions, such as speech-language therapy, applied behavioural analysis and physiotherapy.

On this day, we would also like to recognize the professionals, parents and caregivers who work so very hard in Yukon to ensure that services are available to families in our territory. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to recognize a few people in our gallery visiting for this tribute: Colette Acheson from Yukon Association for Community Living and Kate Swales and Shirley Chua-tan from Autism Yukon. I hope all members will join me in welcoming them to the gallery.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Nixon: We are also pleased to support the valuable work of an organization that I have a very personal connection to. Autism Yukon is doing a tremendous job at raising awareness of autism in our community.

Autism Yukon is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families and individuals living with autism spectrum disorder. They are guided by a board of directors comprised of parents with children who have ASD, and caring family and community members. Their purpose is to provide support, public awareness, training, advocacy and resources for our community.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, we encourage Yukoners to join our families, volunteers and professionals in the effort to inspire compassion, inclusion, and hope for people with ASD and their families. Light it up blue.

In recognition of International Adult Learners Week

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise today in honour of International Adult Learners Week. Adult Learners Week was officially launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on September 8, 2000 and has been observed in Canada ever since 2002. The focus of this year's Adult Learners' Week is on participation, inclusion, equity and quality.

Yukoners, as we all know, come from all walks of life and have all levels of education. They deserve opportunities to continue growing, to challenge themselves, to be involved in what interests them, and to access the programs and services they need to meet their individual goals.

There are many organizations here in the territory devoted to lifelong learning, and its positive effect on society. Joining us here today in the gallery is Debbie Parent, and she is our executive director for the Yukon Learn Society. Yukon Learn is committed to adult literacy as well as competency, such as computer use, critical thinking and using tutoring services to help people achieve their grade 12 equivalency.

In recognition of this particular Adult Learners Week, Yukon Learn is offering free memberships to people all week long. I would like to thank you, Debbie, for joining us today and to you and your team for all that you do on behalf of Yukoners and all that you commit in support of lifelong learning here in the territory.

Other organizations — I would be remiss if I did not make reference to them as well — that are also full partners in adult education include: Yukon College, Yukon's premier post-secondary education institute, an institution with campuses in some 12 communities across the territory and offering more than 50 certificate, diploma and degree programs; the Yukon Literacy Coalition, which is also committed to increasing literacy and essential skills for adult learners; the Challenge-Disability Resource Group, which runs Bridges Café — and all of us in this Legislative Assembly are great fans of them — and they run other programs to assist people with disabilities to become active in their community and full contributors to our territory, learning real job skills and entering the job market; the Learning Disability Association of Yukon, whose programs and services support Yukoners with learning difficulties or disabilities; also the Multicultural Centre of Yukon, which also works tirelessly to improve the English language capabilities of new Yukoners and the Kwanlin Dun House of Learning, which empowers Kwanlin Dun First Nation citizens and others to overcome their personal education challenges.

These and many other organizations and so many other individual citizens, volunteers, in this territory are committed to ensuring adult literacy and learning are supported in our communities.

Today, during International Adult Learners Week I wish recognize the good work of these organizations and to thank them personally and on behalf of the Yukon government and on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly for their many services to their communities.

Applause

In recognition of Biodiversity Awareness Month and Swan Haven Interpretive Centre

Hon. Mr. Dixon: April is Biodiversity Awareness Month, and it also marks the opening of the doors of Swan Haven. I thought it would be an effective use of our time to wind these two together into one tribute.

I'd like to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Biodiversity Awareness Month, which runs throughout the entire month of April. Biodiversity is the variety of life found on Earth. Here in Yukon we are surrounded by a diverse array of plants, habitat and wildlife. From the Southern Lakes caribou herds to the plants of Herschel Island, every living organism in the territory has a role to play. For this, we recognize the importance of biodiversity to sustaining clean air to breathe, nutritious food to eat and even the very fibers that make up our clothes.

Yukon's environment, fish and wildlife are deeply important to the lives and culture of its people. Yukoners know that we all play a part in protecting biodiversity in the

territory. We are working hard together to ensure habitats remain healthy and the widest variety of species endure.

Speaking of biodiversity, as I said, the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre is host to many upcoming Biodiversity Awareness Month events. I'd like to pay tribute to the centre itself on the occasion of its 20th anniversary.

The interpretive centre first opened its doors in 1994 on the north shores of M'Clintock Bay at Marsh Lake. Twenty years later, this wildlife-viewing hub continues to welcome thousands of visitors each year, who learn about the great diversity of swans, water birds and ecosystems in the area.

To mark the occasion, visitors can expect to experience an updated interpretive centre, which includes new panels and interactive displays. This Biodiversity Awareness Month, I encourage Yukoners of all ages to venture out to Marsh Lake to experience the new look of Swan Haven, to celebrate the return of spring with the trumpeter and tundra swans, Canada geese, northern pintails, shorebirds, eagles, and other wildlife around.

For Swan Haven events and other Biodiversity Awareness Month activities, be sure to check the listings of the Department of Environment's spring events calendar. I've often heard it said that you will know that spring has arrived in the territory when this calendar turns up in your mailbox. If you haven't received yours yet, you will soon, along with many other homes in the Yukon.

This springtime guide, also available on the Department of Environment's website, lists over 20 different events to mark Biodiversity Awareness Month. I would like to take the opportunity to recognize the many people and organizations involved in making these events possible. There are too many to list here, but I will name a few: Ducks Unlimited, the Girl Guides of Canada, Kluane National Park and Reserve, Marsh Lake Community Society and Society of Yukon Bird Observatories, the Town of Faro, Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Literacy Coalition and, of course, the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, which I've referred to previously as the gem of wildlife viewing here in Yukon.

As I mentioned before, the Yukon government is working together with our partners to protect biodiversity in the territory. One example of this last year was when the government announced a new management plan to help safeguard the health of Yukon's amphibians, which are comprised of the wood frog, the western toad, the boreal chorus frog and the Columbia spotted frog.

Amphibians are regarded as good indicators of local environmental health. They are also culturally important to many Yukon First Nations. After four years of development, the management plan for Yukon amphibians is now ready and has the support of the Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

In closing, there are a variety of happenings in Yukon during this Biodiversity Month, from a coffee house and a photography workshop to wildlife walks, films and storytelling. Be sure to check out the event listing and get involved.

However Yukoners choose to celebrate, it is my hope that Biodiversity Month serves as a reminder to everyone about

the interconnectedness of living organisms. Healthy communities thrive in a healthy environment.

Just before I close, Mr. Speaker, I'd like also to thank the members of our wildlife viewing program in the Department of Environment who host so many of the events that are undertaken throughout Biodiversity Month and the great work that they do.

In recognition of the Rotary Music Festival

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I also rise today in honour of the 46th annual Rotary Music Festival. Whitehorse has hosted this festival since 1969, and the Rotary Club of Whitehorse has been its main organizer since 1975. The event is held every April, with adjudicators invited from across Canada to hear terrific instrumental and vocal performances from amateur regional musicians.

From April 2 to 12 of this year, Yukon music students and groups will be performing for experts in the art of music at a healthy, positive, community venue. I encourage everyone to come and listen to our amateur musicians at this wonderful event.

The audiences at the Rotary Music Festival will hear bands, strings, choirs and ensembles playing a variety of pieces from baroque and classical compositions to 21st century folk, jazz and pop numbers. Performing at the festival this year is a great opportunity for students to gain stage experience and a better understanding of their musical abilities, techniques and styles.

This year, there will be six adjudicators at this festival from Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia to provide what I would coin as informed, independent and objective opinions on each of the performances. The awards, advice and feedback at this festival help to nurture the talents of amateur musicians and encourage them in pursuing their passion for music in the Yukon and beyond.

The awards presentation will take place on Friday, April 11, with music students receiving prizes based on scoring by the adjudicators. Winners will receive trophies, memorial prizes, medallions and iTunes gift cards for outstanding performances. Some of the senior-level trophy recipients also receive scholarships to go toward furthering their musical training and their careers.

A big bravo to our wonderful performers, who have come from all over the region and territory to share their abilities on stage at the festival, and thank you as well to the festival's adjudicators and to the performers for participating and for sharing all of their talents and their valuable observations.

Another big thank you also goes to all the volunteers — the instructors and the families — for putting in so many hours of their time and support behind the scenes toward this annual celebration of excellence in music and in support of the love of young Yukon's musical minds.

Mr. Speaker, this festival showcases and appraises the terrific talents of amateur musicians in our region, and this festival is a great example of how Yukon celebrates the arts. I call on all members of this Assembly and all members of the public to partake in this great event ahead.

In recognition of the Yukon Convention Bureau's 15th anniversary

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It is my honour, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, to rise today to pay tribute to the Yukon Convention Bureau celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. While some of the players and the faces may have changed over the years, the vision behind the Convention Bureau to promote Yukon as a great place for meetings, conventions, conferences and events remains strong. Whether they are governments, associations, business interests, the incentive travel market or sport and culture, there are many organizations that have benefited greatly from the services that the Yukon Convention Bureau provides. Their work ensures that Yukon continues to be recognized as an attractive, accessible and affordable destination for all who choose to travel here for a meeting or for a convention.

In addition, their work encourages meeting attendees to stay longer or to return with family and friends for a personal stay so that they can see and appreciate much more of the Yukon after an event is over. Just this past February, representatives from the Yukon Convention Bureau travelled to Ottawa in celebration of Air North, Yukon's airline's new service to the nation's capital, Ottawa, as well as Yellowknife. The Yukon Convention Bureau hosted a luncheon, attended an annual tradeshow for event planners and took part in a gala fundraiser.

These types of activities help to grow Yukon as a meeting, convention and event destination and raise Yukon's profile as the place where the world wants to be, not only for a meeting, but to experience the great outdoors, rich history, vibrant culture and amazing hospitality found in all communities.

Data captured in the 2004 visitor exit survey told us that 10 percent of business travellers attended a conference or convention in Yukon. By 2012, that number had increased to 26 percent, speaking to the growth of conventions in our territory. Mr. Speaker, in the last five years, the Yukon Convention Bureau and Yukon's meeting and convention industry has contributed \$3.5 million to Yukon's economy each year. This success rate speaks to the organization's professionalism and their ability to build strategic partnerships with businesses, culture, social and sporting communities.

Conventions or conferences held in Yukon in 2013 included the Canadian Museums Association's annual meeting, the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Association of Mutual Insurance Companies and the Conference Board of Canada Canada's North Summit, which together brought more than 1,600 delegates to our territory.

I'd now like to acknowledge the work done by the Canadian Museums Association's local organizing committee, which received a Bravo Award from the Yukon Convention Bureau in February, during their Golden Bravo and Bravo awards ceremony.

The Department of Tourism and Culture remains committed to working with the Yukon Convention Bureau to enhance the integration of their marketing efforts with the

department's campaigns and initiatives, including Destination: Yukon.

Backing up that commitment, the department provides a \$200,000 annual contribution to the bureau as an important investment to help them with program delivery and services to the business community, trade show attendance and sales and marketing initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the work of the Yukon Convention Bureau and thank their dedicated staff. Please join me in welcoming a few guests to the gallery: Alida Munro, Mike Collins, Heather McIntyre, Edward Peart, Kristine Masuch, Emilie Joslin from the Convention Bureau. Unable to join from the Convention Bureau are Wanda Leaf, Casey McLaughlin and Christi Matthews. Also joining them is Robin Anderson and Pierre Germain from the Department of Tourism and Culture. Welcome.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, these individuals bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the Yukon Convention Bureau. We thank them and the many past members over the years for their efforts and for delivering on the message that Yukon is a great place to hold a meeting. Their commitment sends visitors home with exceptional memories of Yukon experience.

Please join me today as we recognize and congratulate the Yukon Convention Bureau on their 15th anniversary. Thank you.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Moorcroft: I'm very pleased today to rise to acknowledge some guests in the gallery. I would like to begin by acknowledging Pearl Keenan, who is a respected Tlingit elder from the Geddes family near Teslin.

Pearl has been awarded many honours during her life, including the Chancellor of Yukon College, and she was awarded the Order of Canada in 2007.

In her 90s, Pearl remains active and is very generous with her time, working with youth and also with the Whitehorse Correctional Centre elders committee, ensuring that First Nation culture is brought to all.

There are many other distinguished guests here that I would like to acknowledge: Elder Judy Gingell from Kwanlin Dun First Nation; and Adeline Webber and Winnie Peterson, both of whom I have had the honour to work with in a number of women's groups and initiatives promoting equality and human rights in the Yukon. We have Roger Ellis. We have Doris Bill, the recently elected Chief of Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Joanne Henry is here, and Sharon Shorty and Shelby Blackjack. There are number of people who have worked over the years with CAIRS, Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools, who have worked in various proceedings to do with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I would like all members to join me in welcoming them all.

I see that there is also councillor Jessie Dawson here from Kwanlin Dun First Nation. I believe other members have visitors that they would like to acknowledge, but thank you all for being here and welcome.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: It is difficult when we are sitting here to look up, but I do recognize in the gallery today Bev Brazier, minister for the United Church of Whitehorse and I would like to welcome her to the Assembly today.

Applause

Mr. Barr: I would also like to welcome Joseph O'Brien, long-time warrior, Vern Swan, who is also working at CAIRS and is a long-time warrior.

I would also like to extend a welcome to those who may have been missed here today. I see Mike Smith has just entered — the Chief of Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Please welcome them.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

That this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$1 million for designing a new waste-water system in Ross River.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$367,000 for an FASD prevalence study.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$1.845 million for construction of a new Watson Lake district office for the Department of Environment.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to invest \$4.718 million for the completion of a 34-unit Whitehorse seniors building, replacing 207 Alexander Street.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$734,000 to develop a new

campground near the historic Conrad townsite on Tagish Lake's Windy Arm.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$3.475 million to partner with the Salvation Army for a new facility that will include additional shelter beds and new transitional housing.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$2.7 million for a partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and potentially Canada to build a community and recreation centre in Old Crow.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide, by legislative return, the cost of both in-house and outside legal counsel to each Yukon government department for all court cases to which the Yukon is currently a party.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the passage of a local food act, modelled on legislation passed in Ontario in 2013, in order to:

- (1) promote farmers donating excess food production to food banks by way of tax credits;
- (2) promote local food awareness;
- (3) make more local food available in markets, restaurants, school and institutions; and
- (4) allow for the creation of a local food week.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Barr: I would like to rise to welcome Bob Charlie, former chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and renowned entertainer, as well as a support worker for residential school survivors; and Lori Duncan from Council of Yukon First Nations Health — welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any other notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: First Nations health care, federal funding

Ms. Hanson: First Nation health outcomes fall far short compared to the rest of the Canadian population. This well-known truth is long-standing, sad and unnecessary. Based on many real stories that we have heard, Yukon First Nation people are clearly experiencing barriers in accessing health care services, yet the *Canada Health Act* requires

governments to ensure universal access, comprehensive coverage and access to services without extra charge or discrimination.

My question is: Does the government have an accurate assessment of the differences in access to health care services experienced by Yukon First Nation people, compared to the rest of the Yukon's population?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As acting minister, I will — as I'm sure the member will understand — have to ask the minister for more detailed information, but I can tell the member that, first and foremost, Yukon First Nation citizens do have access to the same health care services at all facilities as non-First Nation citizens do. That is not always the case in some parts of Canada, but we provide equitable access to all and also work with other partners, including the Kwanlin Dun Health and Awareness Centre and the federal programs — First Nation non-insured benefits.

As far as the specific details in response to the member's question, I'd have to undertake to get back to her. If she is referring to the specific access to locations, perhaps she could be a little more precise in her question.

Ms. Hanson: I would be pleased to, Mr. Speaker. Yukon First Nation people navigate two health care systems — the Government of Yukon's and the federal government's — called the non-insured health benefits program.

Yukon First Nation people who must work with NIHB face a whole different set of changing rules from the rest of Yukoners in order to qualify for the services they need. For example, someone needing prescription glasses can apply to NIHB, but NIHB may have a condition that the prescription be updated before it will pay for glasses, yet NIHB has limited funds for optometrist appointments and will not provide travel funds to the eye test. The result is that too many Yukon First Nation people go for too long without proper eyeglasses.

The same scenario of delays and administrative back and forth occurs with hearing services and specialist appointments. The question is: How will this government ensure that Yukon First Nation peoples do not face more barriers accessing health care services than the rest of Yukon's population?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It seems that the specific areas the Leader of the NDP has referenced relate to a federal program. As the member should be aware, we do not run the federal program and we don't control how they administer it. The First Nation non-insured health benefit program provides certain services to First Nation citizens that are not available to the general population. Yukon government's programs are all available equitably to all Yukon citizens and we continue to provide services to Yukoners, both First Nation and non-First Nation, in all of our facilities.

The concerns, of course, could be raised by the Minister of Health and Social Services with the federal government, but the issues around administration of the First Nation non-insured health benefits program come down to federal bureaucracy, not an area of Yukon government's direct control.

Ms. Hanson: That latter part was a good answer in terms of the federal government and the territorial government actually working together for Yukon First Nation people.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the disparity between First Nation people and the rest of the Canadian population runs through all basics necessary for healthy living: housing, nutrition, opportunity, income. The results show up downstream in the justice system, in shelters, in the emergency department and in mortality statistics. The government's wellness program is well and good for some folks, but it will not address the structural inequality experienced by Canada's and Yukon's First Nation people.

The Canadian Medical Association made a recommendation in its 2013 report, *Health Care in Canada: What Makes Us Sick*, that there be cross-cultural awareness training for all health care workers.

Will this government commit to expanding cross-cultural training for all health care workers, especially those working in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the member's concern and question, and certainly we realize that there is a disparity across the country in health care outcomes and services for First Nation citizens, particularly for those on-reserve in southern areas. The Yukon has a different system. We do provide equitable service to all Yukon citizens, both First Nation and non-First Nation.

The specific services that the member has brought to my attention are dealing with the federal program — the First Nation non-insured benefits program — and I will certainly undertake to pass those concerns on to the Minister of Health and Social Services. We don't control the federal bureaucracy or the federal administration system. In areas where we have to deal with the federal system and the federal accountability process, we do have frustrations from time to time, so we can certainly sympathize with what citizens may be dealing with in that area, but it would be an area that we would have to raise with the federal government and lobby them to make changes — it's not an area where we could directly make changes, to the best of my understanding.

Question re: Mayo B project

Mr. Tredger: The construction of the Mayo B dam was a hurried job. A 2011 report by the Northern Climate ExChange noted that there's very little data on the groundwater in the Mayo region and that, in particular, there were no long-term monitoring records.

The Yukon Party government built the dam without first doing the necessary baseline studies. Mayo residents have been dealing with the flooding and the threat of flooding every winter since. The government has been promising to find a long-term solution to the problem, but we still don't know enough about the complex water- and ice-flow issues to do that.

When does the Yukon Party government plan to fill the data gap on Mayo groundwater resources?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: To begin with, the member's characterization is not accurate. The Mayo B project was

something that was brought forward to the Yukon government by the board of Yukon Energy and recommended by them as a project for Yukon to submit to the federal government in applying under their green energy program, which was part of the federal stimulus package. As with all portions of the stimulus funding, it was time-limited.

The funding was only available for shovel-ready projects, so the availability of that funding was controlled and limited by the federal government and came with specific timelines for when the work had to be done. At the time the Mayo B project was done, there was not any information that would have given anyone any reason to expect that it would have an effect on water flow. In fact, I would note that the first flooding occurrence occurred before the construction of Mayo B, so whether it is in any way, shape or form related to the dam or not is not something we know at this time. It might be related to increased volumes that resulted after the Mayo-Dawson transmission line was hooked up, but that is speculation at this point. What we are doing is funding the hydrology work to determine what the actual cause of this problem is.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his answer. Any information and any studies will be an improvement.

For the past four years, Mayo residents have been living with the constant threat of flooding during the winter months. Residents are constantly on edge, and after four years, this is taking its toll on the community. The Village of Mayo requested that Yukon Energy reduce the flow through the Mayo dam in order to prevent flooding until a long-term engineering solution can be found.

Will the minister instruct Yukon Energy to maintain the reduced flow of the Mayo B dam until a long-term solution to the Mayo River flooding problem can be found?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate where the member's concern is coming from. However, what the member does not seem to be aware of is that, in fact, what experts both at Yukon Energy and employed by Yukon government tell us is that holding the back the flows for an extended period of time may create other issues or other problems. So in this we are working together; we have multi-departmental and multi-agency approach that has been taken.

During the worst portions of the flooding this winter, I had several phone calls on a regular basis with the mayor of Mayo; I have made sure that he has my contact information to call me at any time day or night if there is an issue. We appreciate very much the concerns of citizens who are affected and we have worked together with the town of Mayo — and will continue to do so — to try to get an understanding of the cause of the flooding event.

I will reiterate and remind the member that the first case of high water occurred before Mayo B was built or was in operation. There is some speculation that it may have to do with increased flows that occurred once we added additional load capacity when the Mayo-Dawson transmission line was hooked up, but that is in fact pure speculation at this point. There are a number of theories out there and that is why we

are investing in getting an assessment of what is the original cause of this situation.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you. It is important to note that we don't know enough about it, that is why we do studies prior to major projects.

The government spent over \$800,000 this winter to keep the Mayo River open and to protect Mayo properties and infrastructure. Mayo residents appreciate the ongoing work done to keep the Mayo river open as part of the effort to safeguard their property as well as the town's public infrastructures.

The expenditure of time and money on flood mitigation measures highlights the urgent need to find a long-term engineering solution that will prevent future flooding. It will take time; we are behind the eight ball already, so it is urgent that it be undertaken as soon as possible.

Has this government set aside funds to implement a long-term solution to the Mayo flooding problem, and when should this be expected to happen?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, I do have to correct the member and remind him of the fact that the Mayo B project was recommended to the Yukon government by the board of Yukon Energy. We acted on that basis, making application to the federal government's time-limited green energy program.

There had, in fact, been significant work done by Yukon Energy to plan for the Mayo B project, and again I would remind the member that the flooding event — the first year of it — occurred before Mayo B was constructed or any work had been done on the ground. We do not know the cause; I referenced one theory that has been suggested by members of the community. Again, we are doing the work to determine the cause and determine a long-term solution. We are working together with a multi-departmental, multi-agency approach that also involves the Village of Mayo.

During the flooding events, we worked closely with the Village of Mayo, including conversations on several occasions between myself and Mayor Bolton, and we have responded when they have made requests for a reduction in water flow. We've acted on the information that we've heard directly from the town and from staff on the ground, and we'll continue to work collaboratively to determine a long-term solution to this problem.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Public Works. All this week I've been asking about this government's inability to manage capital projects and the resulting public money that is wasted when this occurs.

At the top of the list of poorly managed projects is the new F.H. Collins. Last week, for the first time, Yukoners were finally given the full cost of the newly-redesigned school. It is interesting that it was never actually mentioned in the Premier's one-hour and 47-minute budget speech, but it was contained in the background information released by this government.

Will the minister confirm for the public record that the complete budget for the newly-redesigned F.H. Collins School is now \$51 million?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. What I will confirm is that this government's primary objective was to build a new school for Yukoners and we're doing that. This government is pleased to be moving forward with the F.H. Collins replacement project — an affordably designed, modern facility that meets the LEED silver energy-efficient standards. It reduces the energy consumption and environmental impacts of our infrastructure, assets and operations, which reduce the cost of supporting our climate change objectives.

Although the footprint has been moved from what was first proposed, the space-efficiency design still incorporates features and learning spaces requested by the school council building advisory committee and the Department of Education.

I know the member opposite is not in support of a new school, but we are on this side.

Mr. Silver: On the contrary. I'm just wondering about a number here.

Mr. Speaker, this government likes to present itself as good financial managers. We all remember the Premier and the former Minister of Education, with their golden shovels, out before the last election to mark the beginning of construction for a new school. Two and a half years later, construction has not even started and the contract for building the school has been awarded to a company from Alberta.

While the government has tried to convince Yukoners that the cost of the building of the school is only going to be \$31 million, the true costs were finally revealed in the back pages of the budget document released last week. Taxpayers will be on the hook for \$51 million when the dust settles for this project.

Why did the government go out of its way to avoid mentioning the \$51-million price tag in this budget speech?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question.

I'll reiterate again that our secondary objective was to ensure that the school was built well and built in a timely and fiscally responsible manner. I want to correct the member opposite. This government has a great ability to manage projects and we definitely thank our staff for their hard work. We are confident that we will build a world-class facility and meet the current and long-term needs of our school community in a fiscally responsible manner. A decision was made in the spring of 2013 to adapt a proven and cost-effective school design from Alberta. This design has been built in a number of Alberta communities. A few of us members have had the opportunity to see it and it was shared with the Yukon government by the Government of Alberta at no cost.

So during the bidding process that the member opposite spoke of earlier, all bids came in under our approved budget for this project. Clark Builders was the successful bidder on this construction contract. They submitted the low bid on

construction of the school and we're going to start this thing right away here. I think fences will be going up any day now to get this project rolling.

Mr. Silver: There are a lot of things that we do know. The Yukon Party seems to think that awarding one of the biggest construction projects of the year to a company from Alberta is good financial management. The government seems to think that tendering a project that puts Yukon companies at a disadvantage is good fiscal management. The government also seems to think that if it buries the final \$51-million price tag in the back of the budget documents, no one will notice.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why this project is so expensive is because the government spent three years pursuing a separate design and then scrapped it.

Can the minister confirm that \$6 million out of the new \$51-million budget for this project was spent on the now-scrapped design of the school that will never be built or is that money on top of the \$51-million figure?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I would like to thank the member opposite again for the question, and I'd like to let Yukoners know that maybe the member opposite maybe doesn't believe in contracting rules and regulations.

The final objective here was to tender a project that would create local jobs and promote economic activity. Clark Builders has a solid reputation — I've said this in this House before. It just finished having a job fair where they were looking for superintendents and managers. Over the next several months, Clark Builders will be working with the local contractors to identify how they can participate in this significant construction project. We are pleased to see that Clark Builders have recently advertised local project management jobs and stuff, unlike the member opposite.

Some of the other infrastructure projects that you're going to see this year: Whitehorse continuing care, the St. Elias group home, Sarah Steele replacement, the McDonald Lodge — in his riding — the Beaver Creek fire hall and Alexander Street. This is infrastructure Yukoners need that this government has provided in this budget. We support it on this side. Unfortunately, I'll let Yukoners know the member on the opposite will not be supporting any of these projects.

Question re: Yukon Avalanche Association funding

Mr. Barr: With the Easter long weekend right around the corner, Yukoners will be taking to the back country to snowmobile, ski, snowboard and snowshoe. Many of these back country enthusiasts will rely on the information supplied by the Yukon Avalanche Association to make informed decisions about the avalanche dangers in their areas. For the past three years, the YAA has provided valuable service to Yukoners who work and play in the back country. The YAA educates users on avalanche risks and provides an avalanche forecast and danger rating two to three times per week, but this is the last year that the YAA will be providing these essential services as their funding is coming to an end.

Does the minister recognize that this program needs to continue in the interest of Yukoners safety?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have met with the president of the Yukon Avalanche Association to discuss the good work that they have done. This is an area that has been a federally funded program. It is an area where the federal government has not committed to renew the funding, but it is also an area where the Yukon government has committed to lobbying the federal government to stay at the table.

As the member should know, it is has been a long-standing issue with federal governments of every stripe that there is a tendency to commit to projects, on a pilot-project basis or in so-called boutique programs, and then to withdraw from funding those areas. Of course, the Yukon government is very concerned about federal attempts to off-load funding commitments onto the territorial government.

Again, I have met with the president of the Yukon Avalanche Association. I am waiting for information from him and have committed to sending a letter as soon as I have that information to lobby the federal government to continue funding the Yukon Avalanche Association.

Mr. Barr: The YAA provides a service that is critical to the safety of Yukoners operating in the backcountry. Before the YAA, Yukoners in the backcountry were without this vital information to make informed decisions for safe travel in the mountains. The YAA is an established program that provides an important public safety service to Yukoners. If they do not receive the funding they need to continue operating, the Yukon will be facing significant shortfalls in backcountry safety.

This is a service that must continue. The number of backcountry users is on the rise, and their safety depends on the information that the YAA can provide.

Will the minister commit to providing the funding that the Yukon Avalanche Association needs to continue operating?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: When members don't adjust their questions during Question Period after we've already answered them in the first response, it does seem like I'm just standing up, repeating the same thing.

I hear hissing from the NDP benches again — I'm not sure if it's snakes or the Leader of the NDP. We do very much appreciate the work the Yukon Avalanche Association does. I've met with the president of the Yukon Avalanche Association. I'm waiting for information from the Yukon Avalanche Association to go with a letter that I have committed to sending to the federal government, as I indicated during my first response to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

This is an area that the federal government has funded and, as with other areas where the federal government withdraws from funding, our first step is to encourage the federal government to not withdraw and to lobby them to continue the funding.

In fact, much of the area that is referenced is within the Province of British Columbia but, again, we will be going to bat to encourage the federal government to step up to the plate and continue this funding.

It's unfortunate that the NDP appear to not be in support of us lobbying the federal government to continue funding this program.

Question re: Groundwater resources

Ms. White: Yukoners know the value of water. They want to protect it for the benefit of present and future generations, but, in order to protect our water, we need to better understand it. That understanding is a key principle behind some of the great work being done by the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council. The need to better understand Yukon's water is even more urgent in light of the existing and potential impact of climate change on our territory.

Does the government believe that enough is being done to gain comprehensive understanding of Yukon's groundwater?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The simple answer to that is, no, we don't. That's why we've committed to conducting a Yukon water strategy for this territory that will provide us the guidance, as well as other water managers in the territory, including municipalities, First Nations, the federal government and other bodies that have a role to play in this particular aspect.

One of the outcomes that I'm sure will come from the Yukon water strategy will be a vision for how we will continue to improve our collection of data with regard to water in the territory.

The member rightly points out that climate change is, indeed, a contributing factor to changes in our water systems in the territory, and we've identified that as a priority. We will continue to do work to collect information, not only about the effects of climate change on water resources, but the effects of climate change on all aspects of the ecology in the territory, including wildlife and other environmental considerations.

To answer the member's question, no, I don't believe enough is being done. That's why we've committed to do more, and that's why we're continuing to do more, in conjunction with other managers in the territory.

I know that I've heard from her previously that she didn't support the work that had been done to date on the Yukon water strategy, so that's unfortunate. But we'll continue that good work. We'll continue to work with other agencies in the territory to craft a Yukon water strategy that benefits all Yukoners, and all of our water resources in the territory.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for most of his answer, and I look forward to his tabling of the Yukon water strategy.

There are approximately 1,000 locations in the Yukon where surface water data is being collected, but the situation around groundwater is very, very different. There are only seven groundwater monitoring stations in the entire territory.

Does the government have a concrete plan to improve our knowledge of Yukon's groundwater in their new Yukon water strategy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, in our Yukon water strategy draft documents that we prepared and consulted on, we've identified the fact that we don't have adequate information about Yukon's groundwater resources. That's

why we are conducting this strategy — to give us a path forward on how to improve.

We know that we could do a better job of conducting groundwater information collections and work better with other agencies to gather that information and have it available to all Yukoners who want to know about that information.

We've installed some new stations in the territory to date — in the north Yukon, of course — that were welcomed by the First Nations in the area. We are working collaboratively with them to undertake that work to ensure that they have an understanding of what is going on and can participate in the work itself.

But the simple answer again to the member's question is, no, we don't have enough information. That's why we're doing this work and that's why we're conducting a Yukon water strategy to give us a vision and a path forward for how we can improve and how we can achieve an acceptable standard for water information throughout the territory.

Ms. White: I look forward to the announcement of new groundwater monitoring stations.

Water is the subject of a whole chapter of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. The agreement says, and I quote: "...a Yukon First Nation has the right to have Water which is on or flowing through or adjacent to its Settlement Land remain substantially unaltered as to quantity, quality and rate of flow, including seasonal rate of flow."

Mr. Speaker, how is the government involving First Nations in developing knowledge and understanding of Yukon's groundwater resources?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, we are consulting First Nations exhaustively in the development of a Yukon water strategy. We have had a number of meetings to date. We have had workshops held here and in the communities for First Nations and other members of the public who are interested in the development of a Yukon water strategy.

In the specific cases of installing monitors and inspecting those monitors throughout the territory, we engage First Nations on a regular basis. As I said, the three new monitors in the north Yukon are a perfect example, where we have reached out to the Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the Vuntut Gwitchin, whose traditional territories those monitors are in, for their assistance in conducting that work. We have offered programs for their youth to get out and look at the individual monitors to learn about water monitoring and how our technicians do that work. It's a learning opportunity for them and it's helpful for Yukon government to have the input from First Nations as well.

We have been working very collaboratively on the development of the Yukon water strategy with Yukon First Nations and we work with Yukon First Nations on a number of specific cases, just like the ones I have mentioned here today. There are too many cases to answer in this short question and answer period, but I would be happy to perhaps get into that with the member in Committee of the Whole debate.

I look forward to crafting a Yukon water strategy that has the support of Yukon First Nations, considers their input and

put it into the final draft that we will be hopefully tabling very soon.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has elapsed.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: I would like to ask the members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming someone who I believe is here for the debate on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Ruth Massie.

Applause

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 600

Clerk: Motion No. 600, standing in the name of Mr. Barr.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take all necessary measures to expedite the release of data requested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the number and cause of deaths, illnesses and disappearances of First Nations residential school students in Yukon.

Mr. Barr: It is a great honour to speak to this motion today. As you can see, I was getting up as you were speaking. I've been anxious since I brought this motion forward. I want to thank all the people in the gallery for joining us here today. I've been flooded with emotions, and to see them gives me strength.

The mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to inform all Canadians about what happened in the 150-year history of the residential schools, and to guide and inspire a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.

Knowing what happened in the Indian residential schools involves gathering information and seeking truth. To that end, the commission has asked jurisdictions across the country to provide information for their review. We are aware that jurisdictions each have their own legislation to respect. Yukon's *Vital Statistics Act* — for instance — states that a person's cause of death cannot be released without a court order prior to 100 years after their death.

Last Friday, British Columbia was the first jurisdiction to honour the call for information from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In a ceremony last weekend in Edmonton — at the last national event of the commission — B.C. provided the data in electronic form to the commission. Other jurisdictions are finding a way to both respect their own

privacy legislation and meet the needs of the TRC. We can find a way too.

The wording of our motion is open and broad on purpose. We are asking the government to dedicate its resources and its capacities to find a way to provide the information needed to tell the full truth of the residential school experiences. We are heartened by the Premier's response to our question on Monday when he said, and I quote: "I will commit that we will continue to look at what is required and assist when and where appropriate to provide information as requested"

Healing from the experience of residential schools started long before the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Great progress has been made in this important undertaking across the country and there is still a lot of work to do.

The guiding principal in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is that the truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation. The motion before us today is focused on truth gathering. How this government participates in this process sets the stage for reconciliation.

What is reconciliation? There is no one way to define it. But Justice Murray Sinclair has a succinct way of expressing it, and I quote "Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts." Forging and maintaining respectful relationships; that bears repeating. We have a long way to go, but there is good news. We can help here today with this process.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the first step is truth, and one part of the truth is that many children went missing. Many families lost their loved ones and never learned their fates. They are not forgotten. To date, the TRC has identified the names of, or information about, more than 4,100 children who died of disease or accident while attending a residential school; 4,100 children who died have been identified. But there are more children missing and more stories we need to listen to, and that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission needs to review.

Let me emphasize at this point that we understand the sensitivity of the information that is being gathered. No one understands that better than the families who have lost loved ones. The commission understands that. There is a missing children research project. The commission has accepted the recommendations of the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials working group. They recognize that during the 150 years that residential schools operated, an unknown number of aboriginal children in the care of government-funded, church-run Indian residential schools died or went missing. The commission is seeking to review all relevant church and government records, as well as information from survivors, staff, and others in order to gather and share the truth of missing children.

In the summer of 2012, all of Canada's provincial and territorial chief coroners and chief medical examiners expressed their commitment to support the missing children project. They unanimously passed a resolution committing each of them to enter into discussions with the TRC regarding

the role that each office might play in advancing the aims of the missing children project. That commitment was made over a year and a half ago.

Mr. Speaker, the truth-seeking that is being asked of the Yukon government today should come as no surprise. The motion before this House today is about this government making a commitment to provide relevant information about missing Yukon children for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to review. This is a concrete way that we, the elected members of Yukon's Legislative Assembly, can pitch in and do our part to support the enormous effort that goes into recovering from some harsh realities that are at the heart of the residential school experience.

This is a meaningful opportunity for us in the House, and it's my sincere hope that this motion receives unanimous support of this House, that we can all work together for this common purpose — reconciliation that will benefit us all.

The wording of our motion is broad and open for a reason. It is not prescriptive, on purpose. There is room for the government to apply its capacities and resources, including lawyers, to figure out how this can work. What today's motion will confirm is whether there is the political will to make sure the TRC gets the information it needs to complete its mandate.

It is inspiring to know that other jurisdictions are not only committed but have already delivered data to the TRC. Under the terms of reference of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, section 11 is about access to relevant information. I will quote from that section now: "Canada and the churches are not required to give up possession of their original documents to the Commission. They are required to compile all relevant documents in an organized manner for review by the Commission and to provide access to their archives for the Commission to carry out its mandate."

Section 12 of the terms of reference is about research and an explicit intention to respect the confidentiality of records is expressed: "To the extent feasible and taking into account the relevant law and any recommendations by the Commission concerning the continued confidentiality of records ..."

Section 13 of the terms of reference is all about privacy. It clearly states that "The Commission shall respect privacy laws ..." and "...documents shall be archived in accordance with legislation." Again, Mr. Speaker, where there is a will, there is a way.

Last Friday, B.C. found a way to provide that necessary information. This Monday, our Premier made a commitment to look at what is required to provide the information. I'm confident that together we will find a way in this House to deliver.

In the gallery today are some of those people who have just returned from the seventh and final national event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission meeting in Alberta. In the gallery today are lifelong Yukoners who have lost family members to residential schools and to this day do not know how or when their relatives died. Nor do they know the location of the grave they have a picture of. It is time to restore dignity to Yukon families, reconciliation not yet achieved.

I ask members of this Legislative Assembly to imagine that these are your relatives, your families, who have lost loved ones. Imagine that, although you remember and still love your family members, you do not know how or when they died or where they were laid to rest. Would you not want to honour their memory?

What we are talking about today is assisting not only the TRC with that work, but also Yukon families. Let us commit to assisting Yukoners to honour the memory of their loved ones in dignity.

The commission is seeking to review all relevant church and government records, as well as information from survivors, staff and others, in order to gather and share the truth of missing children.

In the summer of 2012, all of Canada's provincial and territorial chief coroners and chief medical examiners expressed their commitment to support the missing children project. They unanimously passed a resolution committing each of them to enter into discussions.

That commitment was made over a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker. The truth-seeking that is being asked of the Yukon government is important.

I have to laugh, and I only laugh at myself. I'm also thankful for the help in preparing this by one of our colleagues, Tory Russell. We've been working on this.

While I was thinking of the children — and one of the reasons why I wasn't even picking up on that — what kept coming to my mind as I was reading it, and realizing I was re-reading something that I had already said, was that I was also focusing and thinking about a story from an elder.

When we speak of missing children and children who have passed away in the schools that nobody knows about, what kept coming to my mind was when I worked at CAIRS and one particular elder whose friend was so sick and passed away at Choooutla. She was young. She was with her friend, six or seven years old. The friend passed away asking for help and nobody came all day. This is emotional for me. I ask for your patience, because when I spoke of memories flooding back of my work — of our work — it's very difficult. Thank you for your patience as I deliver this. To my knowledge, they never really found out what happened. That's what we're talking about today.

In honour of the truth that leads to reconciliation, I will now briefly outline the history of residential schools. Before I start, though, I want to make a very important observation.

First Nations across Canada, Yukon First Nations with us in the gallery today and across the territory have lost so much. However, they have never lost the will to rise above the obstacles continually put before them. They have never lost the will to maintain their dignity and achieve their respected place on the land, in communities and nations and globally as a people. First Nations are resilient and adaptable. First Nations know about all of our interconnectedness in all of creation.

The very first incarnation of the Indian residential schools was established very soon after settlers from Europe arrived in the traditional territories of North American First Nations. The

first missionary school to operate in Canada was opened near Quebec City in 1820. Wow, that is a long time ago. It says 1620, but I wondered if that was a typo.

I think of 1492 when Christopher Columbus was lost and actually landed here. The history has a way of interpreting truth sometimes and so when I was thinking of that I was thinking 1492 and 1620 — my God that is a long time ago — don't worry though, Mr. Speaker, I will be skipping over a lot of that history today.

In 1831, the Mohawk Indian Residential School opened in Brantford, Ontario. It became the longest-operated residential school. It did not close until 1969. That is not too long ago. There are a whole bunch of us in this House who remember 1969. However, I do remember my brother-in-law saying that if you do remember the sixties, you weren't really there.

In 1860, the management of Indian Affairs was transferred from the imperial government to the then Province of Canada. In those days — the 1860s — the assimilation of aboriginal people through education became the official policy of the settlers of European descent who were colonizing what we now call Canada.

The first *Indian Act* was passed in 1876. In those years, the RCMP was also tasked with facilitating government control of the west. In 1892, the federal government and churches entered into partnership for the operation of Indian schools. Here in the Yukon, non-traditional schooling for First Nations started with missionary day schools. The first recognized residential school in the territory was established by the Anglican Church in Carcross in 1911.

I want to pause here to reflect on the phrase: “recognized residential school.” Is it the child that is pulled from their home and family that recognizes what was a residential school? Is it the family whose children were taken who recognize what a residential school was? Even the recognition of what was and what was not a residential school is one of those obstacles imposed from the outside on to the experience of Yukon's First Nations.

The Chooutla school in Carcross, which in later years was called the Carcross Indian Residential School, operated from 1911 to 1969. Often when I speak of this particular school in the past, it is related to me that five generations went to that school — five generations alone. The Whitehorse Baptist School was established in Whitehorse in the late 1940s and was funded by Indian Affairs until 1962. St. Paul's residential school opened in Dawson in 1920 and was closed in 1943.

Many Yukon First Nation students went to the Lower Post residential school in British Columbia, just outside of the Yukon's southeastern border. The Lower Post school was operated by a Catholic church until 1975. We'll hear more about a group of students from this school who became the trailblazers and who later formed CAIRS. In 1975, when Lower Post closed — it is less than 40 years ago. It is not really history anymore; it is living history.

At this point, I would like to recommend a fine film to all the elected members of this House, *My Own Private Lower Post*. It came out in 2008 and was directed by my friend —

our friend — Duane Gastant Aucoin of the Teslin Tlingit Council. This film is a first-hand and intimate account of the intergenerational impacts of residential schools. I believe some of our visitors in the gallery today also helped with that film. All Yukoners should see this film. It would be a great addition to high school curriculum too.

As the Yukon government started establishing public schools, they slowly started to transfer more children to them, but rural schools only went to grade 7, so First Nation rural children who wanted to continue their studies past grade 7 had to attend residential school in Whitehorse or Dawson. Many of us remember Yukon Hall as the former office of the Council of Yukon First Nations. In fact, it was first and foremost a residential school.

Some Yukon students were sent to school in what is now the Northwest Territories — when I think of these dates and the students who went to Northwest Territories or here in the Yukon and throughout Canada, it's important to note that the last school here was in 1976, but semblances of them went on until 2002 in N.W.T. This is 2014.

When I hear comments like “pull up your socks” and “oh, just get over it” and “that was a long time ago”, it brings the truth that there are still so many people who aren't aware of residential schools.

Their purpose, as I have seen in documents of Canada from the 1800s, was to remove the Indian question and to develop a subservient workforce.

I think of the intergenerational effects on some of the folks up here today who are not survivors — many of them are survivors — and the work that is left to do, not only from what we are seeking here today, but if you walk 20 miles into the bush, you have to walk 20 miles back out. They just closed not that long ago.

I want to reflect on CAIRS and a bit of history here — the trailblazers and their struggle. Not knowing much about residential school history — I have not been brought up native, despite my native ancestry, and I am realizing now that I'm older that I am an intergenerational survivor of residential school. But, because it was so suppressed, it just was not acknowledged, and to see how that bled into the lack of self-worth, lack of sense of who I was as a little boy and how that affected my life — I just want to state that.

I want to state that one man in the Yukon — not to minimize, as I know, the elders long before this was even talked about — walked with the awareness that this — I want to say “holocaust” in our history that's not in schools yet, not talked about. They knew about this. They've been patient and waiting for this to come to fruition. For years people tried to come forward but were told, “Oh, you're crazy. You're crazy. It's never going to happen. Don't worry about it. I'm a lawyer and I'm telling you right now, you're crazy. Go home and forget about it.”

It was when the first of the people who were coming forward in Canada and becoming successful — it was a man who is now an elder in Atlin, B.C. who made a disclosure to the RCMP there — Melvin Jack. The RCMP listened.

He was by himself in a little place, with that information, talking to a friend and telling him what he had just done. That friend said, "That happened to me, too." They would meet in coffee shops, start talking like that. Another person wandered in — "That happened to me, too."

There were originally 14, and that became 12, who were the first successful men in the Yukon to take the government and church to court and win, for sexual abuses in residential schools.

I might add that, in order for them to be successful, they had to sign and commit to never taking the government or church to court for loss of language or culture. That came later.

They were the first men, and the only men in Canada still today — and we have something to be proud of — to ever take of their compensation money and form CAIRS Society — Joanne Henry now is the director, Vern Swan works in the back — and have an open door for people to start to come together. That case started in 1990. It started as a criminal court case and ended as a civil court case — because Maczynski, the priest, passed away, so it had to end up a civil case. It was in 1995 that they put forward money and formed CAIRS Society.

During that struggle, men like Larry Jackson and Hank Jackson passed away. They were some of the trailblazers.

This work still continues today. I remember the stories of them having bake sales, craft sales to get to Terrace, B.C. for their court cases. Their support people not getting paid — people like Jackie McLaren and Ruby Van Bibber — going down there and being with them, so that they could make it into the court room in Terrace, and go back and forth and back and forth.

The legacy of that society still plays in Yukon today. That program and that society and that group of men — I will look on it as being, I think, some of the proudest moments of my years and also years of my time learning to understand — and what I believe so many have yet to fully appreciate — how severe the impacts are that still live on today.

If I could just share a few memories of those years: I was there for eight years and we had elders come in — I'm sure they still come in — and CAIRS had a talent contest just over Rendezvous. We didn't do it perfectly, because it had never been done before. None of this has been done perfectly; it's never been done before. We are learning as we go. I think of Roger and us taking street folks on hunting trips and James is carrying them across his creek on his back, because we are following the moose tracks and they didn't bring rubbers. We had a lot of laughs because through this healing we got to laugh a lot. We had a lot of tears and we had music. In those early days to where we are now with the folks that continue this fine work — when that door was opened with CAIRS nobody came.

I remember Jim Sheldon — bless his soul, he is no longer with us — was the first worker. He used to have his office up in the old Hougen's coffee shop; he would meet people there at his own expense, day in and day out, trying to get people to listen, saying "Hey, we have to stick together here." Then the

doors opened at CAIRS and I remember going in there and he and Jackie were just covered in paint, trying to paint that building and the soup kitchen, and asked me to work.

I was just flabbergasted that I would be asked to do that. I was also really in a fix, because I wanted to be semi-retired back then. This was in the early 1990s. I said, I'll work for 10 hours a week, that's all I can do and that's all I'll commit to. I'll volunteer more, I said, but I only want to be paid for 10 hours a week, because I just want to have a bit of a life. Eight years later, and we put in a lot of hours and never got paid. We never thought about it, either. We just went and made this stuff happen. Initially, nobody came in, like I said, so Jim and I would walk the riverbank and downtown, and say "Hey, there's a place you guys can come and talk about stuff."

They wouldn't come in, so we put a picnic table outside so they could have coffee, because there's no trust. I want to impress that there's no trust. When you've been lied to, abused, put down all your life, generation after generation after generation, there's no trust. Not even from your own kind. We do have an opportunity, though, to work together today. They sat out there at the picnic table for a few months, and every once in a while, they would stick their head in, and they'd see a guitar in the corner. They didn't come in to talk about residential school, but we used those little things to help people just kind of get a little comfortable.

I had an artist downstairs who made knives and carving and hide-tanning materials. You could come in and do whatever you wanted to do on your time — just come in and be respectful; that's all. And if you weren't that was okay; please come back when you want to be. It was a safe place. It continues to be a safe place. There are other places now throughout Canada that are doing the same kinds of things because we need to feel safe. We need to feel listened to. We need to be honoured and respected.

I know there are many more people who want to speak, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion, the majority of Canadians and their elected representatives still do not understand the impacts of this history, as I have stated. That is why the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is so important and that is also why we hope that this motion, as written, will receive the unanimous consent of this House.

Let us all demonstrate our commitment to the truth, to healing and to reconciliation. If Canadians do not know this history and do not understand the impacts on generations of First Nations, it means that Canadians cannot fully understand and appreciate the resilience of First Nations. In preparing for this motion today, I am struck by the patience of First Nation elders and of the people in the gallery today. It is an enduring patience that is deeply rooted in values.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for bringing this motion forward here today. I'd also like to extend my sincere thanks to those joining us in the gallery for this important debate.

I would like to begin with a very compelling quote about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts." That quote is from Justice Murray Sinclair. Those words resonate with us.

Residential and day schools have had a long-lasting effect on First Nations people here in Yukon and across Canada. This is very much a national issue. For over 100 years, aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. The government-funded, church-run schools were located all across Canada. One of the main objectives of residential and day schools was to allow First Nations children to adapt to Canadian society. As a result, these children were taken away from their families and from their traditional way of life.

There were four residential schools established in the territory: Forty Mile, which became Chooulta; Whitehorse Baptist, Aklavik and St. Paul's school in Dawson. There was one in northern British Columbia for Yukon First Nation students at Lower Post. I would like to overview a timeline of the history regarding residential schools.

I have adapted this from timelines on the Tourism and Culture website, the Anglican Church's website and the *Edmonton Journal's* website. I think it would be helpful for our deliberations here today if we have this context.

In the 1840s, residential schools began opening here in Canada. In 1844, the Bagot Commission, led by the Governor General, issued one of the first reports recommending the separation of aboriginal children from their parents. In 1874, the federal government, in conjunction with the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, mandated a national residential school system.

In 1879, the Davin report recommended federally run boarding schools. In 1891, Indian boarding school at Forty Mile, Buxton Mission, was established by Bishop Bompas. In 1901, the Anglican mission was founded at Carcross by Bishop Bompas. In 1903, the boarding school was closed at Forty Mile and children moved to St. Saviour's mission boarding school at Carcross. Bishop Bompas petitioned Indian Affairs for a modern building.

In September of 1911, Chooulta Indian residential school opened with authorized pupilage of 40, which was later increased. It would continue to operate until 1969. In 1920, St. Paul's Indian residential school was opened in Dawson. The school was closed in 1943 and the building was eventually converted into St. Paul's Hostel.

In 1927, the Aklavik Anglican Indian Residential school was opened at Shingle Point. In 1934, the school was moved to Aklavik due to overcrowding.

In 1939, the school in Carcross was lost to fire. Although substandard, students were placed in temporary structures as Ottawa could not fund a new school until the war's end. In 1942, health officials condemn the school but allow students to complete the school year. In 1943, the school is closed by government order. In 1944, the school would restart in temporary, prefabricated buildings shipped from Vancouver.

It would be 1953 before construction was finished on the replacement facility.

In the 1940s, the Whitehorse Baptist School was established in Whitehorse and was funded by the Indian Affairs Branch until 1962. Also in the 1940s, the federal government recognized that the residential school system was expensive and inefficient. In the 1950s, aboriginal students are increasingly placed in reserve day schools or in public schools.

In 1951 Lower Post Residential School was established as a result of a merger of two day schools, Liard and the Teslin Lake Catholic. In 1953, St. Agnes Anglican Hostel or Yukon Hall opened here in Whitehorse.

In 1958, Indian Affairs inspectors recommended abolition of residential schools.

In 1967, Yukon territorial government took over from Ottawa the responsibility for providing education for all children in the Yukon and began opening local schools. In 1969, the federal government's formal partnership with the church ended.

Most schools were closed by the 1980s.

In 1986, the United Church was the first church to apologize for its role in the residential school program. In 1991, the Roman Catholic Oblates of Mary Immaculate, which ran 60 percent of the schools across the country, apologized.

Also in 1991, the federal government established the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Phil Fontaine, Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, publicly disclosed his own experience of abuse at school. In 1993, the Anglican Church apologized for its role in the residential school program. In 1994, the Presbyterian Church apologized for its role in the residential school program.

In 1998, the federal government issued a statement of reconciliation, delivered by Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart. In 2001, the federal government created an office to manage and resolve the large number of abuse claims. Two years later, the government launched the National Resolution Framework to help resolve claims through compensation and promises of therapeutic treatment.

In 2004, the Assembly of First Nations issues a report that led to talks to develop resolution to claim. In 2005, the federal government appoints Frank Iacobucci, a retired Supreme Court Justice, to broker a deal in November. Government announces agreement in principle.

In May 2007, the House of Commons provides the first official apology for residential schools. In September 2007, the historic deal of approximately \$5 billion ends years of litigation. Thousands of lawsuits had been announced in December 2006. As part of the settlement, \$60 million was stipulated for a truth and reconciliation commission. On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper made an official apology a stipulation of the settlement. In 2009, Pope Benedict expressed sorrow to a delegation from Canada's Assembly of First Nations over the deplorable treatment of aboriginals in residential schools run by the Roman Catholic Church.

In 2009, Justice Murray Sinclair, Marie Wilson and Chief Willie Littlechild were appointed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada with a five-year mandate. Now, in 2014, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work is entering the final stages.

Mr. Speaker, I begin my comments by referencing Justice Sinclair's quote: "Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts."

Relationships are important to this government and that is why we are continuing to build upon these relationships. The previous administration invested in our correctional redevelopment project, which was done in partnership with CYFN because of the importance of building that relationship. The review of Yukon's police force, *Sharing Common Ground*, was co-chaired by the Government of Yukon, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Council of Yukon First Nations.

The goal there was to rebuild and strengthen relationships. Our delivery on the recommendations made in the *Sharing Common Ground* report demonstrates our commitment to rebuilding the relationship.

Mr. Speaker, for a few minutes I'd like to go back to June 11, 2008, in Ottawa where, on behalf of the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister made an official apology. To set the context, it is important for me to understand the Prime Minister's message. His speech reads as follows:

"I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in these schools is a sad chapter in our history... In the 1870s, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligations to educate aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the residential school system were 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 that aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as was infamously said, 'to kill the Indian in the child'.

"Today we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country... Most schools were operated as joint ventures with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and United churches. The Government of Canada built an education system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes and often taken far from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.

"First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools, and others never returned home. The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

"While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities. The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.

"It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors who have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strengths of their culture. Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

"The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian residential schools system. To the approximately 80,000 living former students and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes, and we apologize for having done this.

"We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions, that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that far too often these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

"The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden of this experience is properly ours as a government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time, and in a very real sense we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly. We are sorry.

"Nous le regrettons. We are sorry. Nimitataynan. Niminchinowesamin. Mamiattugut.

"In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian residential schools, the implementation of the Indian residential schools settlement agreement began on September 19, 2007. Years of work by survivors, communities, and aboriginal organizations

culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

“A cornerstone of the settlement agreement is the Indian residential schools truth and reconciliation commission. This Commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian residential schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

“God bless all of you, God bless our land.”

Mr. Speaker, I understand that representatives of Health and Social Services recently spoke with representatives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to determine the specifics of the TRC's written request for Yukon life event information. The registrar of vital statistics has collected and reviewed the information requested by the TRC and, as I understand, is waiting for this call to see how we could best serve the commission. The current *Vital Statistics Act* prevents the release of cause of death except on the order of the court, however. Discussions between the two parties have forged a way forward that will, as I understand it, give the TRC the information it requires in a way that will not breach our legislation. The vital statistics registrar may confirm or deny the existence of a death or burial record and release public statistical information for a particular period if it's in the public interest. Mr. Speaker, the registrar may not publish statistics information that are personally identifying and no death certificate may contain cause of death unless there is a court order.

In closing, we are working as a government to carry out the very thing that this motion brings forward, but there is much more good work that needs to be done. Thank you. Mahsi' cho. Günilshish.

Mr. Silver: I would like to just begin today by thanking the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for his motion today. We make a conscientious decision when we bring forth motions into the House whether or not we're going to share personal stories with that. The closer these stories are and the closer the motion is to our heart, the harder that is. I just want to thank him very much for sharing. It couldn't have been easy.

The Liberal caucus will absolutely be supporting this motion. Through its missing children project, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is currently trying to get an accurate count on the number of children who died in residential schools, the cause of their deaths and where they are buried. The commission has so far confirmed about 4,100 deaths, but expects that number to rise.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission researchers are also tracking down cemeteries through death records, historical correspondence, testimony of survivors, photographs and even using ground-penetrating radar. Last

Friday, the British Columbia government transferred to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission — or TRC — 4,900 death records. The records include all deaths of First Nation children and youth, aged four to 19, between 1870 and 1984.

Recently the Alberta government turned over 41 DVDs, containing about 10,000 death records of First Nation people who died between 1923 and 1945.

TRC researchers are now sifting through those records to determine which ones died in one of the provinces, with 25 residential schools. The TRC has requested death records of First Nations children and youth during the residential school era from every province and every territory, including Yukon.

Nova Scotia was home to the Shubenacadie residential school, and recently turned over 127 death records from 1922 to 1968. Thirteen of the records were of students who died in residential schools.

Counting the dead and finding where they lie is one of the toughest tasks facing the TRC, which has a little over a year left on its mandate. The commission's final report will include a chapter on the deaths, and it will be the last one written, because researchers expect the number will continue to grow right up until the printing deadline. The final report will also include recommendations on how to maintain the search for the lost children.

So far, in addition to combing through 7,000 survivor statements, TRC researchers have based their current tally on records from Aboriginal Affairs and Health Canada. The recent influx of provincial documents from British Columbia and Alberta will now be added to that mix.

TRC researchers will soon be searching through the RCMP's closed records, held by Library and Archives Canada. Finding where the children are buried is, in some ways, more difficult. Many of the cemeteries are overgrown and unmarked, lost in time and memory.

The commission, delving into the sordid legacy of Canada's Indian residential schools, wrapped up nearly four years of public hearings recently, where thousands of victims recounted stories of cruelty and abuse at the hands of those entrusted with their care. The heartbreaking accounts will now form a part of a lasting record of one of the darkest chapters in our country's history. There is more work to be done in the final year of the commission and I urge the Government of Yukon to do all it can to release the data that has been requested.

Ms. Hanson: I'd like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for having the foresight, the will and the courage to bring forward this motion today, urging the Government of Yukon to take all necessary measures to expedite the release of data requested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the causes of death, illnesses and disappearances of First Nation students in schools that were located in the Yukon.

We have heard an awful lot about the process and the history of residential schools. We know that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is slated to conclude its work next June, when it will be issuing a final report reflecting six years

of work. That commission had — as my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes spoke to — as one of its terms of reference to identify the sources and create as complete an historical record as possible of the Indian residential school system and legacy. That record is to be preserved and made accessible to the public for future study and use.

It has not always been easy for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to do its work. In fact, the federal government stalled and refused to provide data. I think it's a cautionary tale for us as legislators to be mindful that last January the Ontario Superior Court of Justice reinforced the commission's mandate to gather documents related to Indian residential schools. They found that the Government of Canada — and I think we could read Government of Yukon — must produce all relevant documents.

Justice Sinclair, the head commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said at the time that this is necessary to be able to “continue the work of gathering and protecting for future generations documents that are relevant to the history of Indian residential schools in Canada.” The judge at that time was really clear about the importance of the plain meaning of what the Indian residential schools documents were that were required to be provided. We can choose to be constrained by existing legislation or we can use the collective goodwill that exists in the Legislative Assembly as legislators to determine and to say that where there is a will there is way.

If there is a requirement to change the legislation in the Yukon with respect to vital statistics, I know the will exists in this Legislative Assembly to do that to ensure that all the information that's necessary and relevant to the families and survivors of Yukon residential schools is made available.

I want to speak a little bit about the importance of what we do and what we're speaking about today with respect to reconciliation. Reconciliation is an active word; it's a verb; it's an action. That's what we're being called upon today to do. We're being called to expedite the release of this data. That's part of the process of reconciliation.

One of the Truth and Reconciliation commissioners is Marie Wilson, well-known to northerners. She has deep roots in the Northwest Territories. Ms. Wilson spoke in November 2012. We've spoken today an awful lot about the experience of Indian residential schools and the devastating impact that has had on generations and generations of First Nation people. As I said, reconciliation is an active verb.

Ms. Wilson spoke about the imperative of a deeper engagement of non-aboriginal Canadians if meaningful reconciliation is to be achieved. For many survivors, Wilson said it is their willingness to finally forgive themselves and their desire not to carry other people's garbage any longer. She said we must be honest about the real two solitudes in this country.

This is a phrase that was made famous from a novel in the mid-40s about the clash of French and English cultures in Canada. She said the real divide is between indigenous and non-indigenous citizens. We have to commit to doing tangible things to close the divide in awareness, understanding and

relationships. Non-aboriginal Canadians — she said — need to do something in response to the real harm that has been done and to the needs that survivors have come forward to describe. She said we can no longer afford to be strangers to each other in this country that we share. We could actually come to know each other, not just as labels or hyphenated Canadians, but rather as neighbours, as friends, as people who we care about.

Canadians need to own the residential school system as Canadian history, not aboriginal history. It's our history. Hence the call for the mandatory inclusion of residential schools history in our school curricula. Ms. Wilson said that this is not comfortable subject matter, but you have to get uncomfortable to be honest about all of this.

In the Yukon, we have a unique opportunity to give life to the notion of reconciliation as a result of the process embarked upon initially by Yukon First Nation leaders in the late 1960s and early 1970s. We have heard today about the legacy, the reality and the impact of the Yukon residential schools. An aspect of Canadian history often not discussed is that residential schools were only part of the weapons employed by successive governments to try to eliminate the “Indian issue” in Canada. French and British colonial governments and subsequent Canadian federal governments had entered into treaties with First Nations from the earliest colonial times.

After the federal government had successfully opened up the Prairies and west to settlement and the extension of the railway, Canada stopped, essentially, at the British Columbia and Alberta border. From the mid-1920s until the late-1960s, Indians were prohibited from gathering, organizing or petitioning the government to enter into treaties. In fact, when the Yukon Chief Jim Boss from Lake Laberge area had tried to get the attention of the federal government to address the need to protect some of the Yukon land for his people, given the onslaught from the Yukon Gold Rush, the federal government refused negotiations, stating “There is no Indian title to be extinguished in the Yukon.”

The federal government's attempts to eradicate the Indian factor in Canada were not limited to residential schools — outlawing traditions and laws such as the potlatch or the sun dance. It was part of a world view that was captured in a speech given by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1969. Just give me a second here, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry.

He said at that time, “If we think of restoring aboriginal rights to the Indians, well what about the French who were defeated at the Plains of Abraham? Shouldn't we restore rights to them? And what about though the Acadians who were deported — shouldn't we compensate for this? And what about the other Canadians, the immigrants? What about the Japanese Canadians who were badly treated at the end or during the last war? What can we do to redeem the past?”

He said, “We will be just in our time. This is all we can do. We must be just today.” Simply focus on today. Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that that wasn't adequate then and it's not adequate now.

To his credit, Trudeau did move from not wanting to recognize aboriginal rights to being prepared to, after the

success of the historic Nisga'a Supreme Court case, led by Thomas Berger. He went from being unwilling to talk about aboriginal rights to being willing to accept the delegation from Yukon, led by Elijah Smith, who gave the Prime Minister the historic *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*.

Elijah Smith made it clear, in outlining the legacy of the past, that the focus and the vision of Yukon Indian people was in the future. As he said in that document, this is a settlement for tomorrow, not today. "This Settlement is for our children, and our children's children, for many generations to come. ... we seek in our Settlement ... to protect ..." our children "... from a repeat of today's problems in the future. You cannot talk to us about the 'bright new tomorrow', when so many of our people are cold, hungry and unemployed. A 'bright new tomorrow' is what we feel we can build when we get a fair and just Settlement. Such a Settlement must be made between people of peace. There must be a 'will-to-peace' by all the people concerned. We feel we have shown this 'will-to-peace' for the last hundred years. If you feel the same, it should be easy for us to agree on a Settlement that will be considered 'fair and just' to all."

Elijah Smith and the leaders also said, "The Indian people have always been able to survive ... It's learning how to survive in the Whiteman's world that has given us trouble. We have had problems because many of our people have been made to feel they are not as smart as the Whiteman. There can be no equality when one feels he is not as good as someone else. When some of our people have more pride in themselves and in their own people — then they will have a better chance to look at the Whiteman as their equal. We must have, both the right to be different, and the right to be accepted as fellow-citizens and as fellow-humans."

He said that, "Most of the time, Whitemen have insisted that we become instant Whitemen. This was never possible."

"Our old people will once again be encouraged to make our children aware and proud of their heritage. The young can once again be proud to listen. Too long have our young people been taught by the Whiteman to be ashamed of our heritage."

Mr. Speaker, the elders of today were young men and women at the time, one of whom was with us earlier today. When they went to Ottawa to talk about regaining that lost pride, it was a significant part of the process and the outcome of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was mandated by our Canadian government to assist all of us in achieving.

Yukon First Nations actively and patiently have engaged over many years within the land claims and self-government negotiation process that followed Elijah Smith's historic statement to Canada. The result of a series of agreements between and among the governments, First Nations, Yukon and Canada represents — as the Supreme Court of Canada said, when it talked about what those rights that are recognized in the Constitution of Canada in section 35 — a framework to which the fact that aboriginal peoples lived on the land in distinctive societies with their own practices, traditions and cultures is acknowledged and reconciled with the sovereignty of the Crown — the reconciliation; a framework for reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a word that means to bring into agreement and to make compatible. That's what Yukon First Nations offered to us, as Yukoners, as citizens of this territory. They worked with all of us to make compatible two world views.

I was reading from the Swedish institute on democracy talking about how, ideally, reconciliation prevents, once and for all, the use of the past as a seed of renewed conflict. It consolidates peace and strengthens newly established or re-introduced democratic institutions.

As a backwards-looking operation, reconciliation brings about the personal healing of survivors. We've been talking about that today. It brings about the reparation of past injustices and the building or rebuilding of relationships between individuals and communities, and the acceptance by former parties who, for whatever reasons — historic, or because of institutional violence — had no common vision. But through reconciliation, we develop that common vision and an understanding of the past.

Reconciliation also has a forward-looking aspect to it. In its forward-looking dimension, reconciliation means enabling victims and their perpetrators to get on with life and the level of society, the establishment of civilized political dialogue and an adequate sharing of power.

That sharing of power is what we as a society in this territory have agreed to do. The challenge for us is working it through. A key element of the processes of reconciliation, an element based on observations from the international arena and applicable to the process of reconciliation in the Yukon, is that peaceful, coexistence, trust and empathy do not develop in a sustainable way if structural injustices in the political legal and economic domain remain, we will not have that real and true reconciliation.

Reconciliation must be supported by a sharing of power, an honouring of each other's political commitments and the creation of a climate conducive to human rights and economic justice and a willingness to accept responsibility for the past and jointly for the future. That is the essence of the new relationship. The reconciliation that is to be found as a result of us — all of us as Yukoners, First Nation and non-First Nation — being willing to take the risk of openness to a new way of relating to each other.

Maybe one day we'll be ready to express that sense of reconciliation by listening to the words of Elijah Smith and the First Nation leaders who said in 1973 — again from the Truth and Reconciliation document. They were pretty blunt in some of the language they used. They said that if we are successful, then the date of our agreement will be a day for all to celebrate in the years to come. Because — as they said — public holidays in 1973 had little meaning to the Indian. August 17 — Discovery Day — Yukon's territorial holiday means to the white man the day the gold rush started. It means to the Indian the day his way of life began to disappear. The leaders said in *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*: "If we are successful, the day will come when all Yukoners will be proud of our heritage and culture, and will respect our

Indian identity. Only then can we be equal Canadian brothers. I would add “sisters”, since this is 2014.

Maybe — just maybe — we can agree to recognize Aboriginal Day — June 21 — as a territorial holiday and encourage all Yukoners to celebrate together, to recognize that the simple gestures of celebrating together are also forms of reconciliation.

I have been very encouraged by the sense that I have from the government members that they will work to implement the motion that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes put forward today urging the Government of Yukon to take all necessary measures to expedite the release of data requested regarding the number and the causes of deaths, the illnesses and disappearances of First Nation residential school survivors in the Yukon.

We will join with government members and facilitate, to expedite whatever legislative changes may be required to ensure that objective can be achieved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I too would like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for bringing this motion to the floor of the House today for debate, and thank all those who have joined us in the gallery today. Often individuals who don't come to witness these proceedings see in the media where we disagree on policy items or going back and forth on political things, but this is an opportunity, I believe, for those who have gathered.

It's great to see such a large crowd and so many important people gathered here today to witness when legislators on both sides of the floor and all three parties put aside their partisan differences to support an important motion. It happens more often than Yukoners would think, on the floor of this chamber, but it's always great when we're able to share that with members of the public who have joined us here today.

So for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have the people who have joined us in the gallery witness the vote that will take place, where unanimous consent is granted to this motion. But I just quickly wanted to share a couple of stories about the residential schools and maybe a personal story, I guess, on growing up in the Yukon and the awakening that I have seen over the years as far as residential schools.

Attending elementary school, junior high and high school here in the territory — of course, Yukon Hall was a student residence at the time — and growing up, we played baseball, football and other things across the street and on the lawns, in what was in a ball diamond by what is now Christ the King Elementary School, really oblivious to the history at the time of what took place in Yukon Hall.

Many of my friends — we grew up, of course, with First Nation and non-First Nation students going through the school and many of my friends lived in Yukon Hall. I think of Ted James and Darryl James from Carcross, for instance, and many of the others — but not really understanding or learning about the residential school experience that happened, going through our school system here in the territory.

It wasn't really until — embarrassingly so for me, I guess, to a point — because of my involvement as a politician and in other organizations in the community. It really wasn't until I went to the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference in 2008, that there was a bit of an awakening for me as to the impact of residential schools on our First Nations population — not only here in the Yukon — but across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, for those who don't know, the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference is a gathering of young potential leaders from across the country. Over 200 individuals will gather for an opening plenary session and then break into study groups, travel across Canada and then report back in Ottawa to the Governor General and whoever the private sector conference co-chair is.

When we went, of course, it was Governor General Michaëlle Jean and the conference chair was Rick George, the CEO of Suncor. We gathered in Banff. Many people didn't know each other. I was joined by a number of other Yukoners, Michelle Kolla, Executive Director for CYFN now; Michael Hale, Patti Balsillie and Paul Moore were the Yukoners who went on that conference.

We were treated at that opening planning session to a number of keynote speakers who spoke to the theme of the conference which was Leadership in Communities. The conference was opened by the Governor General and the conference chair. We had remarks from the Premier of Alberta at that time, Ed Stelmach. The Hon. Peter Lougheed gave the keynote address at the opening dinner. Jim Balsillie of BlackBerry fame was a speaker at the conference. We heard from a number of excellent speakers, but I would have to say the turning point for everyone at that conference was when we heard from Phil Fontaine, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He spoke on the Saturday, June 7. Of course, my colleague, the Minister of Justice and others have spoken about the significance of June 11, so this was just prior to him going to Ottawa to witness the national apology in the House of Commons. But again, his speech at that conference was the turning point, because it really altered the focus for many of the young leaders that were in that room who would break into the various study groups and travel around the country.

When we all got together back in Ottawa to report back, everyone shared stories of where they watched the national apology. It didn't matter what was going on in the agenda at the time.

The folks that came up to the Yukon were travelling to places like Old Crow, Carcross and Marsh Lake. But it was almost as if the conference stopped for that moment when the national apology was offered. I thank the former Grand Chief Fontaine for his words at the opening and for really bringing to light the significance for the group of us who travelled on that tour.

Many of the individuals who were in my study group — we went to Northern Ontario — some were business people, labour leaders; one gentleman worked for the United Nations. I remember fondly the time that we had on that tour. Many of those individuals hadn't even met an aboriginal Canadian or a

First Nation Canadian — some of them grew up in the big cities of Montreal or Toronto — until they came to this conference. I think it was a real awakening for many of us. From that conference for me I was able to learn and to take more interest.

The stories that the Member from Mount Lorne Southern Lakes was able to share here today is just another part of the education for me with respect to the impact of the residential school experience. I did also have the opportunity, since being elected, to meet with Justice Sinclair here in Whitehorse, once when he was here speaking. I had a private breakfast meeting with him. I was extremely impressed with his knowledge, his passion and commitment to this cause. He later came to Halifax. I was Education minister at the time and that is where the Canadian ministers of education gathered.

Through the leadership of my colleague at the time and, I believe, still-Education minister for Northwest Territories, Jackson Lafferty, Justice Sinclair and the commission came and presented to all of the Education ministers from across the country on the importance of informing our youth and keeping introducing this into the curriculum. At the time, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut were leading the way in introducing this to the education curriculum, and again, that really was — Justice Sinclair came to that conference and presented after the formal proceedings had concluded, again, through the work of Jackson Lafferty to bring him and the commission members to Halifax. But front and centre the next year, when we travelled to Iqaluit for the 2013 meetings, a large aspect of that conference had to deal with school curriculum around residential schools.

Premier Eva Aariak at the time, of Nunavut, shared some of her experience, and the emotion runs very deep when someone is sharing such an experience, just as we obviously witnessed here earlier today with the words of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

I think that's such an important part, because, as I mentioned, growing up here we never really learned about what had happened, or what some of these buildings were in our communities. I think that the work that the Department of Education is doing to introduce that into the curriculum will serve us well, so that we don't forget what happened to these individuals and ensure that we continue to learn from past mistakes, and make sure that nothing like that can and ever will happen again.

I just wanted to close with a story that I was able to share at CAIRS last summer, I believe, when the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and the Member for Copperbelt South were in attendance.

It was a story that the late John Edzerza — former Minister of Education and a former member of this House — shared with me and the current Member for Vuntut Gwitchin when we were travelling with the Select Committee on Anti-Smoking Legislation to ban smoking in public places. I was working for the Cancer Society at the time, and the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin was on the select committee as well as the Member for Lake Laberge. Mr. Edzerza shared with us a story on how sad it was in Atlin in the fall — growing up

there as a child — because when the leaves started to change colour meant that that's when the families would be broken up and the students would be taken away to residential schools. I believe the children from Carcross actually went to Lower Post and they wouldn't return until the spring, if they returned at all.

I share that event because I can't imagine what it was like for those families. Growing up here in Riverdale, I was able to go home most days for lunch and see my family. My family and my parents were partners in my education, so to be torn away from your family at such a crucial time when you're learning and being educated, I just couldn't imagine what it was like. The scene that Mr. Edzerza described to me I'll never forget, as he said that mothers would run after the vehicles that had their children in them screaming and crying as they left each August. It's those emotional stories that I heard from Mr. Edzerza and the stories that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes shared here today that will contribute to my continuing education as to the impact of the Residential school Experience.

Thank you to all the speakers that have gone before and those that are going to speak after me for sharing their thoughts on this important issue, and of course the biggest thanks goes to the individuals that have gathered here in the gallery, for coming and witnessing our discussion on such an important issue — thank you.

Ms. White: I thank everyone who is still sitting in the gallery. I spent a day sitting there and I know they are not the most comfortable seats, so thank you for still being here.

I was born in the Yukon. I grew up in the territory and I am product of my environment, my community, and our education system. These points are all relevant, because until a number of years ago, I had heard the term residential schools — I had heard them in passing — but I didn't understand the full impact of those two words.

I was hired in 2009 to work at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, as a life skills instructor. The women's living unit was a pilot program and so my job. I was to be a cooking instructor in this unit. I never thought of cooking as a life skill. I mean, cooking is a skill and some people are far better at it than others, but maybe before this point I just thought that everyone had the basic skills to feed themselves. It is easy to take for granted the skills we learn from watching or being shown by our families — our mothers our fathers, our grandparents, our aunts and uncles — knowledge that gets passed on without our ever being aware of it.

My mother is left-handed; she puts her pots on and, because she is left-handed, she will stir with her left hand and hold with her right, and to this day I put my pot on the stove in the same way, but I am right-handed, and every time I put the pot down I have to spin it because I watched my mother.

That doesn't seem like a big deal, but those are things I learned just by being present, and those are opportunities that people who went to residential school did not have. They're not the memories they have from their families.

I soon learned that my job in corrections was more than cooking. I often described my position to people who asked as being a dishwashing cheerleader. I was there to encourage, to support, to teach, to listen, and I washed an awful lot of dishes. I was truly blessed to develop friendships with two elders who visited on Fridays. At the beginning, when I first started working there, they would tease me for my inability to sit quietly and wait for the conversation to naturally start. They taught me to be patient, to sit quietly and to really listen.

Sometimes these visits would have me bent over in laughter, and sometimes after they left I would be left with a lot to think about. I'm grateful for the lessons and for these friendships.

Kitchens are special places. They're often the heart of our homes, they're the places to cook and eat and share, and it's an easy place to settle into the rhythm of the tasks at hand. Kitchens are a natural place for conversation. When your hands are busy and when you don't need to look the person in the eye, or be watched while speaking, stories flow.

My education on residential schools and the intergenerational effects of residential schools really happened in that kitchen. Before my time in corrections, I never understood the full scope of what happened. I still can't fully understand the wrongs that were done to First Nation people, communities and families by the Canadian government, and I still struggle to understand because, to me, those actions are incomprehensible.

I met women whose parents were survivors of residential school, and I met women who, themselves, were survivors of residential school. Their stories are their own and they were shared with me while we worked side by side in the safety of the kitchen. Sometimes those stories brought us both to tears, and sometimes it was only me who cried because they had no tears left to cry themselves.

No one ever shared stories with me looking for a solution or an answer. They shared them with me because they needed to be heard. I've been taught well by my elders. I am a much better listener now than I ever was before.

I wish that my Yukon education had shed light on our past. Why wasn't I taught about residential schools when, as a young person, so many of my classmates were living in their shadow? Why wasn't I taught about residential schools so that my heart would be softened to those in our community who struggle with addiction because of that shadow? Why wasn't I taught about residential schools that I could better understand the past to help me understand the present? I have nephews — nephews I love more than I ever thought I could love anything, and I cannot imagine being taken away from their families — from my sister and her husband — when they were four or five years old. I cannot imagine how my sister would react or how my parents would react or how I would react and I cannot imagine what that separation would have done to my nephews as they grew.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's job, as I understand it, is to hear people's stories and bear witness to their experiences. Mr. Speaker, I never went to the sessions that were held in town. I can admit that I was afraid — afraid

of what I would hear, afraid that I wasn't strong enough to do the job of listening and hearing those stories.

The Canadian government issued an apology to First Nations, but until every child is accounted for, that just isn't enough.

The Yukon government has a moral responsibility to take all the necessary measures to make the truth of what happened in the Yukon available to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I believe that truth will set us free.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to first off thank my colleague from across the way, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, for bringing forth such a very important topic for today's discussion. I think my colleague to my right, the Member for Riverdale North, has also mentioned that these Wednesdays are an opportunity for us as MLAs to bring forth issues of importance and to seek collaboration and to seek the will of the Assembly and to move issues forward. Sometimes we'll agree and sometimes we'll disagree and sometimes we'll amend the motion and away we go.

I do want to thank the member opposite for his strength and humility, as well, bringing forth this very important issue, and to all the members who have reflected their personal sentiments as well, as to what this issue really means to each and every one of us. To all the members in the gallery, too, thank you for being here and showing strength and sitting here for so long, listening to us.

There are so many things I want to say here today, but I don't want to be repetitive either. I was going through Hansard from years ago and we have debated a number of topics when it comes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission itself and the good work that has been undertaken and is still undergoing. There were a lot of great comments I do recall at that time — and I just went back; it's always good to review history and what we put on the public record.

My former colleague, the late Member for McIntyre-Takhini, John Edzerza, had often reminded all of us about residential schools — what transpired in our own backyard and in our own front yard and what that meant.

Like the Member for Riverdale North, I was born and raised in the Yukon. I'm from Watson Lake and just down the road — literally — is Lower Post. I grew up alongside lots who remain to this day life-long friends, from Lower Post to Upper Liard to Two Mile, Two and One-Half Mile, and individuals in the Town of Watson Lake as well.

Similar to what I've heard, I think had we had the opportunity to hear what in fact was going on — what really appalled me was last summer — and I know I'm skipping all over here. Last summer, the Summer Academy that was sponsored by the Department of Education was really the first of its kind. They worked with the Northern Institute of Social Justice and the Council of Yukon First Nations to put forth a session. It was a full-day session of speakers. It was a panel of speakers and Mr. Bob Charlie was in the crowd and was among that panel of speakers. It was really an opportunity for well over 500 teaching professionals and support staff to hear

first-hand many of those teachers who were first to the territory.

They had just come to the territory. They had moved from Ontario — all over — and they were going to Ross River. Perhaps they were going to other places — Old Crow. I stayed there for that particular session and it was incredibly powerful to hear first-hand some of the stories that were true life stories and were articulated by survivors.

I do recall Bob Charlie — Mr. Charlie, forgive me if I'm not as completely articulate and eloquent as he had provided that day — who talked about the good and the bad and the ugly, of course. What was really powerful about that was that he talked about, obviously, what had happened and all the things we've heard here today. He also reflected on some of the good things, and some of the less than good things and the downright awful things as well.

Each of the panel speakers spoke eloquently about their experiences, because every single person's experience was different. I can't even begin to imagine what those experiences were. To hear those stories coming forth, and when you look at Canada's north, those former residential school students made up a very large percentage of the population of Canadian children, who had to endure that painful, tremendous agony — that chapter in their lives that continues to resonate in their lives, continues to resonate in generations and impacts all of us as a community and as a country to this day.

In fact, I was just reviewing that Canada's north has the highest ratio of residential school survivors per capita. In fact, one thing I did learn during that summer academy last summer was that it was actually up until the mid-1990s that aboriginal children across the north still were being taken away from their homes and sent to residential schools away from their families. That's not that long ago, as difficult as that is to believe.

There have been a series of hearings performed by the commission itself. There have been a series of discussions — very much so — over the years in my capacity as various portfolios that I've overseen. I had the privilege of hearing first-hand from many survivors in many different capacities at cultural events, education events, and aboriginal women's summits over the years and talking about their experiences. Again, I go back to if we had once had the opportunity, growing up in this territory, to hear and to understand and to really gain a much better coherent understanding of what in fact our history was about and is about, it would certainly have generated an understanding to this day that I think would have made a significant difference in many of our lives.

With this, as the former Minister of Education also stated, there is a lot of work being done on that front. In fact, we were very pleased to be able to work with the Council of Yukon First Nations on a joint education action plan with Canada and Yukon to look at that student achievement gap and build upon the work that has been ongoing and undertaken and reflective. We are much appreciative of the work that is going on, even government-to-government, under the self-government agreements, such as the bilateral that we had with the

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation on enhancing educational outcomes of our students.

Part of that is to be able to tell the stories about residential schools. All of us recognize the importance of the fundamental need to tailor our curriculum to include those locally developed materials that are based on stories about our own Yukon First Nations, and about the residential school story and the legacy here in the territory.

We have been working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and we have been working alongside many First Nation governments, in addition to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, to come up with a grade 10 social studies unit, using the book *Finding Our Way Home*, which we look to be piloted later on this spring at the Robert Service School.

It is important to be able to take that, but also be able to tailor that even further. I know we have talked about, and I even found myself asking our department officials, why we can't just launch all of this in every single school tomorrow. But we have to be mindful that not necessarily every community is ready to tell that story. We have to be mindful and appreciative and we have to get those stories right and articulated appropriately. We hope, with this first pilot at the Robert Service School this spring, we will be able to expand that to as many other schools participating as possible — with the support of Yukon First Nation and to have the support in the classrooms as well.

You can appreciate that this has generations and many, many years of enduring pain and enduring having to tell these stories — and to share is part of the healing process, but to be able to carry on after that and, when we share those stories in our schools, to ensure that we have the resources in those schools to assist our student population to deal with that — and carrying that on into our homes and communities, as well, is a very important issue.

I wanted to also just talk a bit about some of my colleagues in the past and what they have mentioned in the past, to pay credit to their experiences, as well — a good reminder for all of us — but to be able to put in the personal situation, the shoes, of these who had to endure this experience of residential schools in our country is unfathomable.

It is up to each and every one of us to be able to do what we can. As our Premier mentioned in Question Period the other day, and was reiterated by the Minister of Justice, we as the Government of Yukon are very much committed to doing what needs to be done to fully articulate those particular records of those individuals whose lives were lost, impacted, and endured injury.

In terms of legislative changes, in terms of policy changes, those are all things that we are in discussions with the commission on as we speak right now — with the Department of Health and other departments, to be sure. That is certainly our commitment, as the Government of Yukon, to be able to do our part to ensure that the complete and comprehensive story of the survivors, and those who have lost their lives, are appropriately recorded and the stories continue

to be told and we continue to ensure that this never happens again in our country, in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I promised I wouldn't go on at great length, and here I have gone on at great length. In closing, again, I do want to thank all of my colleagues for their comments today on a very difficult issue and, again, thank all of our colleagues in the gallery, as well, for being here.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, for bringing this motion forward for debate today.

The Yukon government, as a northern jurisdiction with a large First Nations, Inuit and Métis population who have survived residential school, must play a leadership role in cooperating with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's information requests about the number and causes of deaths, illnesses and disappearances of First Nation residential school students in Yukon. I am pleased to hear all members will support this motion.

Looking at some of the people in the gallery here today, I'm thankful for how generous Yukon First Nation people are today to those of us who are settlers in their territory. Yukon First Nations share their culture, their stories, their food and their songs. Not too long ago, elder Judy Gingell, who is here in the gallery today, played a key role in organizing a Kwanlin Dun First Nation residential school healing conference that allowed people to "let it go now." Both native and non-native people were welcome at that conference. For both non-native and aboriginal people, knowing that colonial history is an important part of reconciliation.

I have learned so much from the elders and leaders in First Nation communities, but I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday as I was phoning some friends and former colleagues to prepare for this motion debate, I learned that I still have a lot to learn. I can only imagine the shock and pain for the parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles, younger brothers and sisters, when the children were taken away to what we refer to as "Indian residential schools." It has been said that the grief was so profound, even the dogs fell silent.

This afternoon's debate gives us an opportunity to learn more about the damage colonialism has done in the past and continuing into the present day. I must recognize that, from the very first colonial actions of foreign nations, First Nation people resisted the harms being imposed by the state and by the churches. The K'anächá scrapbook, published by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, tells the history of that resistance. Families wrote letters to the Indian agent, to the bishop, to the residential school principal asking for the return of their children. These were almost inevitably denied.

Mr. Speaker, I was recently at a gathering where Yukon First Nation people invited others, "If you want to know more about our culture, don't be shy. Ask. We will share."

If one wants to ask about residential school experiences, I learned that you must be prepared to take as much time as is needed and you must be prepared to hear some very hard truths.

"My brother got sick. They sent him away. We never saw him again. I would like to find out where he is buried." That is a story that I have heard from more than one person. That is Yukon history. Over the past few years, Yukon Sisters in Spirit has uncovered the histories of 38 aboriginal women who are missing and murdered. Most of those disappearances and murders will relate to colonialism and to residential school.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has a mandate to inform all Canadians about what happened in the more than 150 years of history of the residential schools. It aims to reveal the complete story of Canada's residential school system and lead the way to respect through reconciliation for the child taken, for the parents left behind.

In 1997, seven former employees of St. Anne's residential school in Fort Albany, Ontario, were convicted of offences related to the physical and sexual abuse of children. In 7,000 pages of investigative reports, the Ontario Provincial Police told a horror story of beatings, rape and even the use of an electric chair, both for punishment and for the amusement of staff. As Edmund Metatawabin, then Chief of the Fort Albany First Nation, tells it, the sight of a child being electrocuted and their legs flying out in front was a funny sight for the missionaries, and they'd all be laughing.

Between 1870 and 1906, Canada stole at least 150,000 aboriginal children from their homes and forced them into residential schools, where many suffered physical and sexual abuse and more than 4,000 died.

Today the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is trying to uncover the terrible tale of what happened in those schools.

While it claims to support that effort, the Harper government has so far failed to comply with the 2013 court order compelling it to release millions of documents related to residential schools from Library and Archives Canada and, according to the *National Post*, hasn't even issued a request for proposal for outside firms to bid on a contract to sort through the documents at federal archives so they can be passed along.

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's executive director, Kimberly Murray, Conservative foot-dragging already means that there is no way all of these documents will make their way to the commission before the end of the mandate.

In June 2008, in his apology to aboriginal Canadians for the horrors of residential schools, Prime Minister Harper said, "There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail." Six years later the Government still demonstrates its paternalism by withholding information that could help to bring closure to thousands of aboriginal Canadians who were victims of the residential school.

This motion is worded broadly to enable the government to look at how it could expedite the release of data to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission so the Commission's final report can fulfill its mandate and reveal the truth about residential schools and establish a renewed sense of Canada

that is inclusive and respectful — one that enables reconciliation.

There are many ways to enable reconciliation. First and foremost is to acknowledge the colonial code of relationship. European imperialism — Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, other European nations “discovered” — quote — what we call the New World and claimed the lands for their king or queen and country. The lands were labeled terra nullius, or empty lands. Ignoring the rights of indigenous inhabitants of the land, who had societies, laws, cultures — everything we would label as civilization — the colonial code was, move over, we want what you’re standing on.

The colonial code of relationship runs like this — and I take this from the Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society document *Together for Justice Bridging the Gap*, which was published in 2011, based on work that the Liard Aboriginal Society did.

“Colonial code of relationship: (1) You are deficient, and heathen, (2) I am proficient – knowledgeable, white, wealthy, (3) I have the right to perform certain operations on you — controlling, policing, diagnosing, apprehending... for your own good.”

That colonial code of relationship is one that we must recognize and then put behind us so that we can make the decision to change colonial patterns of behaviour. In Canada, there are strong models of how to end that colonial pattern. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is one. The Yukon land claims final agreements and self-government agreements are another. When it comes to providing the information that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission needs to document the number and causes of deaths, illnesses and disappearances of children at Yukon residential schools, there are ways the Yukon government can do that too.

The Minister of Justice spoke about the potential need for a court order. The Yukon government could contribute its in-house legal expertise toward a court order if that is what is required. There may be a need to amend the vital statistics or other legislation in the Yukon to change the 100-year period to a 25-year period. We could do that.

In 2012, chief coroners across Canada unanimously passed a motion to engage in discussions with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in order to better understand the role that each office might play in supporting the missing children project.

Two years ago, the Ontario chief coroner’s office developed a research methodology that they shared with other jurisdictions so others could use it to identify the children who died attending residential school in any province or territory. Here in the Yukon, the chief coroner’s office could be part of that work.

In the past, the land, the children and the social order were taken away from aboriginal people. Today we recognize the strength of aboriginal peoples and cultures. In 1905, Dr. Peter Bryce, the chief medical officer of health for the Department of Indian Affairs, reported that Indian children were deliberately being exposed to tuberculosis. He reported

on tuberculosis epidemics and deaths at Indian residential schools.

Dr. Bryce was fired from his job and expelled from the medical society.

Today, we commit to cooperation with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by providing them information about Yukon residential school students’ deaths and disappearances. I would like to thank all members for their support of this motion.

Mahsi’ cho.

Mr. Tredger: I’d like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for bringing forward this motion and those who have spoken before me. I’d like to acknowledge and honour those who have come out. I’d also like to acknowledge and honour the Northern Tutchone people in Pelly Crossing. I had the good fortune to be a teacher and principal there. I learned much from them. I thank and honour the strength and the courage of the residential school survivors who came back to their communities and committed to them. I learned first-hand as a teacher the intergenerational effects that this had. Again, I salute those communities and those strong and courageous survivors who came home and made a vow to themselves — in the words of Diyet — “No more lonely children.” Those survivors are indeed the eighth wonder of the world.

At the same time, I must honour and thank the elders and the people who taught me, as we saw today, that it is possible to laugh and cry at the same time — and that was a lesson I learned.

This is hard for me, because I am an educator. I believe in education. I’m a principal and I care for the children in my care, and the residential school system was an example of an education system gone seriously awry. To me, it was most insidious, or perhaps more insidious, because it was created in the name of education — a misguided, misapplied education that wrought terrible damage on generations of aboriginal children — damage that haunts First Nation families, communities and all of us to this day.

In the name of education, children were stolen from their parents and communities, robbed of language, culture and faith, taught to hate themselves and their heritage. They were told the only way they could succeed in this world was to abandon their identity and deny their past. There was terrible physical and sexual abuse in some schools. There was some good. There were well-meaning people involved, and we must question why and how this happened.

The national Truth and Reconciliation Commission has travelled across Canada. It has been a chance for residential school survivors and their descendants to share stories of loss and pain — stories of courage and triumph over adversity. It has been a chance, too, for non-indigenous Canadians to confront the bitter truth of Canada’s colonial past and present.

Again I honour those courageous survivors who shared their stories with us. It is important that we apologize. It is important that we condemn the failures of 50 or 100 years ago, but it’s also important — and harder — to take

responsibility for the injustices and failures of the here and now. We must not dismiss racism as a relic of history; instead, it is a current reality.

Today, we have no native residential schools. Instead, First Nation children and youth are over-represented in our foster homes, jails and emergency shelters, and they're under-represented in our high schools and post-secondary education institutions. It is not enough to acknowledge and apologize for the past when so many First Nation children today across Canada live in debilitating poverty. It is not enough to blame those who failed in the past, without taking a hard look at the way our education, health care, justice and social welfare systems continue to fail our First Nation families today.

We welcome the truth; we can strive for reconciliation; but we can't stop there, not if we want the next generation of First Nation children to grow up in justice and equality, to grow up healthy, strong and be masters of their own destiny.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun a process of reconciliation. We can and we must learn from those smart and tough survivors. We must call on the leadership of our communities and our First Nations, on the leadership of those who have been elected here to represent all Yukoners, to come together, to build a society free of racism, to acknowledge our past and grow into the future.

The province of Alberta announced last week that all kindergarten to grade 12 curricula will include mandatory content on the significance of residential schools and First Nation treaties. Aboriginal Relations minister Frank Oberle said, "Starting with the youngest members of our society, Alberta commits to Residential school survivors, their families and communities, that Albertans will hear your stories and know your truths." He said the pledge will help heal a sad and painful wound. The curriculum is to include the perspective of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples living in Alberta. There will also be a program to ensure teachers are made fully aware of the history of residential schools and aboriginal peoples. Oberle said "May this document help to both acknowledge a great sorrow and tragedy in our joint history, yet serve as a profound starting point for a new and brighter journey together"

The challenge for us as Yukoners is to do the same to ensure that our children — all of them — don't grow up as we heard today, not knowing the history of residential schools, or when people like me come to a community with no understanding of residential schools or our obligations under First Nation agreements. We must work together — all of us together — following the spirit, the energy and the commitment of our leaders to ensure that this history is known that our public servants, whether they be in education or in the justice field or in health and social services — know and understand as best we can the tragedy.

It's time for all Yukoners to come together and honour the courageous survivors, to honour the spirit of those who did not return and make a better world for our children. I thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for bringing this motion forward and I plead with everyone here to remember it's only a beginning. It's a first step. We can do so

much more as Yukoners. We are very capable of making the changes necessary. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Seeing the time, I will not take too long in speaking to this motion. I just wanted to rise here and first of all thank the people who have joined us here today in the gallery for sitting here and for taking the time out of their day to be part of this debate here in the Assembly.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission — as a number of my colleagues in the House have noted and outlined the history of it as well as the history of residential schools, I will not repeat that here and add it to the record again. But I do want to, in rising and speaking in support of this motion, note that the government very much appreciates the efforts of everyone who has been involved in this process.

We appreciate the fact that for those who have come forward and told their stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it has been, for some of them, undoubtedly a very painful experience. I'm sure for some, they at least, in large part, want to ensure that history reflects what occurred, so that our generation and future generations can understand the tragedy that occurred and mistakes that were made in the past by government.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, of course, has been a number of years in the works. We did have some challenges getting it to visit the Yukon and although most members of this House were not here in 2010, on May 5, 2010, I, along with my colleague the MLA for Whitehorse West and the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, all voted in favour of a motion urging the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to visit Whitehorse. We do appreciate that there was the opportunity for Yukoners to be part of this process, which it was not certain at the start would occur.

Again, I just want to note that some of the details of the requested information from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission — we're still getting some clarity on some of the specifics of the information they're requesting. There has been contact very recently — including as recently as yesterday, I believe — between the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Vital Statistics branch of Health and Social Services.

That discussion involved getting clarity of what information they want and considering how that information could be provided in a way that is in keeping with Yukon legislation and privacy legislation.

So again, some of this information — some of the specifics — we've just recently received and we need to understand what methods are necessary to ensure we can provide that information. Along with my colleagues, I can certainly support the intent of this motion, which is to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to expedite the data requested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the number and cause of deaths, illnesses and disappearances of First Nation residential school students in the Yukon, and we will ensure that staff gain a full understanding of the information requested, and then determine what is necessary to facilitate that request.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and, once again, thank all of the people who have been a part of this difficult and painful attempt to close the book on a very difficult period in Yukon history and the history of Yukon First Nation families, but also ensure that the history book reflects what occurred and, wherever possible, gain answers to questions that have been asked for many years, but not answered — that those answers are given and that history reflects that record of what occurred.

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

Mr. Barr: I would like to first thank all those in the gallery who took the time out of their day, and who will continue to take time out of their lives to continue the work that we still need to do in healing and moving forward. I would like to say to the members in the House, thank you for your comments. It has been a tough day for me and I know for others. I'm just grateful for all the responses.

I would like to say that Yukon First Nations are proud and strong. The opportunity here today is not for the First Nations so much as for us — the elected members of this House — to support this motion. As I'm hearing now, I believe that we will move forward. I just hold my hands up to everybody in this House.

Günilschish and Mahsi' cho.

Speaker: 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. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 15 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 600 agreed to

Motion No. 408

Clerk: Motion No. 408, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reinstate the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to ensure the voice of the public is heard in the implementation of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*.

Mr. Silver: With today's motion, I'm looking for a commitment that the Solid Waste Advisory Committee will be reinstated in order to continue the good work it started before it was disbanded by the government.

I'll start with some background information for members who might not be as familiar with the committee. In 2009, the Government of Yukon adapted a new *Solid Waste Action Plan*. One of the key commitments of the plan was the creation of a Yukon Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Let me outline its role, and this is from the action plan itself, and I'm quoting:

“Establish a Yukon Solid Waste Advisory Committee:

“With the range of governments and groups involved in Yukon waste management, a key theme heard throughout the Study and our work to date has been the need to look at waste management Yukon-wide, and to take a partnership approach.

“A Yukon Solid Waste Advisory Committee would bring together key representatives involved in various aspects of solid waste management, including the Yukon government, recycling, processing and transportation industry groups, Yukon communities, municipal governments and Yukon First Nations to collaborate and generate ideas for programs and initiatives to better manage waste in the territory.

“The Committee will be established to assist in the successful implementation of this Solid Waste Action Plan and as an ongoing opportunity for partnerships and ideas. The Committee would act in an advisory role in reviewing implementation options and making recommendations to the Yukon government regarding the management of solid waste and recycling programs in Yukon.

“This Committee would be the first of its kind for looking at Yukon waste management in a coordinated fashion — it would provide a formal venue and opportunity to explore partnerships, opportunities, share information and provide broader advice to governments and communities on waste management. By coming together to discuss waste management in this way, Yukon will continue to develop and implement modern and sustainable waste management practices.”

The creation of the committee was announced in June 2010 by the then Minister of Community Services. I would like to read from that press release. The title of the press release was, “New Solid Waste Advisory Committee members appointed”. I'm quoting from the press release: “Eight members have been appointed to Yukon's new Solid Waste Advisory Committee to help set priorities for improving solid waste and recycling programs in Yukon.”

This is a quote from the Community Services Minister inside of that press release: "Yukon government is serious about creating a sustainable waste management system... In response to what we've heard, we are successfully implementing the Yukon's Solid Waste Action Plan by looking at waste management Yukon-wide and taking a partnership approach." That's the end of the quote from him, but continuing on with the press release: "The advisory committee will meet a minimum of four times a year with wide representation. This committee will explore partnerships, share information and provide broader advice to governments and communities on waste management."

Another quote from the minister in the press release, "I am looking forward to the advisory committee's contributions toward a modern and sustainable solid waste management system that includes recycling, waste reduction and waste diversion..."

Continuing with the press release: "Chairing the committee will be Community Services' operations and programs manager... The following committee members began their two-year appointments on June 1..." The press release continues to go on and includes names of a youth representative, a recycling industry representative, an unincorporated Yukon community representative, a non-government organization representative, a trucking industry representative, an Association of Yukon Communities representative, a Department of Environment representative and a City of Whitehorse representative.

The appointment of all eight members of that Solid Waste Advisory Committee were made at the same time and ended at the same time. I believe their terms all expired on May 31, 2012. On June 4, 2012, an e-mail was sent from an employee at the Department of Community Services about the timing of the next meeting. That e-mail read, and I'm quoting: "Regard to this meeting, it is confirmed that everyone's term ended on May 31, so everyone will need to be renewed before the meeting can be held. You will all be contacted for scheduling of a new time, once appointments have been determined. Thanks for your time and involvement. We look forward to continuing on with all of the SWAC hard work and dedication."

Shortly after this, the committee was disbanded. Reappointments were never made and the government has never explained why. I asked this question on April 10 last year of the then Minister of Community Services and I didn't receive an answer that day. Members of the committee were certainly expecting the work to continue. The employee in the Department of Community Services thought so as well. The decision to disband this committee was a political one, with no reason being provided for why it came to an end. Certainly public input into the solid waste plan is a good idea, so the question remains, why was this committee done away with in the first place?

On September 6, 2013, in a mandate letter from the Premier to the Minister of Community Services, the Premier asked the minister in the mandate letter, and I quote: "Endeavour to meet the target recommended by the Solid

Waste Advisory Committee that Yukon develop a goal of zero waste with a target of 50% waste diversion by 2015." The instructions don't necessarily say to meet the target. They say try to meet the target. The bar was set pretty low and it's clear that the government had no intention of meeting the recommendation from that committee. Perhaps this is why the committee no longer exists. I look forward to hearing some responses from members of the Yukon Party on this one. They asked the government to do things the government didn't want to do, and it seems that this has ended up disappearing.

Mr. Speaker, the *Solid Waste Action Plan* is supposed to modernize how our landfills operate. An important part of that plan was the creation of a Solid Waste Advisory Committee. It was established to assist in the successful implementation of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and is an ongoing opportunity for partnerships and for ideas moving forward. The committee produced one annual report and it has been dormant since May of 2012, when the terms of all the appointees expired and the government didn't appoint any new members.

I suspect that the subject of solid waste will be a big topic of discussion during the upcoming AYC AGM, which is happening in Dawson City this year. I also know the government and municipalities have been working together on a solid waste working group.

Let me quote from the *Solid Waste Working Group Findings Report*. "Solid waste is a long-term problem that everyone will be dealing with in perpetuity. A forum like the Solid Waste Working Group or the defunct Solid Waste Action Committee (SWAC) is valuable and can play an ongoing role in helping the Yukon and municipal governments keep up with a rapidly changing environment and provide a forum for discussion, training, research and information sharing."

Mr. Speaker, the government's own report does recognize the value of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and I'm hoping that the government does as well. It can be demonstrated by supporting the motion and reinstating the committee. I must re-emphasize that, although there is a solid waste working group, this doesn't involve input from the public, as did the original Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to some conversations from all other members of this House, hoping that we can all agree to support this motion.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the MLA for Klondike for bringing forth this motion. Perhaps I'll just start off by saying that, when it comes to waste management in the territory, it has been and remains a fundamental priority for our government, in terms of coming up with solutions that are environmentally, socially and fiscally responsible in terms of coming waste-management practices throughout the Yukon.

I'll dial it back to a few years ago, actually quite a few years ago, when I was growing up. The cost of waste management back at that time was the cost of a pack of matches, literally. You would see landfills on fire throughout the territory and, to be sure, in many of the areas that were

administered by the Yukon government in unincorporated Yukon, where Yukon government oversees a large number of sites throughout the territory.

That has changed, of course. It has changed since January 1, 2012, as I seem to recall. We have been able to deliver a ban on burning practices and have really gone to work.

It's not just among the officials within the Department of Community Services and Department of Environment as the regulator, but also with our municipalities, unincorporated Yukon and the communities they're in, we've gone to work as well with recyclers, the processors, industry and transportation companies over the years to really come up with a fundamental way, a new way and a modernized way, in dealing with waste management practices.

I recall when I was Minister of Environment at that time — this was prior to the ban on burning coming into play — and I was invited to come out to Mount Lorne for their annual dumpster dining event. I took that occasion to go there on a Saturday afternoon, and I was greeted with a large group of individuals who wanted to showcase to me some of the sound practices that they were attempting to implement on their own.

To be sure, it was a very passionate group of individuals who were very committed to coming up with a new approach to dealing with waste management — what they had done on their own to showcase the importance of sorting, the importance of recycling opportunities, reducing waste altogether, educating the public, showing us that there are ways other than burning to dispose of waste throughout the territory.

Of course, ever since then, and before then, and leading up to now, we continue to work with a whole host of stakeholders on coming up with that plan. We do have a *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*.

It came about by the previous Minister of Community Services. To his credit and to the department's credit, they worked very hard with a number of great stakeholders throughout the territory to come up with a number of steps in terms of how we can better manage waste throughout the territory.

Since then, there have been a number of steps that have been undertaken. I can say that, as the previous Minister of Community Services, I had the opportunity to visit just about every single one of those transfer stations and landfills in the territory. I got to see first-hand — every trip we went on to every community, we made sure that we went to see each of those sites to see first-hand the improvements that had been made. To be sure, there has been some tweaking along the way and there will continue to be changes along the way. But we know full-well that we have come a long way in terms of providing added opportunities for Yukoners to dispose of their waste in a convenient and affordable manner, keeping in mind that we need to find that balance in terms of making those sites available and in terms of making those different disposal streams available to Yukoners.

Waste management is a very complex matter. What occurs on one site has repercussions on all sites.

Part of the overarching theme of this *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* is really to take a regional approach in coming up with regional circuits. A fundamental part of that in all of that success is to work hand in hand with all of our municipal governments.

The City of Whitehorse has been working on its own solid waste action plan. They have been working with the Yukon government through Community Services and the Department of Environment, in terms of sharing their best practices and ensuring that what we are doing and what they are doing are complementary.

As members know, we do have a number of sites where we do transport waste from all of our unincorporated sites into the City of Whitehorse to dispose of appropriately. There are fees associated with that waste management disposal. It is very important to be able to work seamlessly with the City of Whitehorse in all of this.

Likewise, it is also very important with our regulator, the Department of Environment. As they oversee the beverage container regulations and designated material regulations, there are some fundamentally important key aspects of waste management that have to do within that particular shop, as well, that we need to take into consideration.

One of the key objectives of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* is to develop a coordinated regional approach to waste management and to work in partnership with our municipalities, our communities, industry stakeholders.

As I have said on a number of occasions and I'm sure many of my other colleagues — the Minister of Community Services will also speak to this later on today — we are working to do just that. With the Association of Yukon Communities and individual municipal governments, we have been and continue to work on long-term strategies and the most cost-effective ways to work together on waste management in the territory. We also continue to work with the private sector, work with industry, and work with the processors who are fundamental — of key importance — to how we deliver and how effectively we are able to deliver waste.

We are working with the City of Whitehorse, as I mentioned, to integrate that planning, to optimize diversion and really, to move Yukon toward diverting waste from our landfills to begin with, again, in the most cost-effective manner. We have been working alongside with municipal governments such as Dawson City. The member opposite will recall that it was not that long ago — about a year ago — that we were able to sign off a landfill agreement, the first of its kind in the Yukon's history, speaking to the very important role of the municipal governments in waste management. Being able to articulate that partnership with our specific municipalities is of key importance. It does speak to the good work of the "Our Towns, Our Future" report that came out a number of years ago, speaking to the importance of solid waste management.

What came out of that was the solid waste working group, on which we had a number — and we continue to have a

number — of rural representatives and municipal representatives on that particular working group.

Solid waste management is obviously territory-wide. We all have a very important role to play in terms of coming up with workable, cost-effective solutions. Municipal governments play a very important role in all of that.

Of course, when we were able to sign off the Quigley landfill agreement back in May, that was really representing collaboration between our respective levels of government on an issue of utmost importance to all Yukoners — waste management. It's something that many of us may take for granted in Yukon, but it's perhaps one of the largest — if not the largest — challenges that all communities have to deal with.

We appreciate and we certainly heard directly from municipalities on the importance of that. We have made a concerted — a direct — effort in terms of working with municipal governments and hearing their concerns and priorities in coming up with those workable solutions. They play a very key, fundamental role in how we deal with waste.

The Quigley landfill agreement — for example — is unique in the territory. The Quigley landfill is a joint-use facility for both the municipality and unincorporated Yukon. It formalized the centre as a regional facility that's equally accessible by residents of Dawson, as well as those living outside the municipal boundary. We were able to come up with a financial agreement of \$400,000 to complete that 10-year operational plan and site assessment — also inclusive of future capital upgrades that, again, would take into account cost-effective environmentally responsible waste management diversion and would increase the lifespan of the facility itself.

We were also able to negotiate a financial agreement with the City of Dawson on the operations of that facility. We have been doing this for some time, but we have also agreed to continue to assist with the transportation of special waste — removal of tires, for example, and car metals — something that is stunning to see is the amount of metal waste in our regional facilities and our landfills — and how Yukon government has been able to work alongside unincorporated Yukon, as well as municipal governments, to remove that.

This agreement again reflects that commitment to continue to remove those metals, recyclables and other items that require that off-site transfer. What I'm trying to say is that this agreement really moves Yukon toward a regional solid waste model that is supported by the action plan and the findings of the "Our Towns, Our Future" solid waste working group that came out less than a year ago.

Again, recognizing the greater efficiencies and enabling governments to work together to operate a single solid waste facility, likewise, we're looking at similar arrangements with other municipal governments and that good work is being undertaken by the Department of Community Services.

Any way that we can realize cost efficiencies, reducing the amount of transportation for removing our waste; any time that we're able to provide another added revenue stream to our municipal governments, these are all good things, enabling

them to enhance their fiscal capacity, to enhance the delivery of waste management practices in the territory, as well.

By working together, it has enabled communities such as the City of Dawson to improve those services through modern, but practical — as I mentioned — planning, with an emphasis on waste diversion in a very cost-effective manner, which is of utmost importance.

So it is but one example of how we have been working alongside municipal governments for the past while and how we have been able to deliver a findings report, under the banner of "Our Towns, Our Future", through the good work of the solid waste working group. We have been, and continue to, work on implementing those recommendations, and that too will help further inform the work as we go forward with our other stakeholders.

As I mentioned, in terms of unincorporated Yukon, we have been working alongside unincorporated Yukon, with our communities, to end the open burning of waste at all of our waste facilities. We have refocused operations toward diversion with the creation of transfer stations with enhanced recycling opportunities. We are undertaking that review of the beverage container regulations and the designated material regulations, as well, to further assist our goals of increased diversion. We are also working — and continuing to work — at the national level to implement an EPR policy.

We recognize the importance of managing waste in every community in the territory and that we need to work collaboratively to ensure that we can manage waste efficiently and also sustainably in the Yukon. Our costs associated — and I should give great credit to Building Canada funding, as well as gas tax funding, available to our municipalities and First Nation governments and unincorporated Yukon to help us implement our action plan and to help modernize our waste management systems by bringing them in line with current environmental practices and sustainability objectives.

Through funding made available, as I mentioned, we have been able to reduce — actually, end — the open burning of domestic waste in 2012. We've been able to really improve site management and key facility improvements.

As I mentioned, I have been to just about every transfer station in the territory and to see pictures of what they were before — and some of them I was there before and to see them now is a tremendous improvement.

We have been able to install groundwater monitoring wells at the majority of our facilities, we have been able to establish transfer stations, as I mentioned — the majority of them in waste circuits at all of our regional sites. We have been able to work with the Department of Environment in looking at a recycling review, which incorporates potential changes to the beverage-container regulations and the designated-material regulations as well.

We need to work very seamlessly so that we can do the best with the least amount of dollars but ensure that there are sustainable practices across the territory. The work is underway, as I just mentioned, and I know that the Minister of Community Services will speak at greater length about the specific work that is taking place.

I do want to thank all members of all of our stakeholder groups who have worked and continue to work with the Yukon government on many different fronts. I also want to thank the AYC for having agreed to strike this working group of municipal and Yukon officials for the purpose of looking at the gaps and issues of concern as they relate to their municipal administration of landfills in the territory. Issues such as liability, permitting and regulatory changes — all of those are very important and they are all issues that we will continue to work with our municipal governments to address while, at the same time, keeping our eye on the larger picture at hand, and that is continuing to gather input and to find the solutions, to continue to improve waste management across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I guess in closing, I just want to say that the Solid Waste Advisory Committee has certainly played a very fundamental role in the territory and it has provided a very important venue in terms of bringing individuals together. Since then, however, we have been working seamlessly alongside many organizations and also municipal governments. That continues to be the priority of the Yukon government — working with the municipalities to implement the findings of the working group and coming up with solutions to the regional approach originally envisioned in the action plan itself and then continuing to be able to find solutions on how we can best administer solid waste.

I'm very proud of the level of investment financially and, of course, all of the human resources that have gone toward improving and modernizing our system here in the territory. We have implemented a number of partnerships, best practices and cost-effective solutions suited to the north.

I think that we are achieving the goals set out in the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*. We are laying the foundation for a sustainable system in the territory that meets not only the current but the future needs of our population.

We're very excited and very pleased to continue to build on those community partnerships — key to the success of solid waste management in the territory. We are very much committed to working in partnership with our municipal governments — as I said, the communities, industry and stakeholders — on continuing to explore those innovative, long-term approaches to improving waste recycling, diversion, reduction and handling.

I wanted to also make reference to a recent example. There is a group of individuals and organizations that have come together and are promoting a zero-waste campaign. They are doing some great work. I can tell you that just recently — I believe it was last fall — the mayor and I, accompanied by representatives of Raven Recycling and Yukon College and others, got together and launched the kickoff of their zero-waste campaign in front of Whitehorse Elementary School. One of the components of that was the Waste on your Waist event. I'm pretty sure that the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King also participated in that. I have to say that for me that was a very effective way of how we can work together with the community to inform and raise awareness about the amount of waste that we as individuals create just on a 24-hour basis, never mind 365 days a year.

We were asked to carry a large garbage bag taped to our waist and to carry and to consume all the items that we had consumed throughout the day as waste, and try not to hold back, and to carry that with us on our waist, and at the same time, we were also asked to showcase our nice, neon-yellow, bright T-shirts, that say, "Ask me why I'm wearing waste on my waist".

Needless to say, going down to the Canada Games Centre and watching my son's soccer game, I had lots of people ask me about that and what that big bag of waste on my waist was.

The following day there was a waste audit. We were all asked to convene at Yukon College, showcase all that we had consumed throughout the day. It was a great example of just what we can do, by working together to showcase awareness and what we as individual citizens can do to reduce waste in terms of recycling, in terms of composting, in terms of just education about what, in fact, is recyclable, what is non-recyclable, where you can take that, the partners involved.

Since then, there has been a lot of work done through our social justice clubs throughout the high schools in the territory. The Vanier Social Justice Club was very much engaged in a campaign that was also hosted by the zero-waste campaign initiative, and it was at the Canada Games Centre again.

It was to talk about and to showcase practices, in terms of reusing. It was the community garage sale. It was highly attended — in the first hour, I think there were over 300 people in the Canada Games Centre. It is another example of the efforts being made by the communities and efforts being made in collaboration. I know that particular initiative was funded through the community development fund and through many other partners and sponsors as well.

It is another example of just how the work is proceeding, the action plan is being implemented and we are expanding the work that is already underway in the action plan. We are working hand-in-hand with municipalities individually, but also collectively, on identifying and coming up with "made in their own municipality" solutions to waste management practices.

Seeing the time, I know that there are other members who would like to say a few words about this, but I certainly look forward to receiving the feedback and I would to thank the MLA for Klondike for his comments on this important issue and for highlighting the important work of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*.

Mr. Tredger: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Official Opposition in support of this motion, that this House urges the Government of Yukon to reinstate the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to ensure the voice of the public is heard in the implementation of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward.

As a society, particularly in our rural communities, we are dealing with an increasing amount of waste and the nature of the waste is changing. Much of it is toxic; much of it is non-biodegradable. Indeed, as the member opposite said, the days of throwing a match to it and putting it into the ground and

burying it are gone. Who knew 10 years ago about e-waste? For those of you who are my age, e-waste is electronic waste.

Our mines and our industrial activities are creating waste. Again, much of it is toxic. Our communities — the Association of Yukon Communities — our government is to be commended for beginning the task of grappling with this, because it is a challenge. It is a challenge to each and every one of us and it is a challenge to us as government.

We do have a legacy from the past. We do have toxic or semi-toxic waste facilities. That may be excusable because of a lack of knowledge, but today we have new knowledge and we're learning the effects of the waste that we're putting into the ground. There is no excuse for us to leave a legacy for future generations. There is no excuse. We are developing new rules and new regulations. We're becoming increasingly aware of the liabilities. As a society, we're attempting to reduce, to recycle and to reuse. We know that is a fiscally responsible thing to do, that is the environmentally responsible thing to do.

It is an admirable goal to produce zero waste. It's also becoming a very necessary one, as our world's resources are being stretched. This is an opportunity for local involvement, for municipalities to generate some revenue, to recycle and look at waste diversion and management. It's important because each one of our communities is unique and has their own set of problems. It's important that we share our experiences and that we gather together with them.

I must congratulate our public service for the work they are doing and the coordination of efforts. Their commitment is inspiring and I know when I have met them in the communities, in Mayo, and I have talked to them about the dilemma and the challenges that they are facing, they are very enthusiastic and they are very committed. There is a need for continuing to learn and a dissemination of that information. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee provided a forum for such discussion.

I talked to some of my communities and they are wondering how to supervise their waste management facilities; they are looking for ways to make it viable. Sometimes, whether through a lack of education or just haste, people use our waste management facilities in the old sense, as dumps. We find barrels of half-used substances; we find stuff disposed there. It is important that we look at funding and solutions for the supervision of waste facilities.

I know some of the communities are very concerned about ongoing liability and groundwater programs, and the cost of that. The people living downstream — or down the water table — are concerned.

We need to share. We need to work together to come up with such ideas.

Last spring, I was very fortunate to attend in beautiful downtown Watson Lake the Association of Yukon Communities. I would commend Watson Lake for their hospitality. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, and I thoroughly enjoyed the discussions with our municipal leaders and councillors. They were quite excited about developments and the way "Our Towns, Our Future" was represented. It set

the stage. They talked about the ongoing communication and the value of being heard and were excited about the energy going forward.

They welcomed the opportunity to interact with the Yukon government and the public service to work together to come up with solutions. All felt it was a good beginning to establish committees to implement some of the recommendations from "Our Towns, Our Future". They were learning to trust again and they were hopeful it would continue.

I would like to commend the AYC for their ongoing advocating on behalf of our communities, and strongly support the continuation of this and other committees designed to increase local involvement in local challenges. This was an opportunity for Yukon-wide coordination to share local experiences with each other. It was a forum for discussion.

The Yukon Party government has a habit of abandoning committees when their job is half done. Committees are designed to be flexible and ongoing. They're designed to participate in a process that is reciprocal. They're designed to put forth ideas, try them, and learn from them. One would have thought that the Yukon Party government had learned when they abandoned the F.H. Collins building advisory committee midstream and were left without a voice from the community.

This trial and error, this ongoing discussion is not stagnant, but growing — a living engagement with an ever-changing challenge. It allows the local communities to be involved, to be treated with respect and to assume the responsibility of managing their challenges.

It is much more fiscally responsible to engage with committees like the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, because they're in a much better position to monitor and respond to ongoing developments.

They deserve the respect and support to coordinate and responsibly manage their challenges. It is good governance and common sense, fiscally responsible and wise to be able to involve local people in local decision-making.

With that, I wholeheartedly support this motion from another rural member who understands the importance of rural involvement and the importance of listening to rural people and engaging them in solutions that are close to them. By engaging them, we get a better response; we get better results in a fiscally responsible manner. By abandoning them, it costs us money in the long run and it is not as environmentally sound.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise here today to speak to this motion. I would like to first of all begin by thanking the Member for Whitehorse West, the current Minister of Education and my predecessor as Minister of Community Services, for the good work that she has done on this file. I would like to thank the Minister of Environment for his work on this file, as well as to thank officials in both the Department of Community Services and the Department of

Environment for their efforts in updating, modernizing and improving how Yukon is handling solid waste.

As my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse West, noted in her response, one of the opportunities you have when you become Community Services minister — and in fact one of the things they don't tell you when the Premier asks you to take on the role — is that this gives you the opportunity to go and visit every dump and every sewage lagoon in the territory. It is often with a guided tour with very detailed information from staff about that particular facility. That was an unexpected experience, and while I have not had the opportunity to visit every single one yet, as I believe my predecessor had, I'm sure I will get to catch the rest of them during the upcoming summer season.

What should be noted in this area, as my colleague referenced, is the fact that the Yukon really saw a significant shift in how solid waste was handled. It had been for a great many years quite literally a situation where at most of the dumps in Yukon, the cost of doing most of the maintenance was the cost of a match and maybe a little bit of fuel as a propellant to get the fire going. That is, needless to say, an outdated practice. I'm pleased to have been a part of a government that took steps to end that practice, recognizing that the practice was out of date and, along with our partners, sought to tackle the challenge and rise to the challenge of modernizing Yukon's waste management system.

In 2012, with the end of the burning of solid waste at facilities in the Yukon, this led to significantly increased volumes of garbage, rather than being burnt and producing toxic smoke in the process, so only clean wood and materials that are appropriate for burning can be burned at solid-waste facilities under the new permitting system.

The Yukon has also taken significant steps to do testing and groundwater monitoring in the vicinity of old landfill stations. So the permits specifically required Yukon to end open burning of waste, install hydrogeological monitoring wells, build engineered cells at landfills and improve the handling of special and hazardous waste and enhanced diversion opportunities. This input did emerge from the work with stakeholders through the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and through the involvement of the committee in developing that plan. However, it is also important to acknowledge and realize that, at this stage, a lot of the work in taking the next step falls on the shoulders of the Yukon government and municipal governments, as well as in the case of societies that manage some of our dumps in the Whitehorse periphery. They are also key partners in figuring out the specific solutions for those areas.

Again, as I alluded to, the significant increase in volume of garbage and the requirements to change how garbage is being handled led to a situation where the number of landfills was reduced, the number of transfer stations increased and the amount of garbage being shipped within the territory has gone up significantly. That has come a long way from where it was. It is also something that has had its challenges along the way, and I appreciate the efforts of all who were involved in that — in getting a better understanding of the volumes of waste

being handled, how we can take the next steps in improving diversion of waste such as cardboard, as well as increased recycling opportunities.

We have also, as members may know, taken a step on a one-year basis, as we assess how it works, to encourage the diversion of cardboard by putting in diversion credits to match what the City of Whitehorse does.

The services that go in the area of solid waste, after the initial stages that led to the "Our Towns, Our Future" review took additional steps in gathering input from municipalities and the Association of Yukon Communities to develop solutions to improve solid waste management across the territory. The "Our Towns, Our Future" Solid Waste Advisory Group was formed early in 2013 to address a number of issues, including the regulatory environment, financial sustainability, landfill liability, fees and charges, peripheral users, regional landfills, waste diversion, extended producer responsibility, training and education, and community involvement.

The advisory group was asked to complete a findings report and deliver it to the Minister of Community Services and the president of the Association of Yukon communities, and the findings report was delivered in May 2013.

The group, as well, has taken steps to create a high-level solid waste planning manual intended to assist municipal councillors, and that is responding to some of the feedback that we heard — and that I know I heard specifically, as well as I believe a number of my colleagues did — from municipalities.

In some cases, while understanding that they had flexibility to determine the right model at their own landfills, they're asking us to develop a planning guidebook to give them some high-level advice on what some best practices were, because the change in the requirements, the change in the permitting regime — in the end of simply lighting a match to burn the garbage and get rid of it — has caused challenges for municipal governments, just as it has for the Yukon government.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to implement the goals of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and meet the conditions of our operating permits while making operational improvements and finding cost-effective solutions that meet the needs of citizens, communities, local government and the business community.

One point I would like to specifically make is that, during the time of the outdated practice of burning at dumps, the Yukon government, in addition to recognizing that it was an outdated practice, was also hearing a significant number of concerns from residents who lived nearby those facilities who, understandably, were concerned about what was going into the air as a result of that waste being burned and so, again, we acted and we ended that outdated practice.

We value collaboration, and we'll continue to work in partnership with the municipalities, communities, industry and stakeholders, including highway lodges, to find long-term solutions to improving waste diversion, recycling, reduction and handling as we move forward.

Through developing community partnerships and cost-effective solutions suited to the north, we will realize the goals set out in the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and lay the foundation for a sustainable waste management system that meets the current needs of our territory and also takes the step to rise to meet the future needs of the territory, including — and especially — finding opportunities for increased diversion and increased recycling.

The Yukon government will continue to collaborate with municipalities to create new planning tools and to identify options for best operating practices. We will work to create a greater level of certainty for municipalities by committing to increased communication prior to any future contemplated changes to solid waste operating permits, standards, or to the regulatory regime, recognizing the effect that those changes can have on municipalities.

In 2013, the Yukon government partnered with the City of Whitehorse to establish greater short-term certainty for recycling processors and to increase diversion efforts. This included the interim funding to which I referred earlier to support the processors in a fair and equitable manner, recognizing that commodity prices are very low and recognizing our shared interest in increasing the diversion of cardboard from solid waste facilities.

We are also committed to partnering with municipalities to establish a sustainable level of long-term support for recycling processors in recognition of the importance of the service that they provide to divert waste from landfills throughout the territory. We will continue to focus on Yukon government solid waste facilities and look for ways that we can take additional steps to both increase diversion and make our operations run more cost-effectively.

We are currently establishing 10-year operating plans for solid waste facilities in unincorporated communities to ensure efficient operations that comply with the regulatory and permitting requirements.

We will also continue to engage with the communities to acknowledge local perspectives on solid waste and to establish levels of service that recognize the needs of each community.

We will continue to work very closely with all of our partners in these areas. The summer of 2013 also saw the removal of waste metal from most solid waste facilities in the Yukon as government coordinated the efforts of a large metal recycler from the south who visited the territory. The recycler removed all forms of waste metal, including car bodies, appliances and industrial metal waste from almost all solid waste facilities, including several municipal sites.

Across Yukon, we are seeing investment in the improved management of solid waste by municipal governments, First Nation governments, by Yukon government, private sector and non-profits. We believe in an innovative approach to managing solid waste in remote communities through efforts including municipal and community partnership that are a key part of the success of our collective solid waste management efforts.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, through the changes in the model through ending of open burning, some of the specific

changes that have occurred on sites include the transformation from dump and burn models to transfer stations and landfills, which has resulted in increased capital expenditures for both Yukon and municipal partners for installation of balers, compactors, chippers, recycling facilities and other diversion measures, cleanup and removal of metal and hazardous waste, additional costs for site maintenance, including fencing and personnel, ground transportation of waste to regional centres —

Speaker: Order please. The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.