



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

CEREMONIAL SPECIAL SITTING

To mark the 125th anniversary of the
creation of the Yukon as a Territory within Canada

DAWSON CITY, YUKON

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2023 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Deputy Premier Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Environment; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Lane Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Dawson City, Yukon
Tuesday, June 13, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

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

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House, notwithstanding any Standing Order or practice and the order of business of the House, for the Assembly to adopt the ceremonial sitting program agreed to by the House Leaders to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Yukon Territory, and for the transcript of the address today by the Mayor of Dawson City referenced therein to be printed in Hansard and form part of the records of this House.

Unanimous consent re adopting ceremonial sitting program for 125th anniversary of the Yukon Territory

Speaker: The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House, notwithstanding any Standing Order or practice and the order of business of the House, for the Assembly to adopt the ceremonial sitting program agreed to by the House Leaders to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Yukon Territory, and for the transcript of the address today by the Mayor of Dawson City referenced therein to be printed in Hansard and form part of the records of this House.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Speaker: Under Introduction of Special Guests, the Chair has the honour to introduce the Mayor of Dawson City, His Worship William Kendrick, and the Yukon's Senator, the Hon. Pat Duncan.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further special guests to be introduced?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce some individuals who are here with us in the House today. I would first like to welcome Mr. Dan Davidson, well-known journalist and community advocate, to the House today. I would also like to recognize Mr. Peter Menzies, a tireless community advocate in Dawson, to the Assembly today. I would also like to recognize Mr. Chris MacIntyre who is with us today, also a well-known journalist from CBC, for joining us this afternoon.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It also takes a lot of work to pull things together, Mr. Speaker, so I want to thank Nicole Lamb and Tess Crocker, who are both employees of this incredible building, for their work with the museum here in Dawson City. I would also like to welcome them here.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to welcome some folks who are here — some family members of Peter Jenkins — for the tribute today. We have Peter's daughter, Samantha Bond. We also have Will Fellers, Lenore Calnan, and Dina Grenon — if we could welcome them together.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to please help me welcome Councillor Brennan Lister from the Dawson City Council. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Sergeant Dave Wallace here from the local detachment of the RCMP here in Dawson City. Please welcome him for being here today for the sitting.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, could we also please welcome Ms. Helen Fitzsimmons to the Assembly today.

Applause

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Sis Drugan, who is a citizen of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in community, for being here today.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Peter Jenkins

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure today to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Peter Jenkins. As we all know, Peter passed away back in October 2021, but due to some scheduling challenges, we haven't had a chance yet to offer a tribute in the Legislative Assembly; however, when the plans began to develop for the Special Sitting in this, the old Territorial Council Chamber, on today, the 125th anniversary of the creation of the Yukon, it dawned on many of us that this would indeed be the perfect time to pay tribute to Peter Jenkins. The confluence of the celebration of the Yukon Territory, a Special Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and this location here in Dawson City is such wonderful symbolism of Peter's legacy.

Now, of course, Peter was a father, a grandfather, and family man. He was a prominent and successful businessman and, even in his later years, a mainstay of the social life in Dawson City. But I think that what Peter is certainly most well-

known for and well-recognized for is his long and colourful political career. From 1980 to 1994, Peter served as the Mayor of Dawson and then again from 2009 to 2012. His early days as mayor were interesting times for Dawson City. At one point, the town had fallen under the administration of the territorial government after the Yukon government was forced to disband the elected council. Following that, in 1980, Peter was cajoled into running for mayor. As a testament to both his generosity and his frugality, Peter only accepted a salary of one dollar per year. In fact, to this day, the family has all of his annual paycheques from his time as mayor, and each of them were from the City of Dawson to Peter for the sum of one dollar.

It was also during the time that he gained notoriety for his scheme to provide the people of Dawson with free satellite television. I won't rehash the story, but I always found his explanation of the matter to be telling. "That was the wish of the electorate," he said.

Following his first foray as mayor, he was elected as MLA for the Klondike in 1996 and began his 10-year career in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. During his time in opposition, he was known for his sharp and biting criticisms of the government. He may have been harsh in opposition, but there could no be no doubt that he was effective.

Following the general election in 2000, he was the lone member of the Yukon Party elected, and there are many in our party who credit Peter with keeping the party alive during those years. Were it not for his effectiveness as the lone Yukon Party MLA, it is unlikely that the party would have had the success that it did in the following years. Those who worked with him in the Legislature knew him as a sharp, detail-oriented, and devilishly clever person. I can't repeat many of his quotes today, but I couldn't help but enjoy the irony of one of the news stories about his passing. I believe it was the CBC who referred to Peter as "larger than life". If they only knew what he thought about that phrase.

In the years after his time in the Legislature, Peter was a mentor and friend to many of us here today. He was generous, funny, and always entertaining to talk to. He cared deeply about the community of Dawson City, he was utterly committed to making the Yukon a better place, and he made a deep and lasting mark on the politics of this territory.

On behalf of myself, my colleagues both past and present, and the entire Yukon Party: We are indebted to Peter for his contributions and offer our belated but sincere condolences to Peter's friends and family.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I also have the privilege today of rising to pay tribute to Peter Jenkins. Peter was, as folks know, the Mayor of Dawson City for over 15 years, from 1980 to 1994 and again from 2009 to 2012. He was also the MLA for Klondike for 10 years, from 1996 until 2006. I moved here to the Yukon in 1996, and you really did feel like you became part of the town when Peter Jenkins finally bought you a beer at his establishment. He was one of those very community-oriented people who knew everybody as they came into town in their first years, that's for sure.

During his time in the Yukon Legislative Assembly, he served as the Leader of the Yukon Party, Deputy Premier, Minister of Environment, and Minister of Health and Social Services as well. He also sat as an Independent MLA for a time.

During Peter's time as mayor, the population of Dawson grew from just under 700 in 1980 to close to 1,400 in 2012. With that growth came a need for increased and modernized infrastructure, and that's where Peter really shined. Peter led talks with the Yukon government on a wide range of issues, including wastewater, drinking water, solid waste, and recreation as well.

Dawson definitely needed — because it is a unique and dynamic town — a unique and dynamic mayor, and we had that in Peter as well when he was the mayor of this wonderful community. He was the colour of our community and a very strong advocate for Dawson, and there's not one piece of underground pipe in this town that Peter didn't know of and couldn't explain.

He and his late wife, Karen, were involved in several charitable endeavours. He is most known for being incredibly generous even though he never sought out the spotlight for that generosity. Outside of his political career, Peter was, of course, a leader in the business community as the long-time owner of the Eldorado Hotel. Mr. Speaker, you could really tell the town's respect for the Jenkins the year that the Eldorado burned to the ground. It was so amazing to see how quickly the community rallied to make sure that was rebuilt in record time. That's a lot of respect that the community showed to Peter and his family, and Peter absolutely loved Dawson for reasons such as that.

So, I hope that you will join me in remembering Peter and his dedication to serving all of the Yukoners.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the storied life of Peter Jenkins. I never, sadly, had the privilege to meet Peter, but everyone who knew him all have a story to tell. Peter lived a life worthy of the Klondike, full of adventure and tenacity. He will be remembered for his deep love of family, for his love and dedication to the community of Dawson City, and, of course, for his love and dedication to the Yukon. When reflecting on such a jam-packed life, we might even suggest that Peter Jenkins be honoured as one of the Yukon's colourful five percent.

We extend our condolences to his family and friends because he lived an amazing life.

Applause

In remembrance of Peggy Kormendy

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to honour the memory of the late Elder Peggy Kormendy, a remarkable individual who made significant contributions to her community.

Peggy was an esteemed elder and former Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people. She holds the milestone of being the first woman to be elected for her nation.

Peggy's roots were deeply connected to the land. Her parents, John and Alice Semple, would traverse the trails and camps they established, walking from Dawson to their home in the Blackstone River area. They hunted to provide for many of the Dawson community members, embodying a spirit of generosity and support.

In 1962, Peggy married Steve Kormendy and together they raised six children. Family held great importance for them, often hosting dinners for over 30 family members. The Kormendy family engaged in mining, fishing, and trapping, instilling in their children a profound respect for the land. During the 1970s, Peggy achieved a remarkable feat, pulling an 84-pound chinook salmon from the Yukon River. I personally got to hear that story from Peggy. I had a chance a couple of years ago to travel with her to Forty Mile by river and she told many, many stories. We went there for a historic sites event and I will cherish those moments for sure.

Peggy played a pivotal role in her community in various capacities. She was one of 13 witnesses who signed the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement*, leaving an indelible mark on the history of her people.

Additionally, when a mummified baby woolly mammoth was discovered in the Klondike goldfields within Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory, Peggy was among the elders present when the mammoth was revealed to a small group from her community. Together, the elders named the mammoth calf "Nun cho ga" and offered prayers of blessing, interpreting this remarkable find as a symbol of powerful healing.

A staunch advocate for Mother Earth, Peggy raised her voice to urge the government to protect the Peel Watershed when the final land use plan was called into question. Her love for the land extended beyond words, as she served as a field trip guide for Top of the World Highway tours during the North Yukon Permafrost Conference in August 2022. Peggy's teachings and powerful influence continue to resonate, reminding us of the impact one person can have on fostering a community dedicated to each other and to the land.

Her absence is deeply felt by all who knew her, as we cherish the memory of a remarkable individual who left an enduring legacy. On behalf of our Yukon Liberal government, we offer our sincere condolences to Peggy's family, friends, community, and nation.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Elder Peggy Kormendy. Born in Dawson City at St. Mary's Hospital on November 29, 1936, Peggy lived a full life to age 86. Growing up around and inside Dawson City, she learned the traditional ways of her people and throughout her life she was willing to share her knowledge.

Marrying her husband, Steve Kormendy, in 1962, they began their family. Then came many grandchildren and finally great-grandchildren. All were so special to Peggy and she was thrilled with her largess. As someone who lived through many decades, Peggy had seen many changes, good and bad, and was willing to adapt but to keep her teachings moving forward. By

sharing her knowledge of cultural camps at meetings and at Robert Service School, she ensured the old ways were introduced and not forgotten. Working with youth and encouraging all to get along to make a better place to live was something that she stressed and instilled in people.

I remember a quiet woman who was busy with her family and home, but that public life surprised many. She became the first woman chief of the Tr'ondëk people. When the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was signed, then the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in self-government agreement was signed by Chief Steve Taylor, and all the former living chiefs also signed as witnesses: Percy Henry, Hilda Titus, Angie Joseph-Rear, and Peggy Kormendy.

This summer, on July 16, it will have been 25 years since the historic signing, and there will be a celebration. All citizens will see and witness themselves what a strong group of people they had, who led them to this space in the evolution of the Han people.

Peggy's celebration of life ceremony was held on May 6 in St. Paul's Anglican Church, bringing together a large congregation of Dawsonites. Apparently, one of her favourite colours was purple, and as I drove here yesterday, the lupins were everywhere, and I thought of Peggy.

So, thank you to all her family for sharing her. Her wisdom and strength added so much to our territory.

Applause

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to respected elder and former chief, the late Peggy Kormendy. Peggy was a matriarchal symbol of strength, not only in her family, but also in her community. Peggy was a mom, an auntie, and a grandmother in her community. She is remembered as a strong yet fierce grandma. Peggy brought love, compassion, gentleness, and warmth to any space.

In addition, Elder Peggy was not afraid to use her power for the greater good of all people. Peggy's way of living and all of who she was is rooted by the values that she carried deep within her heart. Peggy cared deeply about the protection of lands, water, the animals, the birds, the fish, and everything in between. Whether it was on the land, in the classroom, or in the community, Peggy lived her life in a manner that allowed her to be the fierce voice for all the vital and natural elements that could not speak for their right to respect, protection, and sustainability.

Elder Peggy will continue to be remembered for her contributions and achievements toward Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's comprehensive land claim and modern treaty, as well as her contributions to making the Yukon Territory a better place for generations to come.

I had the beautiful privilege to meet Elder Peggy a few years back when I ended up on a lengthy layover in Dawson. It was a hot summer day, and I was wandering around the community looking for an elder to visit. Randomly, I knocked on a door to get directions to an elder's house. Luck would have it that I knocked on Peggy's door.

Before I could speak, she asked, "Where are you from? Who's your family? What are you doing in Dawson?" When I said that I was from Old Crow and that my grandfather was

Kenneth Nukon, Peggy instructed me to sit down, and then she so willingly shared stories of her connections to my family. She talked about the importance of the Peel watershed and all the life that flows in this area.

Peggy shared a few stories with me of her younger years living on the land, working with furs, raising her children, and working hard, not only for her family, but also for her community. Peggy had a gentle smile and a warm, loving presence.

As I spent time with her, I was in awe of the beautiful elder she was, and I thought about how lucky her grandchildren are to have Peggy as their grandma. After our visit, I told Peggy I was going to spend some time by the river and make my way back to the airport. Peggy gave me some dried fish, some crackers, and a few candies for the road. As we said goodbye at her door, she gently held my hand, wished me luck, and thanked me for visiting.

This is how I will remember Peggy: as an elder of strength and grace. Peggy reminded me that you can be fierce yet gentle, you can be firm yet kind, you can be strict yet loving, you can have hard conversations yet remain respectful. And Peggy reminded me that, even if you sit in silence with a stranger, there is always space for you to share a smile.

Losing an elder from our communities is never easy, as we lose a living encyclopedia of traditional knowledge, guidance, and wisdom. I feel that Peggy strived to live by example. Her leadership and love for her family and community will continue to live on and be remembered by all who knew her and shared space with her, and her voice will continue to make a difference in those spaces where conversations are had on issues that were of great importance to Elder Peggy.

Mahsi' cho to the Kormendy family, the Semple family, and the Tr'onđek Hwěch'in First Nation for sharing Peggy with us to learn from and be inspired by.

Mahsi' cho.
Applause

Speaker: The next item of business is the government motion.

GOVERNMENT MOTION

Motion No. 733

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I move:

THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly forward the following address to the people of Yukon:

WHEREAS June 13, 2023 is the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Yukon Territory in Canada; and

WHEREAS Yukoners value the history and heritage of the land and its peoples;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly acknowledges and celebrates the history and heritage of the land, its peoples and the lives, traditions, and cultures of all Yukoners past and present and pledges to continue to improve the lives of all Yukoners for generations to come.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier:

THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly forward the following address to the people of Yukon:

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Hon. Mr. Pillai: I move that the House recognize today, June 13, 2023, as the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Yukon as a territory. This is an important milestone for our territory and for all Yukoners, who I know hold great deference for the history and heritage of this land and its people.

In 1896, George Carmack, Shaaw Tláa, known as Kate Carmack, Keish, known as Skookum Jim Mason, and Káa Goox, known as Dawson Charlie, discovered gold on Bonanza Creek. That's not too far away from where we stand now. This ushered in the Klondike Gold Rush, which, at its peak in 1898, brought tens of thousands of prospectors to the Yukon.

The massive population influx led to the separation of this land from the North-West Territories and to the formation of the separate Yukon Territory. That was 125 years ago on June 13, 1898 with the signing of the *Yukon Territory Act*. However, this is an anniversary, not a birthday. We know that First Nations have thrived on these lands since time immemorial. They travelled every corner of this territory gathering resources, visiting friends and family, and trading with neighbours both inland and on the coast.

Over time, Yukon people have adapted to new technology and traditions. In Yukon today, there are 14 distinct First Nations, each with their own traditional territories, cultures, and political organization. This year, we are proud to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, the landmark document that started the modern treaty process in Yukon. The *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the final agreements flowed funds. It has now been 30 years since the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was signed on May 29, 1993. The signing of this document is a milestone and a turning point for intergovernmental relationships between the federal, Yukon, and First Nation governments. The journey to land claims and self-government in the Yukon is part of our collective history, and these agreements shape our governance to this day.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Teslin Tlingit Council, and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation were the first to sign final agreements, and we join them in celebrating 30 years of self-government. These nations have accomplished much in the past 30 years. They have used the agreements to revitalize their culture and language, support their citizens, and bring

prosperity and growth, not only to their communities, but to all of the Yukon.

The *Umbrella Final Agreement* and its first four agreements paved the way for subsequent agreements with other First Nations in the Yukon. The agreements play a crucial role in fostering reconciliation, empowering individual communities, and building stronger relationships through meaningful dialogue and shared decision-making.

As we commemorate Yukon's 125th anniversary, it's important to be aware of all the impacts of Confederation. Indigenous people continue to experience the impacts of colonization and the painful legacy of institutions like residential schools, and that's why it's so important that we stay stalwart in our commitment and efforts toward reconciliation.

We have come a long way since 1898. Yukon is home to modern treaties and ground-breaking initiatives, like the First Nation School Board. We are investing in our future by building and enhancing infrastructure and housing, ensuring our territory can be a home for all. We are taking strong action for climate change, ensuring our children inherit a clean, green Yukon. It is an absolute honour and privilege to lead the territory as we work to build a stronger future together.

Applause

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, I think to start I would acknowledge that I am on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, and it's custom for me to introduce that my grandparents on my mother's side are from the Nukon family and on my father's side are from the Blake family and, as custom, to introduce myself in another First Nation territory. In celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Yukon, I have been reflecting for the past few days on the leadership and hard work of the many people who have come before me.

I have thought about our elders, who have lived nomadically on the land hunting, trapping, fishing, and providing for our families. I think about the leaders who were working hard to lead our people across our nations prior to the signing of self-government, and that reminds me that our Yukon First Nation people have had self-government prior to these documents being signed.

I think of the many chiefs who have come to the table over the years who have used their voice, sacrificed their time, and given so much of themselves to make the territory what it is today so that we can live the life we live in the territory today. I think of the elders and our youth who are in the territory today using their voices to bring forward issues and concerns and identify the challenges that they want addressed by government leaders to ensure that the future is stable and secure for our future generations to come.

I think of the journey of my own family. I come from a long line of fur traders on my mother's side. On my father's side, it was the North-West Mounted Police who brought the Blakes up north, and I think about that, because if the fur trade didn't happen and the North-West Mounted Police didn't exist, I would not be here today, and I think about that. I feel very honoured to speak about this in the Legislature as a Yukon First

Nation woman, as a Vuntut Gwitchin citizen, and I think it's important for me to also recognize my mixed European ancestry, that I recognize my ancestors who journeyed from another country to the Yukon to not only learn about the lands and the resources that we have in the territory, but to also learn about the people that I am now a part of.

I am so grateful, and I feel so honoured and privileged and thankful to be a Yukon First Nation woman. I'm grateful to the elders who have instilled in me the values of the people I come from and given me the teachings that I carry to allow me to speak in this House today and represent my home community. I thank all the leaders who are working in this territory to continue to serve the territory and make it a better place for all people.

Mahsi' cho.

Applause

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying what an honour it is to rise today as Leader of the Official Opposition and a member of this Assembly to speak to this motion. It is all the more special to do so here in the old Territorial Council Chamber in Dawson City on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

On June 13, 1898, royal assent was granted to the *Yukon Territory Act*. The Yukon had been carved out as a distinct district within the North-West Territories a few years before, but with the passage of this new piece of legislation through Parliament, the Yukon joined the Confederation as a stand-alone territory. The reasons for this legislation all related strictly to the ongoing implications of the Klondike Gold Rush. First, there was a surge of gold seekers from around the world, but most problematically from the standpoint of sovereignty were the thousands of Americans.

In 1897, the Minister of Interior, Clifford Sifton, appointed former North-West Mounted Police Major James Morrow Walsh as the Chief Executive of the Yukon Territory and sent Major Walsh to the Klondike to be the long arm of the federal government. When it was realized that it was a bit odd for Major Walsh to be the chief executor of the Yukon when the Yukon did not even technically exist, the *Yukon Territory Act* was passed and Major Walsh became the Commissioner of the Yukon.

In 1898, Mr. Sifton wrote to Walsh and made clear his new role, saying — and I quote: “You have an absolutely free hand.” Soon after, a name that will be much more familiar to most of us, William Ogilvie took over as Commissioner and ushered in a new era of the territorial government. Additionally, the Government of the North-West Territories had sent a representative from the capital in Regina to sell liquor permits, which the Government of Canada disputed. So, between the need to provide some sort of federal presence of government and a jurisdictional squabble over liquor permits, the Yukon Territory was born.

Over the last 125 years, this territory has seen some incredible changes. We have seen ups and downs, booms and busts, growth and retraction. The decades following the Klondike Gold Rush were lean. We saw the outbreak of the

Second World War and the creation of the Alaska Highway, which opened up a whole new chapter for our territory. We have seen political and constitutional development, the likes of which are almost entirely unique to the Yukon, through the 70s, 80s, and 90s, with a parallel tracks in devolution and negotiation of land claims. The desire for greater control over the affairs of the territory were sought both by Yukoners who wanted a more responsible, democratic, and robust territorial government and Yukoners who wanted to see true self-government for First Nation people.

The achievements of devolution on one hand and First Nation land claims and self-government on the other have positioned us where we are today and toward a bright future.

As we stand here today, we can certainly celebrate all that has been accomplished in the past 125 years. There can be no doubt that we have had challenges and problems, but despite these, there is far more that is worth celebrating, and today, the anniversary of the passage of the *Yukon Territory Act* and the addition of the Yukon Territory to the Canadian Confederation is truly something worth celebrating — but equally so, we turn our collective attention to the future and to the next 125 years.

It is very hard to imagine what will lie ahead, but it is our job, as leaders and legislators, to lay the ground work, to take what has been bequeathed to us, to protect it, to improve it, and to pass it along to our children and generations to come. It is an incredible honour to speak today and to add my voice to those of my colleagues to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the creation of the Yukon Territory.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I am incredibly pleased to rise today on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to speak to the motion commemorating Yukon's 125th anniversary. It is an honour to be here in Dawson City, the community that has been my home, as of August of this year, for 25 years — a silver anniversary to mark a special occasion.

Every corner of this territory has its history, its infamy, its charm, and its draw, but when you look at the past 125 years, the Klondike stands out in very special ways. The Klondike is a world-renowned spirit, ambition, and way of being. At the height of the gold rush, this community boasted roughly 30,000 individuals — those were the ones who got here — and was the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. In the 1920s, less than 1,000 people remained, and by the 1960s, only a few hundred people called this place home.

The history of Dawson is a story of a capital that rose and fell quickly. By 1953, the responsibility of governing the territory transitioned to Whitehorse. We had only been a capital for a short period of time, and newcomers had only been in the Yukon for a few generations, yet we had already begun to cause unimaginable change to the Indigenous way of life. Here in the Klondike, the impact fell foremost on the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

As we reflect on the history of our community, it is important to acknowledge both the success and the pride that we draw from it, and indeed there are many reasons to be proud

while we also bear in mind the disparities and injustices of the past that continue to have an impact today.

We have come a long way in becoming a community that moves together in partnership — Indigenous and settler, territorial, federal, First Nations, all Dawsonites, and all Yukoners — together. This space that we stand in today was constructed in 1901 as the legislative and administrative building, and a lot of very important discussions and decisions were grappled with and eventually made here, shaping the future of this territory. It was also where I was sworn in as Premier, making it a very special place for me personally as well.

I thank all my colleagues here for coming up to the Klondike for this extremely important anniversary. Thank you, as well, to our community members who have joined us here today, to the municipal governments, and to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for helping make this community a place we all know and love, a place that continues to be the Yukon's brightest gem.

May the Yukon have many, many years to be proud of in the future.

Mahsi' cho. Thank you very much.

Applause

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to respond to this motion, I wanted to thank everyone involved in putting this Special Sitting together in this historic Chamber, with a special thank you to Helen Fitzsimmons as she embarks on her new adventures. I also wanted to thank the people of Dawson City for their hospitality, not just on this trip, but every time I have visited this wonderful community.

Representing the residents of Copperbelt South in the Yukon Legislative Assembly has been an honour and privilege for me, and I want to thank all those individuals for that opportunity. I would also like to thank the residents of Riverside and Riverdale North, whom I previously represented as an MLA, with special mention to Senator Pat Duncan, who gave me my start in politics a few years ago.

On this, the 125th anniversary of the Yukon entering the Confederation to create a second northern territory, it gives us a chance to reflect on so many important milestones for the Yukon. The Klondike Gold Rush, the building of the White Pass & Yukon Route railway, World War II and the construction of the Alaska Highway, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, the introduction of responsible government, the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, and final agreements for 11 of our 14 First Nations are just a few of those.

These and other events have changed the face of the Yukon and continue to shape who and what we are today. When I come to Dawson City, I often think of our two main private sector industries — tourism and mining — and how much they have changed over the years as well. Tourism in the Yukon was built on the railway and river boats, and now jet service, RVs, cruise ships, festivals, conferences, and canoes are part of the mosaic that makes the Yukon so special to visit.

When it comes to mining, it has also changed so much from the early gold panning, dredges, and sluice boxes on the brinks

of the Klondike to modern technology and environmental permitting. We are a world leader in what is our number-one private sector industry.

We all know the Yukon is a special place. The land is pristine and the lakes and rivers contribute to the beauty unrivaled on the planet. It has often been said that the people here are our greatest resource. The First Nation and Inuit peoples who have lived on these lands for thousands of years continue to play such an important role in our territory and its future. Others from across Canada and around the world make the Yukon rich in culture and diversity.

We have a treasure in the people who live here, whether they are involved in the arts, business, sports, or other pursuits. Many have made their mark on the national and international stages.

Now, 2023 is the year of anniversaries: the 125th birthday of the Yukon, the 150th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* among them. On a personal note, this year also marks the 50th anniversary of my family moving to the Yukon. Like so many other Yukon stories, we were planning on being here for two to three years; however, here we are, half a century later. Three generations and over 30 members of my family call this place home, including all six of my siblings. For us and others, the opportunities that exist here are unlike anywhere else in Canada, and that's why we stayed and why we still call this place home.

It is indeed a special place with special people living in it. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I think a quote from Robert Service is in order. This from the poem *The Spell of the Yukon*:

It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,
It's the forests where silence has lease;
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

Thank you.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour to be here today in Dawson City on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation for this Special Sitting, as we commemorate 125 years of the establishment of the Yukon Territory in Canada. I'm mindful that we are celebrating 125 years; the land we know as Yukon has been home to the Indigenous people for 14,000 years.

My vision for life in the territory for the next seven generations, for 125 years, is a life without violence where all Yukoners feel included, a life where all Yukon children are learning Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being, and a life where Yukon First Nation governments are able to fully utilize and realize their self-government agreements.

I know this vision is bold, but it is achievable, and our government is taking steps to realize this vision. The Department of Education continues to work on advancing reconciliation with Yukon First Nations. This is a path that started 50 years ago with the historic document championed by

Yukon First Nation chiefs when they presented *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The establishment of the Yukon First Nation School Board, which will now operate 11 schools, is an historic step in advancing reconciliation and improving the educational outcomes for all Yukon students across this territory.

We have education agreements with First Nation governments that enable cooperation for the implementation of shared education priorities. As an example, we work with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation to implement its section 17.7 of the self-government agreement provisions with respect to education in a way that does not require the First Nation to draw down education and provides meaningful authority through a shared responsibility for the design, delivery, and administration of education programs within their traditional territory.

Following a child-centred approach, the Yukon launched universal childcare on April 1, 2021 with the Yukon early learning and childcare funding program, a commitment to providing all Yukon families access to high-quality, affordable, inclusive, and flexible early learning and childcare. In Pelly, Whitehorse, Ross River, and here in Dawson, 350 childcare spaces have been created and we continue to expand and grow. As of March 2023, 1,727 children and their families are benefiting from universal childcare.

As the Minister of the Women and Gender Equity Directorate, I know our government has taken steps to ensure positive impacts are felt for generations as we reconcile with the past indiscretions of violence and non-inclusivity. Last week, the Yukon Advisory Committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-spirit+ People, of which I am co-chair, released a full implementation plan for the Yukon strategy *Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice*. Both the strategy and the implementation plan are intended to be living documents that will serve as management tools for the next 15 years.

The Government of Yukon's work to improve inclusion and create equity in its programs and services for 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners is well underway with lasting impacts through measures such as changes to legislation and regulations and the delivery of important medical services and health programs.

Mr. Speaker, our territory's lands are rich in people, history, and culture. Today, we celebrate where we have come from but also where we are going and ways in which we can get there. It has been a great honour to be part of this Special Sitting, and I thank all of my colleagues today for such a special event.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: Salamat, Mr. Speaker. My name is Yvonne Clarke. It is an honour to address this Assembly in the Yukon's oldest electoral district, the Klondike, as I represent Porter Creek Centre, which contains the new and ever-growing neighbourhood of Whistle Bend in Whitehorse.

I immigrated to Canada 29 years ago and have called the Yukon home ever since. While I am originally from the

Philippines, the history of the Yukon, especially Dawson City, is not lost on me. I was born and grew up in the Philippines. We have made my home in the Yukon since I arrived in Canada. I have spent more of my life here than in the Philippines. I have raised three children in this beautiful territory. I ran a small business in the late 1990s; I volunteered extensively. I have helped people and in turn have been helped by others along the way.

Despite being an immigrant, I have always felt welcomed here in the Yukon, in the traditional territories of First Nations, much like the stamperders who ventured over the Chilkoot Pass, down Bennett Lake and the Yukon River to Dawson 125 years ago. Everyone helped each other through some of the world's toughest conditions 125 years ago, with no airplanes, vehicles, roads, cell phones, or Internet. Can you imagine none of those modes of transportation or communication today? That is how the Yukon spirit was born — people helping people; that still holds true today.

Mr. Speaker, I never thought that I would find myself in politics in my 50s. Throughout my time in the Yukon, I have seen so many things change and grow: the population, the characters of our great territory stretching from Old Crow to Beaver Creek to Watson Lake, landmarks, communities, culture, access to technology, businesses and services, and, of course, our natural environment.

The Yukon is a thriving, beautiful place. No matter what their political stripe is, we, as Yukoners, need to balance the interests of all Yukoners with the protection of the natural environment that makes the Yukon so beautiful. That is our history; that is our future.

I can't imagine anything else I would rather be doing than to give back to my territory, my community, doing my small part to help achieve that balanced space on the wishes of my constituents. It is an honour and a privilege to represent my riding of Porter Creek Centre. Thank you, constituents, for electing me as your voice in the Legislature. I will continue to work for you. We, as the Official Opposition, may not get everything we want, but at least we put our best foot forward. Your ideas and concerns help to move our riding in a good direction.

The Yukon has been good to me. The population of our territory has grown tremendously over the years. The diversity is our strength, and I'm so fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from and experience so many different cultures and traditions. It has truly been a wonderful experience for me, as an MLA, to be able to be part of so many celebrations, ceremonies, and events — events that mark our history and ceremonies that look to the future. As we mark the Yukon's 125th birthday, we celebrate, remember, and reflect, acknowledge the history of First Nations and all those who call the Yukon home, and work to build a future that all Yukoners can all be proud of.

[Member spoke in Tagalog. Text unavailable.]

Salamat po.

Applause

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I'll start by thanking the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for inviting us as guests on their territory, for having us as guests in this territory and I thank everyone who made this Special Sitting happen. I know it was a lot of behind-the-scenes work.

As I think about the past and the present and the future of the Yukon, I think with great pride and love of Yukon. Yukoners are an incredibly wonderful, diverse, eccentric, brave, hard-working group of people, but I think what unites us is the love of land and love of community.

I love hearing people's stories of their connections to the Yukon. For some people, it's cultural and ancestral connections that have been here for millennia, and I love hearing those stories. I love hearing from people who are seeing Yukon for the very first time and seeing it through their eyes for the wondrous place that it is.

My own ties to the Yukon are not exactly either of those. I moved here when I was a baby and then got to choose to come back as an adult. I spent a lot of my childhood in fairly remote Yukon on Selkirk First Nation territory, and I learned a lot about community there, despite the fact that there were not actually a lot of people there. I learned a lot about relationships with my neighbours, and we didn't always have to agree or think the same way, but we had to rely on each other. I learned that, for me, community meant knowing you could count on someone to come through when you were in a hard spot and knowing that you could count on that, because you would do the same for them.

Those are values that I think many, if not all, Yukoners hold dear. I really held onto those as I came back to Whitehorse, where I live now in downtown Whitehorse. When I first moved back to the Yukon, I was really struck by people's passion for everything they did in the Yukon, and even more than that, they were not only passionate — whether it was about their sport or their activity or their activism — they wanted you to be part of it too.

I have never felt so welcomed somewhere as when I moved back to the Yukon. I think it was two weeks after I moved back that I had been convinced to join a board, which was a record time for me, and I just love the community in the Yukon and how much everyone wants everyone to be part of it.

I think of Yukoners' connection to the land that comes in so many ways. For some people, it's a favourite hunting ground and berry patch; for some people, it's a favourite ski trail; for some people, it's picnics and walks through downtown Whitehorse's parks, through the greenbelts of Whitehorse; for some people, it's treks to places that few people have ever seen in the most remote corners of the Yukon.

As we talk about land and community, of course, we need to talk about reconciliation. Yukon has a complicated and difficult history, but I think something that all of us here are proud of is the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. I had the privilege of learning about the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the final agreements growing up here, but I don't think I really appreciated how the Yukon led reconciliation until I left the Yukon and learned that we were leaders with those agreements with our way forward.

There's so much left to be done. I think that's why many of us, if not all of us, are here, because we see that there is so much left to be done.

I think that, as a territory, as a world, we are facing incredible challenges, but what gives me hope, what gives me optimism, is Yukoners — their love of the land, their love of community. I'm so proud to be one of them.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute honour to rise today, 125 years to the day since the Yukon was established as a territory in Canada, to speak on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in Dawson to mark this moment in time. It's a privilege to speak alongside all Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, alongside colleagues, each of us who represent our beautiful ridings that together make up all communities and traditional territories and remote corners of the Yukon, a place we all love.

I thank everyone here today for the opportunity to share in representing our collective home to mark this occasion. On the 125th anniversary, I also think of us speaking alongside all of the past MLAs who brought us to this point in time, like Peter Jenkins, who we spoke about earlier, and all the past leaders, like Chief Peggy Kormendy, and the many Yukoners who helped shape this place that we love.

We stand on the shoulders of giants. To put it into perspective, four months ago, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. I came to live in the Yukon in 1998, the centennial of the territory. I grew up moving around a lot. Before I met the Yukon, I had lived in several of the provinces. I enjoyed all of these places, but the first time I came to the Yukon, it made the top of my life list. The first thing I remember about when I came to the Yukon was the people, how warm and open-hearted they are.

I loved that this place celebrates the colourful five percent; I wasn't looking for a place where everyone thought the same. The next thing that took my breath away was the wide-open spaces. I went hiking a lot. One time, I went on a solo hike to the Kaskawulsh Glacier, and I came up on a ridge and looked across the Slims Valley as the fog burned off, and for a long time, I watched a grizzly sow and her cubs fishing and berry picking across the river. After that hike, I went to the archives to look up about the name "Kaskawulsh", and I started to learn about the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the open-minded path the Yukon was charting toward self-determination and reconciliation.

I was blown away by this place and still am today. Although all of our stories are different, there is a thread that weaves our stories together into this place that we call home. Mr. Speaker, I don't think of 125 years as some sort of achievement; I think of it as a moment to pause and look across the river valley, to reflect on the home we wish to make in a good way. One hundred and twenty-five years is not a destination, it's a journey, a shared step on a shared path. This territory is named after the Yukon River, which connects us from the headwaters where I live on the traditional territory of

the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to the Porcupine tributary far to the north, with the Vuntut Gwitchin and the Old Crow Flats.

In my mind, our journey is connected not just in space but in time. Like the history of the Yukon Territory, the heritage of this river goes way beyond 125 years. It goes far back into the mists of time and forward into the future. I think of each of our lives, each of our stories, as part of a stream that flows into the river of our shared journey. It is an honour to rise today as part of our shared Yukon story.

Mr. Speaker, thank you, mahsi' cho, günilschish, merci.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise here today as MLA for Lake Laberge. As we came here to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Yukon, I want to begin by acknowledging how truly blessed I feel to be a Yukoner and live in this beautiful land that we love. Of all the places in the world, I am so thankful to call the Yukon and Canada my home.

The lure of the Yukon and the Yukon River brought my family here, and I celebrated my 21st birthday in the campground in Dawson. I want to thank everyone who helped make Yukon such a great place to live. Prospectors, adventurers, placer miners, businessmen and women, hunters, trappers, steamboat pilots, dog mushers, stage drivers, Mounties, can-can girls, doctors, nurses, and public servants — including the MLAs who sat in this Chamber full time, not just on ceremonial occasions — as well as other elected representatives and leaders and so many others all played a part in developing a vibrant culture, heritage, and shared history of the Yukon.

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, whether your ancestors had lived here for thousands of years or you had just arrived over the Chilkoot Trail, life was much harder for most people than it is today. Simply surviving was very hard work. The Yukon River was the main highway and travel happened at a much slower pace. The beautiful sites we enjoy taking pictures of today, like Lake Laberge and Five Finger Rapids, were often major hurdles, and not everyone made it through.

The discovery of gold led to the Klondike Gold Rush and then to the creation of the Yukon as a separate territory. The work of the people who came before and pushed for decisions about the Yukon to be made locally, instead of in Ottawa, eventually led to the establishment of responsible government here in the Yukon and negotiation of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and individual agreements and the devolution transfer agreement, all of which played a major role in the constitutional development of the Yukon Territory.

As we celebrate this milestone here today, I would like to give my thanks to everyone from every walk of life who helped make the Yukon the best place in the world to live. As we embark on the next 125 years, may we succeed in honouring the work of everyone who came before us and the needs and hopes of the people of the Yukon whom we represent. While we must always seek to improve, we should also be proud of the Yukon people and thankful for our home.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, it is both an honour and privilege to stand today in the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in the historic Territorial Council Chamber in Dawson City to speak to Motion No. 733 acknowledging and celebrating the history and heritage of this land on the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the modern Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, this location has a very special and personal perspective for me, as I have been present in this very Chamber every two months, with some breaks, as defence counsel on the territorial court circuit from the early 1990s until close to my first election in 2016. I spent many hours here through all seasons. In fact, one held in memory I will always have is one brilliantly blue beautiful fall morning when Dawson court proceedings were surreally interrupted by breaking news of the Twin Towers and the Pentagon being attacked in New York and Washington and probably our wonderful Yukon being involved in Whitehorse with the suspected hijacking of a Korean Airlines 747.

In the spring and summer, when the museum was open, I was often asked if we were part of an interactive exhibit, integrating an extremely convincing — one might say lifelike — court docket as a bonus feature of the usual museum tour. As I was interviewing clients in a corner of the display room over boxes of additional crockery from the Commissioner's residence, bellows, and other metal equipment from the gold fields, as well as an impressive collection of sundries from a prior century's lighting fixtures, it was not difficult to appreciate the melding of the past with the present.

This is a day for celebration, Mr. Speaker, but as other members have reflected, it is also for reflection. In my travels to all Yukon communities over the past 30-plus years, I have witnessed significant challenges faced by many. The road to reconciliation with Yukon First Nation citizens has, of course, been challenging, yet I would observe that it has generally been characterized by incremental socio-economic progress with ongoing efforts being made to improve the outcomes for all citizens, both self-governing and non-self-governing First Nations.

There, of course, remains a great deal to be accomplished, yet as we, as a territory today, can proudly and jointly recognize, the nature and sophistication of the government-to-government relationships with Yukon are seen as nation-leading.

We can also reflect upon Yukon as increasingly diverse, welcoming individuals and families from all corners of the world. This diversity has had positive impacts on many aspects of Yukon society, whether it be in arts and culture, sports, gastronomic variety — I repeat: gastronomic variety — and generally creating a more dynamic and vibrant Yukon.

This transition over the course of my past 30 years has been substantial and is primed to continue, whether it's participating or being a spectator at a gripping game of the four-team cricket tournament at Christ the King Elementary School last weekend, enrolling in Bhangra dance classes at various locations, as well as being welcomed at a number of social gatherings celebrated throughout the year by the burgeoning Filipino, Muslim, Sikh,

Jewish, Chinese-Canadian, Afro-Canadian, and many other groups.

It has been an absolute honour to be an MLA for the amazing creative, active, and diverse Riverdale North for the past seven years, and I sincerely thank my constituents for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I am also personally grateful to live in a country and territory where we live in peace and prosperity, where we can continue to disagree without being disagreeable, where we can experience world-class wilderness daily which is the envy of many, and where we will all redouble our efforts to continue to work tirelessly to improve our beautiful Yukon every single day.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: It is my pleasure to rise today in the grand city of Dawson to speak to the motion today.

Everywhere we go in the Yukon, we can find something to celebrate at any time on any given day. From the time when the Yukon was formed as a territory in Canada to today, we have been evolving as a society. I think that the people of the Yukon form a distinct society.

In my travels, when people ask where you're from and you say "the Yukon" and after the blank look that get on their face because they have no idea where that is and you tell them that you're in Canada and you live next door to Alaska, then they can appreciate the uniqueness of the location. It then gives them a reference to ask about where you live.

I recall talking with a sheep farmer in the highlands of Scotland, and when he understood where the Yukon was, we had a good conversation about the sheep that we have here. My point being is that we Yukoners have much in common with other countries in this world. The Yukon is enriched by the cultural diversity we see all around us. People from all around the world, including our First Nations who have always called Yukon home, invite us to share in their culture so that we may appreciate one another and still form a single society.

If I was asked what it means to me to be a Yukoner, I don't think I could point to a single thing, but it's rather a collection of habits and experiences. It's the experience of managing at 50 below when you know you still have to go to work; it's the experience of close communities; and it's the experience of participating in all of the things that Yukoners enjoy: celebrations, hunting, fishing, enjoying the wilderness and open spaces.

Now I would like to say a few things about my own community and riding of Watson Lake. Watson Lake is a gem, and we have managed to maintain our small-town feel, that involvement of all those who wish to embrace the opportunities to come together and just be with one another. My favourite thing to do is go to community dinners, and, of course, I relish the opportunity to talk to people.

Watson Lake is the hub of a broader region. We have Upper Liard and our neighbours in BC Lower Post who are all part of our community. A success story for one is a success for all. We want to thank the city of Dawson for hosting us here for

this Special Sitting of the Legislature for us to enjoy what the city has to offer.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, to be honest with everyone, I hadn't fully developed what I was going to say today, and sitting here listening to people's love letters about this place we call home really brings it back. I reflect on my own history, as my grandparents immigrated — my oma and opa — from Germany to Montréal and then, with a very young daughter, arrived in a traditional and living territory of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. That's where my mother grew up.

Then I think about being here on the living territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, which is the place where I spent the first years of my life. When we talk about the 125th anniversary of Yukon joining the Confederation, I think about the First Nations in Yukon who touch every aspect of our life and have and will continue to do that in the future. I think about how fortunate we are to have those lessons and to have the openness and to have the nations be so patient in their teachings with us, because really, when we reflect on the work that we have all done, there are those of us in the room who were born here and, more importantly, there are those of us in the room who chose to come here.

When I reflect on the Yukon, I think about the importance of our diversity. I think about the fact that — hearing the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources talking about arriving in the Yukon and feeling like he was home or the Minister of Finance saying that he's just about to celebrate his silver anniversary. I think about myself, and I think about the good fortune I had of being born here, but I think more important than that is knowing that the Member for Porter Creek Centre immigrated to Canada but then chose to come.

I think about the diversity of this place that we call home and how it has changed since I was a child and how it continues to get more vibrant — being at City Hall yesterday to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the independence of the Philippines, to be at the opening of the mosque in Whitehorse, and to be celebrating with our community as it changes and also understanding that Yukon First Nations have been welcoming us forever, and they continue to welcome us in, in all that diversity.

Really, when I think about the love letters that I have heard — because that's what I'll call them, the "love letters" to the place that we call home — I think about how strong we are because of those differences. It's true; we don't always agree, but really we all come at this from the same spot, which is that we come from a place of caring.

I think about the importance of how important it is to be able to lean on your neighbours, and we have seen it happen in the Klondike with the recent floods where neighbours were helping neighbours and how important that was. So, as I stand here in celebration, looking back at the past 125 years since Yukon joined the Confederation and looking forward to the future, I know that it's bright, because we will continue to invite people in, and that diversity is what's going to make us stronger.

I look forward to a vibrant and bright future, and I thank everyone for the opportunity to share their thoughts today.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

Mr. Hassard: I guess, instead, I'll say that it's a real pleasure to rise today to speak to the motion before us, but it's even more so because we are delivering our speeches today from the beautiful city of Dawson, which was once the capital of the Yukon. I know there are a few individuals here today — Peter Menzies, in particular — who were hoping we are going to announce that we're bringing the capital back to Dawson City today. But anyway, sorry, Peter, but I don't think it's going to happen today.

I would like to begin by thanking the wonderful constituents of Pelly-Nisutlin for their continued support over the last 11 and a half years and also take the opportunity to thank my entire family for their wholehearted support, because without your family supporting you in this job, it would certainly be much more challenging than it is.

In terms of the motion, I think back. I think of the past 125 years, in particular, of the history of the Yukon. I find it really amazing to think of how things have changed but also how things have stayed the same. Things like technology, of course, are so different today than it was 125 years ago, but the beauty of the territory and the beauty of our people never fades. It's that beauty that really captivates people when they come here to visit this incredible land.

It's interesting — there are so many stories you hear of people who came to the Yukon to visit or for a short stay — it was interesting when my colleague the Member for Copperbelt South spoke about his family moving here 50 years ago for a short stay. It was 1969 when my family came to the Yukon. It was a similar situation. He told my mom that we were going for five years, and here we are 54 years later. I'm really thankful that five-year plan never came to fruition.

As we assemble here today in Dawson — and recognizing that it is the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people — I think it's important to quickly recognize the mining industry as well. Mining has been, and will continue to be, the cornerstone of the Yukon economy, and it's probably the key reason that the Yukon has grown and thrived the way that it has. So, it's important just to recognize that as we are here in the middle of the placer world that we call home.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank a few folks — of course, as I said, my constituents and our family, but also for the staff of the Legislative Assembly who keep us moving in the proper direction every day, ensuring that we're not stepping on our own toes, and also for all the staff members in all the caucus offices who really keep things moving and ensuring that the day-to-day operations continue to move forward, dealing with constituency issues, just helping people out.

I would also like to thank everyone here — all of the elected officials — because I agree, and we've heard today that

we don't always agree, and that's certainly the case, and that's one of the beauties of democracy, I guess, but at the end of the day, we are all here to try to make lives better for Yukoners. So, for that, I thank you all as well.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about here today is a celebration of place. Ceremony and celebrations reflect our traditions, our cultures, our beliefs, our hopes, and often our spirituality. Celebrations and ceremony bring us together, show people that they are united and show us all that we belong. A sense of belonging is crucial to our life satisfaction, our happiness, our mental and physical health, our mental wellness, and our longevity. It gives us a sense of purpose, meaning, and a sense of community.

Scholars who have studied and written about this topic advise that an increased sense of belonging leads to collaboration, problem-solving, and better decision-making, something we are all tasked with. When people feel a sense of belonging and a sense of pride in their families, their peers, and their communities, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured, and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. This creates an important foundation for learning development and a healthy sense of self.

As we come to understand the impacts of the last three years and our wrestling match with COVID-19, we have learned about the negative impact that it has had on our state of mental wellness at every age of every citizen. Any opportunity to foster this much positivity and even joy must be taken and respected. A sense of belonging can sometimes be equated with inclusion. Belonging and inclusion create an environment where all people can feel accepted and valued. We know that feeling accepted, valued, and included is what we all need to feel at home.

People all over the globe dream about visiting the geography and beauty that we are lucky and determined enough to call our home. Celebrations are often an opportunity for us to feel like we have achieved something significant. It is a time to reflect, to recognize, and to appreciate where we have come from and maybe more importantly, in this case, where we are going. The time has come to reflect and celebrate on this special and unique place that we have all helped to build. Those who have been here for millennia, those born and raised here, those who have found their way here, or those who have come here with intention — they have all come together to make a community.

My colleagues and I in this House have each brought a different perspective and emphasis on speaking to this motion, a true example of the value of diversity and what it is that we can all bring and how it will improve our lives. We're here to celebrate the Yukon, to celebrate our achievements, to celebrate our innovation, our diversity, and our history. I too am very proud that we are here in this special room in this building, in this special place. Thank you to all of those who made that possible.

I have had the honour, along with my colleague, of spending many days in this room when it was, and still is, used

as a court room; although it was my job to sit on the other side of the room. It is truly our honour to gather here in the traditional territories of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in this historic Territorial Council Chamber as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

It is, as my colleagues have said in their love letters, I am sure, a day that we will all cherish as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Yukon Territory.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and speak to the motion today on this 125th anniversary of the Yukon Territory. The *Yukon, North of Ordinary* magazine is of course the reading material on Air North, Yukon's airline, and it asked a question: What makes you a Yukoner? Growing up here really helped me form true camaraderie between long-time Yukoners and myself. To this day, we see many leave the territory and use the term "Yukoner" to describe themselves as a badge of honour.

Today, while the characteristics of Yukoners have broadened and our sense of pride in our territory remains, there are a number of ways we describe Yukoners of the past: steadfast, determined, enterprising pioneers. Of course, these qualities still exist in the Yukon today, and I would like to talk a little bit about some of those who helped shape my riding of Kluane and the territory into the unique and beautiful place we call home.

Thomas Dickson came to the Yukon in 1896 as a member of the North-West Mounted Police. He and his wife, Louise, settled on the north end of Kluane Lake, where their family started out and Dickson Outfitters still thrives today. The Burwash Landing trading post was founded by the Jacquot brothers in the early 1900s. Louis and Eugene Jacquot, who were French trained chefs, moved into prospecting but later chose to homestead at Burwash Landing and worked as guides and outfitters.

We all know stories of Chief Elijah Smith, also known as "Ta Me" in Southern Tutchone. He was born in the community of Champagne in 1912 and fought in the Second World War as an opportunity to do his part, and Chief Smith saw many possibilities for First Nations and later spearheaded a group to Ottawa in 1973 to deliver to Ottawa the document called *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, which marked the beginning of the Yukon land claims process.

Bill Brewster, who landed on D-Day in World War II, returned to the Yukon in 1950 to work in various lodges around Haines Junction and Burwash Landing. He ran a general store out of a cabin in the 1950s and was first elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1982. In 1935, George and Dorothy Mackintosh bought the Bear Creek Roadhouse and breathed new life into that place. George had already spent 30 years in the Yukon Territory, about 25 of those in the Kluane area.

The families of Jimmy Kane, John Kha-Sha, Parton Kane, David Hume, and Jack Pringle were based at Dalton Post along the Dalton Trail, then known as the "Grease Trail." The trading post there carried a variety of necessities for those in the area.

In fact, elders Jimmy Kane and Kitty Smith remember tasting their first sugar and cow's milk at that post.

Ron and Hilda Watson, after having served in the war, moved to the Yukon in 1947. Hilda taught in Haines Junction for about seven years before she was elected to the Legislature in 1970 as a member for Carmacks and Kluane, going on to be the first elected leader of the Yukon Party and the first Canadian woman to be in a mainstream political party in Canada. Ron ran a pump station north of Haines Junction, was the chairman of the local improvement district, and was also a huge volunteer for many communities.

In 1946, John and Sally Backe opened the Kuskanaw store in Haines Junction, later moving across the street and becoming a lodge called the Haines Junction Inn. The Backes provided the first power to residents of Haines Junction and donated a block of land to the community where an arena and community centre are located today.

People like these are the reason we acknowledge and celebrate the history and heritage of the land here today. I appreciate all those who make up the history of the Yukon, their lives, their traditions, and their cultures. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I pledge to remember our rich history and will continue to work and improve the lives of those in the great riding of Kluane and all Yukoners.

In closing, I do want to thank the residents of Dawson and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for their hospitality. I want to thank everyone in this building today who made this happen and my fellow colleagues for being here. Thank you, shāw nithän, gūnilschish, merci.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, in 1898, Yukon boundaries were carved from Rupert's Land, and we became a territory before Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces. No one in this room will be surprised that I will speak of my hometown, Dawson, because there is so much to speak about.

I decided to share a few memories mainly around this building that we're in today, the Old Territorial Administration Building. Dawson City was the biggest instant town north of Seattle and west of Winnipeg during this era. Once the goldfields were claimed and some got rich — most didn't — the big town dropped to around 800 through the early 1900s and stayed there. With the buildings crumbling down around us and the boardwalks rising and falling with the frost heaves, fields of tall grasses and willows were the dominant feature of this dusty little town.

We played in those old buildings. The junk left behind that we now call "antiques" was garbaged, trashed, or taken far away. During the early 1960s, when many Dawsonites realized that we might have a tourism industry, the restoration of some of those old buildings began. The Palace Grand was rebuilt, and in 1962, the Broadway play *Foxy* with Bert Lahr was held for that summer. Gambling happened on the Keno. Fathers in Ottawa decided that it was a common gaming house — illegal despite the fact that the money was used to help rebuild the crumbling town. A plea was given, and Diamond Tooth Gertie's was the first legal gaming house in Canada.

This particular building holds many memories. It was our territorial building in the true sense, so picture, if you will, downstairs, as you came in the big doors and faced that beautiful stairway that sat central, a true Lily Tomlin. With one ringy-dingy, maybe two long ringy-dingies, she would hook up the locals by switchboard.

Continuing to your right, there's the Customs office, and beside it a little radio station, CFYT, where characters like Wee Willie Anderson and a lot of local teens volunteered to keep the BBC reels and the records playing.

To the left of those doors was a post office, and a little down the hall was our local dentist, Dr. Wishart. In 1957, the school burned down. It was situated where the current school is now. Then the school was housed here, just down the hall, from grade 1 upward. Miss Gartside, the principal — a tiny woman who took no prisoners and ruled with an iron hand — would stand on the front steps and ring a big handbell so you knew school was in session. So, line up and smartly.

There were huge enclosed rusty flues that ran from the top windows down to the ground so that when we had fire drills, we had to slide down these tubes to reach safety. I was afraid of that slide, and I think I had to be pushed and it was not a good memory. Come grade 3, a new school, Dawson City Elementary High School, and a few years later, the Catholic nuns, the Sisters of St. Ann, left Dawson. They had run the old folks home, the hospital, and also the Catholic school. All the kids from that school joined ours, and — who knew? — they were the same as us.

The times changed, and as buildings sprang up around us, a new federal building was built to house the Customs, the mining recorder, and the post office. The museum, which stood beside the CIBC bank on Front Street, also burned down. The museum then eventually moved into this building which we have today.

The time was special, and as an observant child, I think often of those precious long summer days with the cotton blowing and the sound of the noisy baseball game that you could hear all over town. The Yukon is young with a fascinating history, so thank you to all who have paved our way to today. Thank you for listening to me ramble.

Have a great day, Yukon.

Applause

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, as we have heard on the floor of this historic territorial administration building today, this is the 125th anniversary of our territory, and what a special day it is for all of us. There are so many stories of incredible resilience, innovation, get-'er-done attitude, and success, it's unreal. I thank all my colleagues in the Yukon Legislative Assembly for being here today. I want to thank our special guest, the Mayor of Dawson City, the Yukon Senator, as well as the most-loved and longest serving public servant in the Yukon government, Helen Fitzsimmons, and I want to

recognize that we're on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

I do want to highlight to Yukoners that coming together today shows the best in their elected political class. All leaders came together to ensure that we could have this day and celebrate for Yukoners, and I think we could tell from what was shared today and the emotion how important this is to all of us.

This is a group of people — although, yes, there are times that we debate and may not get along, each and every one of them fiercely work on behalf of the people who elected them.

From brand new folks who now call Yukon home to Yukoners whose families have been here for generations and to the First Nations who have been here long before anyone else, there is so much spirit carried by all Yukoners.

As Yukoners, we cherish our success and successes, and we learn from our mistakes. One hundred and twenty-five years is an incredible milestone, and I'm absolutely so honoured to be part of this moment to reflect back on the journey. I look around this very building, a national historic site of Canada, and imagine all the significant discussions that took place here right up until 1953.

As we stand on this floor, we are standing on the shoulders of those who have laid a foundation to guide us on our path. Today, we recognize and honour that history. As we have heard and as I said in my opening remarks, we must also acknowledge the colonial impacts the last 125 years have had on the Yukon and Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, in preparing for today and going back to read the words of our first Commissioner and our second Commissioner and going through the *Yukon Act* and then reflecting on what's happening here today, it's important to talk about how we learned from our mistakes. The majority of members who are here in the Assembly today would not have qualified to be here. They wouldn't have qualified to be here as Premier, Deputy Premier, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Justice, the Leader of the NDP. They would not have been here. And so we have learned — and again, as Yukoners, we continue to make the changes that we need to, to make sure that Yukon is an inviting and inclusive place.

We honour the contributions of Yukon First Nations and transboundary First Nations in the territory and we continue on the path of reconciliation in a meaningful and active way. There is a history over the past 125 years. Again, we are dealing with that, and we know that. But I am also taking this day to think about the next 125 years. In a way, we can all shape that future today. Yukon needs a place full of promise and opportunity. This unique place where work happens and hand-in-hand with self-government First Nations at a place, again, that we can all look upon. The Yukon, as well, has a story that I think Canada needs to hear. I think we have a story that the world needs to hear. I think the lessons that we learned are lessons that many people across this globe need to hear. We are a growing territory, again, with friendly faces, helpful, caring neighbours with a diverse community and a landscape like nowhere else.

The Yukon is always evolving, and that is the beauty of this place we call home. We, as Yukoners and as leaders, must continue to serve the people of this territory and set a stage for

continued growth. We will continue to work hard, take action, and share the energy of our team of leaders to realize this promise of the Yukon. We will continue working with and alongside all Yukoners, setting our beautiful home up for the next 125 years.

Mr. Speaker, when I sit here today, I think I have an admission that I want to share with you. At five years old, my favourite show to watch on the TV was *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*. I would get into tremendous trouble with my grandparents and my mom because I would be late for Mass because of when Sergeant Preston was on CBC. I would come back home from church, and I would try to take my grandfather's wood sled and think it was Sergeant Preston's sled.

Now, I know that Sergeant Preston wasn't shot here in Dawson City, and I know that his faithful dog, King, didn't walk the streets of Dawson, but I think what I was drawn to was the absolute spirit of the Yukon. It fascinated me and I think that's where my journey started.

What I can say to my colleagues today is — as I sit and look around surrounded by absolutely incredible Yukoners who are the colleagues that I get to sit with, and listening to their stories, as well as to all of Yukoners who are here with us today and special guests — here we are today, and it's important to continue to dream for all of us, and as I sat here, I recognize today that the Klondike fulfilled another dream and Yukon fulfilled another dream today for me.

So, to all Yukoners, past and present, and to those yet to come, this anniversary is for you. Happy 125th; I hope we all find a pocket of time to get outside, take a paddle, enjoy an establishment, local cuisine, or visit a site that pulls at our hearts and hold space for 125 years as a territory.

Applause

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. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

MLA Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Motion No. 733 agreed to

Speaker: The House will now stand in recess. I would ask everyone to remain seated as we invite His Worship William Kendrick, the Mayor of Dawson City, to speak to this gathering. I would now ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort His Worship Mayor William Kendrick beyond the Bar of this House.

Recess

Sergeant-at-Arms escorts Mayor Kendrick beyond the Bar of the House

Address by William Kendrick, Mayor of Dawson City

Mayor Kendrick: Hello, and welcome to Dawson City and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory. I'm not sure whose bright idea it was to ask me to speak after all 16 or 17 of you. It's a pretty daunting task to speak after 16 or 17 of the best public speakers in the territory; I will attempt to do so now without a washroom break.

As Mayor of Dawson City and on behalf of Dawson City Council, I want to wish everyone a very happy 125th Yukon anniversary. Of course, I want to thank Members of the Legislative Assembly and staff of the Assembly for coming here for this special session, and I want to thank all the other distinguished guests here today, including the senator, as well as the families and friends of the late Peter Jenkins and Peggy Kormendy. They certainly were some of the most colourful Dawsonites, and it was a privilege and honour to have known them.

So, yes, of course, we acknowledge that this land and people on this land have a much older history than 125 years. Indigenous peoples have called this area home for thousands of years. One hundred and twenty-five years ago and in the final decades of the late 19th century, powerful forces were changing the world. In the new country of Canada and throughout the world, industrialization was spreading rapidly, and people were moving from rural areas and flocking to cities.

Ordinary people were wanting to survive and seek better control of their own lives and increasingly were rejecting the notion of being ruled by monarchs and the wealthy from afar. The worst proclivities of capitalism were on the rise and supports for the most needy were certainly in short supply. Modern democracies were in their infancy.

Against this backdrop, let us think about the vast North-West Territories in the new country of Canada. Indigenous people had lived here for thousands of years, yet the worst of prejudice and racism rejected any inclusion of their values and traditions from this new country's *modus operandi*. With the discovery of gold in the Klondike, 100,000 people from all around the world started to make their way to the Klondike

goldfields to try to change their fortunes and their futures. Only about 30,000 made it, and far, far fewer than that were able to change their economic reality or their social status.

The newly minted country of Canada had a real reason to be concerned about an American takeover of the goldfields and this region. The North-West Mounted Police and then the Yukon Field Force established a Canadian presence in the area, and in those early days, I've read, they also brought some protection for the Indigenous people from the worst inclinations of gold seekers and traders.

The Yukon Territory was established on June 13, 1898, but it was not the Yukon as we know it today, of course. Its new council and Commissioner were entirely appointed by Ottawa. In 1900 this partially changed, with just two of the 10 members being elected. In fact, the first fully elected council in the Yukon was Dawson City's very own city council in 1902. Eight years later, in 1910, the advisory 10-seat Yukon Territorial Council was fully elected. Yes, it must be noted that there was only a very narrow political franchise at the time. Women and Indigenous people could not vote then, and the struggle for full political franchise continued for many years.

Elected representatives in the Yukon continued to just be an advisory body to the Commissioner and the federal government, right up until 1978. So, yes, while we are celebrating this anniversary, we should also remind ourselves that it is an anniversary that involves our colonial past but one that we can and should still celebrate.

The years leading up to 1898 may have resulted in very different outcomes. Canadian Confederation occurred in 1867, but so did the Alaska purchase, when the United States took over Alaska from Russia. A different history may have seen Russia continue its presence in Alaska and they may have even annexed this region. And the militia trip of the Yukon Field Force in 1898 was a direct response to the very real concern by Canada that the United States may have moved to annex this area, especially so given that gold was discovered and thousands of Americans had descended on the Klondike to seek their fortunes.

Our region's fate may have been very different, and we may not have ended up as part of Canada, which can now boast universal health care, respect for minorities, cultural diversity, tolerance for differing opinions, access to abortion, free movement from coast to coast to coast, and, last but not least, strong and proud First Nation people sharing the land under the Canadian tree.

The birth of the Yukon eventually led to self-governing First Nations and the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement*, which may not have happened under Russian or American rule. All this to say that I hope and trust that the Yukon will continue to learn, grow, and evolve. So, let us proclaim a very happy anniversary to the Yukon and remember all of its history — the good, the bad, the ugly and the wonderful. May we continue to learn and flourish for another 125 years. Happy anniversary to the Yukon.

Thank you for your time. Mahsi' cho.

Applause

[During the recess, the Speaker, Hon. Jeremy Harper, on behalf of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, presented a gift to Mayor Kendrick in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the creation of the Yukon Territory.]

Speaker: At this time, I will call the House to order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at 3:02 p.m.