

**THE HONOURABLE ROBERT C. MCLEOD
DEPUTY PREMIER**

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Orange Shirt Day

Mr. Speaker, since 2013, September 30th has been marked as Orange Shirt Day, a day for all Canadians to remember the survivors of the residential school system.

Organizers chose an orange shirt as the symbol for that day based on a story told by Phyllis Jack Webstat, a survivor of the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in Williams Lake, BC. In her story, Ms. Webstat tells of having the shiny, new orange shirt her grandmother had given to her being taken away on her first day at residential school.

We remember residential school survivors and their families on all days but especially on September 30th because it was around this time of year that children were taken from their homes to residential schools. It is also a time when schools have the opportunity to implement their inclusive, anti-bullying practices and policies for the coming year, setting the stage for education and learning about the impacts of residential schools that continue to echo today.

Mr. Speaker, we are living in a new world where the need for reconciliation with Indigenous people is receiving more attention than ever before. We welcome this attention in the Northwest Territories, where approximately half of our population is Aboriginal, many of whom are survivors of residential school.

Our government has been proud to lead the way in forging new relationships with Indigenous people and has made dealing with the legacy of residential schools a priority, including introducing a mandatory residential schools curriculum in 2012. We also remain committed to implementing the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mr. Speaker, Orange Shirt Day is a reminder of the often troubled relationship between Indigenous people and the wider Canadian society, including governments, churches and schools. Repairing those relationships in a territory where many of us – including myself – have had experience with residential schools, will be critical to creating strong, healthy and inclusive communities.

Orange Shirt Day took place on Saturday, Mr. Speaker. As we did not sit on that day, Members are proud to be wearing orange in the Chamber today out of respect for the survivors of residential school and as a symbol of our commitment to reconciliation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.