

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, September 21, 2010 – 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Speaker: It gives me great pleasure to announce that the following students will be serving the House as legislative pages for the 2010 fall sitting. They are Aline Halliday, Jared Hrycan, Sian Molloy, Kieran Poile and William Thomson from F.H. Collins Secondary School and Shakiba Kazemi, Mikaela Lane and Noah Sternbergh from Porter Creek Secondary School. Today we have with us Kieran Poile and William Thomson. I ask members to welcome them to the House at this time.

Applause

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes which have been made to the Order Paper.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper because they are outdated: Motions No. 640, 789, 790 and 891, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition; Motions No. 651, 865, 1030 and 1090 standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; Motions No. 738 and 846, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane; Motions No. 901 and 904, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge; Motion No. 907, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek South; and Motion No. 1095, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been fulfilled in whole or in part: Motions No. 89, 106, 244, 732 and 797, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; Motions No. 500 and 532, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike; Motion No. 802, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek South; Motions No. 912 and 1025, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; and Motions No. 978 and 1076, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane.

Motion for Production of Papers No. 35, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been fulfilled in part.

Finally, all motions and bills standing in the name of the former Member for Whitehorse Centre have been removed from the Order Paper.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Unanimous consent re reinstating Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to reinstate Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*, to the Order Paper

at second reading stage to stand in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne.

Speaker: The Leader of the Third Party has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the Assembly to reinstate Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*, to the Order Paper at second reading stage to stand in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is unanimous consent.

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day of Peace

Mr. Mitchell: I rise today on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the International Day of Peace. The Day of Peace was established by the United Nations in 1981, and the first Day of Peace was celebrated in September 1982. In 2001, the UN General Assembly declared September 21 as the annual date for the International Day of Peace, providing an opportunity for individuals, organizations and nations to create meaningful acts of peace on a shared date.

En 2001, l'Assemblée générale a établi le 21 septembre comme journée annuelle de non-violence et de cessez-le-feu. Les Nations Unies invitent tous les pays et tous les peuples à respecter l'arrêt des hostilités durant cette Journée et à la commémorer avec des mesures éducatives et de sensibilisation du public aux questions liées à la paix.

International Day of Peace is also a day of ceasefire — personal and political. Imagine what a whole day of ceasefire would mean to humankind. Think about the impact of millions of people from all parts of the world, coming together for one day of ceasefire and peace, and by making a personal commitment to strive for peace in the world.

This year's theme is "Peace, Youth and Development" under the slogan "Peace = Future".

Les Nations Unies souhaitent recueillir des récits de jeunes du monde entier œuvrant pour la paix. Le slogan de la campagne pour cette année est : « Paix = Avenir, c'est mathématique ».

Only in a peaceful environment will young people realize their full potential, and young people have the potential to start building that peaceful world today.

Des jeunes en bonne santé et éduqués représentent un aspect crucial pour le développement durable et la paix.

Our young people already play a crucial role in working for peace. Let us help them by giving them the tools to work with, by ending armed conflict and building sustainable peace. The world's concerns will soon be in their hands.

On this Day of Peace we must reaffirm our commitment to non-violence and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Gather with family and friends or engage with co-workers and associates to pause for a moment and reflect on how we can help achieve peace in the world. We look forward to a day when our troops are home safe, and away from harm's way. A day when our peacekeepers don't have to travel around the world to keep the peace in wartorn lands. A day when we as a nation are

known as humanitarians for sending aid when disaster strikes, or for helping underdeveloped countries meet their basic needs, and ultimately support themselves and their citizens.

On a personal note — make peace by resolving any outstanding disputes you may have with family, friends, co-workers or neighbours. Let's make this day about peace, and our commitment to peace and the resolution of disputes.

Make this day your day of peace.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Mr. Cardiff: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic caucus to pay tribute on this 21st day of September to the International Day of Peace. The celebration of this day is a worldwide call for global ceasefire and non-violence. The International Day of Peace was established by the UN General Assembly in 1981. It is dedicated to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace within and among nations and people.

It is especially important for humanity to pause and consider the objective of a peaceful world in these days of accelerated armed conflicts and possible nuclear devastation. The dangers and costs of the escalation of present warfare and terrorism around the globe make it imperative to raise awareness about disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons and the cessation of all kinds of violence.

We cannot lull ourselves into thinking that it is not we who are doing harm, but it is those others who are far away and not as civilized or compassionate as we are. We are very much involved in the production and selling of arms with our own Canada Pension Plan investments. For-profit motives have quietly endorsed the invasion of other countries and the killing of innocent populations, such as in Honduras and Gaza. We make trade agreements and support armed conflicts in oppressive regimes in Central and South America so they can continue in power with impunity, and we are, sadly, not even immune to going to war. Our peacekeeping days are, sadly, in the distant past as we kill and we die in Afghanistan.

Martin Luther King Jr. said that "peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but it is a means by which we arrive at that goal." In other words, to gain peace, we must practise it in our daily lives and in our professional and political endeavours. Being peaceful is not an easy thing to do, but when we see countries and multinational corporations that profit from war and state terrorism, from oppression and from torture and from the environmental destruction in the name of progress, we must withdraw from supporting them and make a clear statement of objection.

The Canadian Department of Peace Initiative, or CDPI, is one route to becoming a more peaceful nation. The CDPI is committed to the establishment of a cabinet-level minister of peace and department of peace within the Government of Canada, as other countries have done. In support of this initiative, there are now chapters in most major cities across Canada and it has obtained the endorsement of many prominent individuals. There is a chapter here in Whitehorse.

With the present atmosphere in the world of violent conflict and terrorism, it is urgent that this initiative be endorsed

and promoted. We urge individual members in this government to do so by supporting and establishing activities and research that promote a culture of peace and assertive non-violence in Canada and around the globe — we will help create a more peaceful world. It is an ongoing and a long-term process, but it can turn the tide of peace in our generation if we want it to.

In recognition of National Forest Week

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to National Forest Week. This year's theme is "Canada's Forests — Branching Out" and recognizes the continuing evolution of forestry in Canada.

Every year during the last full week in September, Canada's forests are honoured for the many benefits they provide in our lives. Canadians are encouraged to participate through challenging themselves to learn more about their forest heritage and support greater recognition of this valuable resource.

National Forest Week is a great time for Yukoners to take a walk in the woods together, to know their local forests, care for a newly planted or neglected tree and spend some time studying tree species, identify all the things at home or school that are made from wood, or learn more about the prevention of forest fires.

Mr. Speaker, here in Yukon we have always understood the important contributions the forests have made to our way of life. From wood to build and heat our homes, to a place to enjoy our leisure time, or practise cultural traditions, Yukon's forests continue to be celebrated for their many and diverse values.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the hard work of our forest managers, not only the Yukon government staff at Energy, Mines and Resources, but also resource managers working for Yukon First Nations. Yukon forest managers are rising to the challenge of balancing diverse forest values and providing the necessary stewardship for our forests. Out of their continued effort, we are seeing new partnerships, new opportunities, and new knowledge that will contribute to the continuing growth of a strong forest sector. Knowledge and understanding of Yukon's forests continues to grow with research and education, including the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest and the Yukon-wide forest health monitoring program. During this year's National Forest Week, I encourage all Yukoners to spend some time out in the abundant forests we are so lucky to enjoy here in the Yukon.

Mr. Elias: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Forest Week, which runs from September 19 to 25. This year's theme is "Canada's Forests — Branching Out". National Forest Week is a time to reflect on the important role that forests play in our daily lives and to celebrate Canadians' connection to the forest. The week was established in 1926 by the Canadian Forest Association and was originally called "Forest Fire Prevention Week". Canada's forests contribute significantly to the high standard of living, clean air and water we enjoy.

As Canadians and Yukoners, we look to our forest for many things: healthy living, employment, recreation and peaceful moments. Canada's forest industries and forest-dependent

communities are facing many challenges, including new international competition and natural disturbances, such as insect infestation and increased forest fires.

National Forest Week is an opportunity for all Canadians to rediscover the natural beauty of our forests, the biodiversity that they contain and the important economic, social and environmental benefits that forests provide.

Here at home, we are fortunate that we have vast areas of incredible landscape diversity, including wetlands, meadows, boreal forest, alpine and Arctic areas. Yukon is also home to numerous species of plants and animals, many of which are not found anywhere else in Canada. They live and thrive in our boreal and alpine forests. We must protect our forests in order to protect the biodiversity and wildlife they contain.

National Forest Week is a wonderful time to reflect on what our forests have to offer and their importance to all of us. I encourage all Yukoners to connect with the world around you by taking the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our forests and the nature and wildlife that surrounds us.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Dr. Terry Weninger, president of Yukon College, to our Assembly. Dr. Weninger has been responsible for not only expanding the research programs at Yukon College, but also the breadth and depth of courses there, including the number of university degrees offered through Yukon College. Welcome, Dr. Weninger.

Mr. Mitchell: I would ask all members of this House to join me in welcoming several people to this House today. Mr. Patrick Singh, downtown businessman; Mr. Kirk Cameron, downtown businessman and resident; Ms. Roxanne Livingstone, downtown resident and community volunteer, in particular with the Anti-Poverty Coalition where she has done much good work, and Mr. Murray Martin, a constituent.

Speaker: Any further introduction of visitors?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling a notice pursuant to section 17 of the *Legislative Assembly Act*, signed by Steve Cardiff, Member for Mount Lorne, and Darius Elias, Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, respecting a vacancy in the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre caused by the death of Todd Hardy.

The Chair has also for tabling a copy of the letter from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to the Commissioner of Yukon respecting a vacancy in the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre.

The Chair also has for tabling the Conflict of Interest Commission's annual report, for the period ending March 31, 2010.

Further, the Chair has for tabling a report from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on the absence of members from sit-

tings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees, dated September 21, 2010.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have for tabling the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees.

Mr. Mitchell: I have for tabling the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Speaker: Are there any further reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 21: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 21, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 21, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 21 agreed to

Bill No. 22: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 22, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 22, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 22 agreed to

Bill No. 92: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 92, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2010)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 92, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2010)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 92 agreed to

Bill No. 91: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Lang: I move that Bill No. 91, entitled *Second Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 2010*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 91, entitled *Second Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 2010*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 91 agreed to

Speaker: Are there further bills for introduction?
Hearing none, are there notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Nordick: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges Yukon's Member of Parliament, Larry Bagnell, to vote on September 22, 2010, in accordance with the views of the vast majority of his constituents, rather than follow the dictates of Leader Liberal Party Michael Ignatieff, in relation to voting in favour of the private member's bill, Bill C-391, abolishing the long-gun registry.

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to uphold the principles of democracy by ensuring there are no vacant seats when the House sits.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House recognizes the importance of the annual community tour and urges the Government of Yukon to continue to make this an annual event.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Saskatchewan and any other governments to ensure Yukon residents suffering from multiple sclerosis may have the option, if they so choose, to be included in any clinical trials of the "liberation therapy" treatment for MS.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House commends the efforts of the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition to build supportive housing for the homeless population in Whitehorse — and for others who need it — and urges the Yukon government to support the project in the following ways:

(1) directing the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to work together with the coalition to ensure the project is approved and the budget is spent by March 31, 2011;

(2) including in budgeting operational funding of a predetermined amount annually for the purpose of providing supports for residents of the facility; and

(3) working with all levels of government, non-government organizations, First Nations and stakeholder groups to support a Housing First approach ending homelessness in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release its position on the recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to assist the City of Whitehorse and local planning groups in making *Hockey Day in Canada* a resounding success when our capital city plays host in February 2011.

Mr. Cardiff: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to establish a commission to review all processes and procedures regarding appointments to government boards and committees, including the major government boards and committees listed in Standing Order 45(3.2), but excluding those established under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*;

THAT the commission report its findings and recommendations to the House no later than the end of the 2011 spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly; and

THAT the review includes, but is not limited in scope to, the processes for:

(1) soliciting nominations;

(2) receiving nominations;

(3) reviewing nominations;

(4) making merit-based appointments;

(5) reducing patronage appointments;

(6) setting honoraria and other remuneration;

(7) setting the terms of these appointments;

(8) determining reappointments;

(9) reducing the potential for conflicts of interest;

(10) determining the need for new boards and committees to address new issues and/or concerns — an example would be climate change; and

(11) disbanding boards and committees that no longer serve any widely recognized public function or purpose; and

THAT in doing so this House affirms the important role government boards and committees play in the participation of members of the public in the political, social, cultural, environmental and economic spheres of the Yukon Territory.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House is of the opinion that the *Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly* be amended to provide for the creation of a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly on Yukon government corporations and their entities in order that:

(1) this committee can inquire about current matters, future objectives and past performance of Yukon government corporations and their entities;

(2) this committee can conduct inquiries under the Yukon *Public Inquiries Act* into matters within the mandates of the Yukon government corporations and their entities;

(3) this committee can require Yukon government corporations and their entities to submit reports to the Legislative Assembly of their significant transactions, which are defined as those that are material in amount, and outside the ordinary course of business, or are judged to be sensitive and likely of interest to legislators and the public; and

(4) this committee's discussions, inquiries and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly result in more open and accountable government and in better management of government operations.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to bring forward amendments to the Yukon's conflict-of-interest legislation as

(1) the original legislation was enacted in 1995 and amended in 1999;

(2) the Yukon's Conflict of Interest Commissioner in his annual report to the Legislative Assembly for the period April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 notes concepts about what constitutes a conflict of interest to evolve over time; and

(3) he has asked the Yukon government in previous reports to consider amending the relevant legislation to increase transparency and clarity.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately create a system for registering paid lobbyists, as recommended by the Yukon Conflict of Interest Commissioner in his annual report to the Legislative Assembly for the period April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon's Member of Parliament, Larry Bagnell, to not allow pressure from federal Liberal Party Leader Michael Ignatieff to prevent him from representing his constituents by continuing to support Bill C-391, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (repeal of long-gun registry)*, presented by the Member of Parliament for Portage-Lisgar, Candice Hoepfner.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Is there a statement by a minister?

Hearing none, this brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Election call

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you and welcome back, Mr. Speaker.

When will the Premier be calling a general election?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, welcome back to the Official Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

I think the member recognizes that the Yukon Party government was elected in the fall of 2006 to serve for a five-year term. That is our priority. We would be remiss, as we have stated a number of times, if we did not, in the public interest, give due consideration to the circumstances that we face today, due to the sad passing of the Member for Whitehorse Centre. Therefore, that's exactly what the government is doing — deliberating on what is in the best interests of the public. From there, we will make our decisions.

Mr. Speaker, we also have an obligation, when it comes to democratic principles, to bring forward the public's business to this chamber, to debate the public's business and to provide passage for it.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, that was a lengthy answer to a direct question, but I'm glad the Premier raised the principles of democracy.

Let's ask another election question, then, on the minds of many Yukoners. Residents who live in the heart of the capital city deserve their own representative in this Chamber. As we begin the fall sitting, downtown residents do not have an MLA they can call their own. The Premier is the only one with the authority to call a by-election and he has chosen not to do so. He has deliberately chosen instead to leave the seat vacant — deliberately chosen, Mr. Speaker. Worse still, he has called this Assembly back a full month early, virtually guaranteeing Whitehorse Centre residents will have no voice of their own throughout the fall sitting. The Premier has yet to provide a good explanation for the delay because he doesn't have one. There is no good reason to leave the seat vacant.

Why has the Premier refused to do the right thing and allow residents of Whitehorse Centre to choose their own MLA?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: It appears that the Leader of the Liberal Party takes issue with his attendance in this House. That is our job; that is our obligation as elected members. He obviously takes issue with calling the House in — as the member stated — a full month early. Once again, that is our job and our obligation.

At the risk of being repetitive, I will respond once again to the Leader of the Official Opposition — the government is giving due deliberation to these decisions in the context of what is in the public interest. When you consider the time we are in in this mandate, that consideration must include both by-election and/or general election. That is our job and that is certainly in keeping with our responsibility to represent the public interest.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, very sadly, there is an empty seat over to my left, and it should be filled with an MLA directly elected by the downtown residents of Whitehorse Centre. They deserve to have an MLA in place today, as they always have in the past, as we begin the annual fall sitting. Downtown residents we have spoken with are not content to be represented by the government, as the Premier has recently suggested. In fact, they are quite offended by it. I doubt the Premier would feel the same way if the vacancy were in Watson Lake. Instead of spending his time figuring out what's best for his government, the Premier should be allowing residents to exercise their fundamental democratic rights to pick their own representative as soon as possible. Residents downtown don't trust this government and with good reason. This government has gone out of its way to deny them representation on the floor of this Assembly this fall. Why is the Premier refusing to call a by-election downtown?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, the government's side — and, in this case, as the member referred to, "the Premier" — have not decided not to call a by-election. I think that's what we're trying to get through to the Leader of the Official Opposition. If the Leader of the Official Opposition wants to stand and criticize others for not representing the citizens of Whitehorse Centre, let's look at some facts. The Official Opposition has opposed investment in the cultural centre on the waterfront. The Official Opposition continually opposes investment in the downtown core and revitalizing the downtown core. The member opposite has continually opposed our investment in the

eight-member street crime unit for the downtown core. The member opposite opposes our investment in Habitat for Humanity and the transfer of 810 Wheeler Street to that very entity. The list goes on.

The member opposite and his party, the Official Opposition, oppose the replacement of Alexander Street. They can hardly criticize others for not representing the citizens of Whitehorse Centre. They, in fact, have never, ever even given one indication that they care about the citizens of Whitehorse Centre.

Question re: Cabinet community tour

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for this open and accountable government. Last year, in a press release, the Premier had this to say about the annual community tour. "Hearing people's ideas and suggestions for their communities helps the government deliver programs and services that best meet Yukoners' needs." A lot has changed since then. The Premier and his Cabinet don't want to hear from Yukoners any more. They have cancelled the community tour this year.

Last year, this government bragged about how important it was to hear directly from Yukoners in their own communities. This year — nothing. The Premier cancelled the community tour this year. He avoided hearing from Yukoners. Why is the Premier afraid to face Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I'll just ignore some of the comments and, once again, present the Leader of the Official Opposition some facts. First, it would be very difficult to conduct community tours at the same time we are sitting here, physically, in this Assembly — but the government has accommodated Yukoners. In fact, recently, I travelled to Carmacks and met with the mayor and council, at their request. Yesterday, members of the Cabinet and I met with the mayor and council of the City of Whitehorse. So, what the government has done, under the circumstances, is inform all First Nation governments, unincorporated communities and mayors and councils from across this territory that if they wish to meet with the government and Cabinet, we will certainly accommodate them, because we are a government that's keenly interested in listening to Yukoners. That's why the Yukon is progressing so positively. We have listened to Yukoners, and we've implemented the views of Yukoners.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, here are some facts for the Premier. He determines the calendar for both community tours and sittings of this Assembly. In 2007, the Premier was genuinely excited about the community tour. The Premier said, "I encourage Yukoners to come and participate."

In the same press release, the Premier also said, "We want to hear your ideas."

That was three years ago; how times have changed. The Premier doesn't want to face Yukoners now. He doesn't want to hear from Yukoners any more. The Premier can't be bothered to hear what Yukoners have to say now. Three years ago the Premier said this to Yukoners: "We are there to listen." Not any more, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is now walled up in his corner office and out of earshot.

Does the Premier believe Yukoners are happy about his decision to cancel this year's community tour, or does this government just not care?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I guess the government side is to accept that the member did not hear the former answer. Frankly, we are listening to Yukoners, but now the member wants to talk about what has been said. It was a year ago that this very Leader of the Official Opposition stated here in this House, to inform all Yukoners, that the Yukon economy was devastated. Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the Yukon was one jurisdiction in North America that actually had economic growth in 2009. I think the Leader of the Official Opposition should be careful on reflecting on what is said.

Mr. Mitchell: We heard the Premier's answer and it's an empty answer. "We are there to listen." Those are the Premier's own words, quote and unquote. Well, the Premier was not there to listen this year.

Perhaps the Premier is tired of hearing about the ATCO scandal. The Premier doesn't want Yukoners to tell him they no longer trust this government. The Premier doesn't want to hear about his bad investments or the massive debt that he is sticking Yukoners with. The Premier doesn't want to face Yukoners, so he has ducked out of the annual community tour.

Who made the decision to cancel the community tour, the Premier or the Cabinet? Who is responsible for snubbing Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The member opposite has just once again mentioned bad investments. Of course this is important because Yukoners have to understand the facts, and the government has been very busy in ensuring Yukoners are aware of the facts. The facts are the Yukon government's investments have earned over \$19million since we took office in 2002-03 and even the member's accusations that we've lost money with respect to the asset-backed paper issue — that, to date, has earned us \$1.8-million.

The member says to Yukoners that we've lost money and we've made bad investments. Yukoners know the facts. They know the government is not hiding, because we have a lot of good things to point out to Yukoners. Our investments have earned almost \$20 million.

Question re: Social inclusion policy

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, over a year ago, Todd Hardy called for the creation of a social inclusion summit to bring people together to come up with real measures to eradicate poverty and address issues of social inclusion, like the lack of affordable housing. Since the summit, there is now an office of social inclusion and poverty reduction. There has been a survey. There is a website. A report is being commissioned to study the cost of poverty in the Yukon. The Minister of Health and Social Services even got in on the act by painting sidewalk messages about social inclusion. These messages were perplexing and rubbed some people the wrong way. The good thing about it is that people did talk, and I guess that can be viewed as a small success. We commend the minister for really getting it on social inclusion.

When the minister sits down with his Cabinet colleagues, how are his concerns about social inclusion factored into the government's decisions about projects, policy and programs?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. I also thank him for paying attention to our recent campaign in August.

I will advise the member opposite that we have a substantial number of stakeholders who are assisting us in evaluating and compiling the information and data that will be utilized by our department for data collection to ensure that when we make decisions they are being made on the information that is provided by the stakeholders and by the general public.

We look forward to compiling that information, receiving the information and having the information ready and compiled later on this fall.

Mr. Cardiff: I feel for the minister. He gets the issue, but recent developments show that his government does not and that his social inclusion is already being undermined from within Cabinet. In Whitehorse, we have a 0.6-percent vacancy rate for rental housing. The housing squeeze has meant that housing prices have gone up every year. I heard stories of a young woman, earning just over minimum wage, paying \$1,300 per month in rent. I have also heard stories of a young man who has a job, but he has to sleep in his car because he can't find an apartment.

If the minister wants to address social exclusion, he needs to deal with our deplorable housing situation. His colleague, the minister responsible for lands, announces that 144 new lots will be put on the market, either at prices that are out of reach for those most in need of affordable housing or are part of a competitive bidding process that is going to drive the prices up.

Can someone please explain how the Ingram and Takhini North land sales plans reflect government policy —

Speaker: Thank you. The minister responsible, please.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The member opposite brings up some good points in there, but I do have to point out that housing prices are up consistently across Canada. I can't speak for the United States and some of the problems down there, but they are up. While it's good in some respects — if you own property, its value has radically increased, but if you're looking for property, it has added to the problems. We're well aware of that.

I do have to point out for the member opposite that in the time that this government has been here, we have added 162 units to social housing — a 35-percent increase compared to the previous short-lived Liberal government and the previous NDP government, which provided no housing whatsoever, to my knowledge. So we are addressing that. We have put a great deal of money into programs with federal help: replacement of the Alexander Street apartments, the Korbo apartments in Dawson, the seniors residence in Watson Lake, in Faro, in Teslin and elsewhere — the Abbeyfield. So, we are working on this. It's difficult to keep up with the increase in population in the Yukon though — thanks to our very good and very hot economy.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, it was nice to hear the minister pinch-hit for the Minister of Health and Social Services, but that wasn't the answer we were looking for.

The NDP caucus wants to see poverty eradicated and barriers to people's participation eliminated. We want to see action sooner, not later. What can we do right now? We can make land available at affordable prices. We can raise social assistance rates. We can raise minimum wages. We can run a guaranteed annual income pilot project. We can hire more social workers in adult services. Those people are overworked. We can create a wet shelter pilot project. We could build a youth shelter for our youth. Things that can be done now should be done now and not be put on hold until after an election or the unveiling of a social inclusion strategy.

What real tangible things will this government do now to reduce poverty and social exclusion?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for his question. All those issues the member opposite just discussed are things that this government is working on through the social inclusion program. We are dealing with our stakeholders in all of the subjects the member opposite indicated. For us to go out and, for example, build something ahead of time — before our stakeholders actually sit down and review the information that's out there and, among themselves and the government, provide a priority list of the items that should be addressed first — that would just defeat the whole purpose of us going through and obtaining the information from the stakeholders. We intend to do that, as I said earlier. We will obtain this information and work with the stakeholders. We will have another conference with the stakeholders to identify those issues and come up with ideas that we can move forward with in the new year.

Question re: Lake Laberge road improvements

Mr. Cathers: I want to follow up with the Minister of Highways and Public Works on project commitments he made to me this spring. To begin with, I want to thank him for the turning lanes at the Deep Creek Road and Shallow Bay Road, and for the new asphalt on the north Klondike Highway. Department staff and contractors did an excellent job there and those investments are much appreciated by my constituents and me.

I would like to follow up with him on the status of another project. On April 6, he indicated that this year's budget included money to improve turning lanes at the intersection of the Alaska Highway and the north Klondike Highway. Will the minister please tell me if that work will still be done late in this year's construction season or if that project has been delayed?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would like to thank the member opposite. It is in the budget and will be done, weather permitting, in October. We will have people on the ground to do exactly that.

Mr. Cathers: I thank the minister for the answer, and it was an answer that I am very pleased to hear as well. I certainly look forward to seeing that.

Another project I would like to follow up with him on that had been scheduled was improving sight lines at the intersec-

tion where Boreal Road meets the north Klondike Highway by removing the hill on the north side of that road.

Will the minister please tell me whether that work is scheduled to be done later this year or has it been delayed until next year?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I appreciate the question, because the question has been asked in the House as of last spring. I will have to get back to the member opposite. The workplan — I know that it is a question the member has asked before, so I will commit to get back to him on the timing of removing that obstruction on that intersection.

Mr. Cathers: I thank the minister for the response. I look forward to receiving that.

Finally, I had written to the minister about a culvert across Echo Lane that had partially collapsed where that road intersects with Echo Valley Road. The response I received indicated that the culvert was being fixed this summer, but it is still in need of repair.

Will the minister please tell me whether repair of that culvert is going to be done in what remains of this year's construction season?

Hon. Mr. Lang: That's another thing — I'll have to get back to the member. I was under the impression that that work had been done, but I will get back to you to reconfirm that.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the honourable member asks his next question, I'd just like to reinforce that each and every member in this House has a right to ask questions and shouldn't be subject to hand gestures or mocking from other members of this Assembly. Each and every member of this House has a right to stand up and represent their constituents.

Question re: Whitehorse Centre by-election

Mr. Mitchell: Let's return to the government's decision to deny downtown residents a representative of their own choosing in this sitting. Residents have been telling us they will be disappointed if the government makes a decision on a by-election date based on political considerations. Unfortunately, that appears to be exactly what's happening here. Yukoners no longer trust this government and this is another reason why. One of the most basic rights a citizen of this country has is to be able to choose who they want to have representing their concerns. This government is denying residents of downtown that right.

Why does the Premier think residents of Whitehorse Centre don't deserve to have their own representative in this Chamber?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The short answer to that is the government side does not think that at all and that's why the government is doing what its doing and deliberating on what is in the best interests of not just the Whitehorse Centre residents, but Yukoners in general.

I've expressed that earlier this afternoon on the floor of the House. I don't want to be repetitive. I don't think that's constructive or productive for this Assembly, but if the member wishes, I can keep repeating the same answer over and over.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I hope we get a better answer. The Premier had plenty of time to ensure that the residents of Whitehorse Centre would be represented by someone they chose through an election. The government made a decision — probably the entire Cabinet, because they're all in it together. We know the rest of the government members have backed the Premier time and time again. Someone across the way could have said no. They could have stood up to the Premier and said, "This isn't right. People downtown should have their own voice." Instead, all the government members agreed with the Premier's decision. It's very disappointing and it's undemocratic. My question is for the Deputy Premier. Why didn't she stand up to the Premier when he decided to freeze out downtown residents?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: What's disappointing is the inferences coming from the Leader of the Official Opposition. The fact of the matter is, when something like this happens, there is a six-month timeline under all the rules and procedures that we must follow. But there are also other matters that we must make sure that we are living up to in terms of our obligations. That's why we're in this Chamber.

The fact is that we have not precluded representation for Whitehorse Centre and its citizens. We are deliberating on what that decision will be. We hope to have a decision on that matter as soon as we possibly can. The point is that we must always act in the public interest. I am not sure that that is what the Official Opposition is actually doing.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the inferences as well. I would point out to the Premier that, in the past, vacant seats have had by-elections called in as little as one month's time. Residents downtown are not buying the Premier's excuses. They are without representation and it was done deliberately by this government. It is about trust, Mr. Speaker. Residents trusted this government to do the right thing when the seat became vacant. There was plenty of time to hold a month-long campaign and ensure that the seat was filled. Instead, residents are directed to the Premier's office if they have concerns. It is just not good enough.

This sitting is supposed to go until November 9. Will the Premier commit right now that residents of Whitehorse Centre will have an MLA — one they have chosen — representing them before this sitting is done?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: As I have said, we will commit to making sure we do our due deliberation and make our decisions in the public interest. That's exactly what we are doing. We also have a responsibility — all of us in this House — to represent Yukoners regardless of where they may live.

When you look across this territory, that's exactly what is happening in today's Yukon. Every riding is being paid attention by this Yukon Party government. We're building public facilities across this territory. We're reconstructing highways and bridges. We are investing in hydro. Mr. Speaker, we are investing in our seniors in Faro, Watson Lake, Teslin and the list goes on. We truly are ensuring that all Yukoners are represented, not only in this Assembly, but by government itself.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the Minister of Environment. The last Minister of Environment was routinely overruled by the Premier when she tried to manage her department. The Premier gave direct orders through her senior officials about their submissions to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, bypassing the Environment minister. Eight months ago, the Peel land use planning commission issued a recommended plan. Since that time, the Minister of Environment has had little to say about that plan; he has let others speak for him.

Does the minister have the authority to speak about the recommended Peel land use plan or does he simply have nothing to say?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: As members are aware, it's the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, on behalf of the Government of Yukon, that is working with the affected First Nations in the Peel planning region.

The Government of Yukon and the four affected First Nations are committed to working together to establish a land use plan that will serve the Yukon now and into the future. Earlier this spring I provided members with an update as to the process that would be followed for the planning process and we're continuing to work through that process now.

Mr. Elias: Years of considerable effort have been spent in developing this plan and I understand that the government is working with other parties on a recommended plan to determine a final course of action. However, it is time for Yukoners to be given some information from their public government about what they plan to do in the Peel.

Last week, a public meeting was held in Whitehorse to gather input on the Peel plan and about 170 concerned Yukoners showed up. You know who wasn't there, Mr. Speaker? The Minister of Environment — and the public noticed.

Does the minister intend to support the rejection or modification of the recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: This government certainly recognizes that we have a responsibility to the environment, to the economy and to the future of the territory. We recognize that the planning processes outlined under the self-government agreement are an important tool to be used now and into the future. This is the government that completed the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* — the first land use plan of its kind — and we'll continue to work through the process that has been agreed to by the parties involved as how to go through this.

We certainly encourage all Yukoners to voice their comments, to contribute to the process. That was the whole purpose and intent of doing consultations on the issues that were coming forward. We appreciate hearing the comments. We're receiving the comments from public meetings, from people on the street, in writing — that's part of being in office.

We'll continue to work, as I said, through the plan that has been agreed to by all parties. The consultation phase will be completed by October. Then the Government of Yukon, in cooperation with the other affected First Nation governments, will also work together and then prepare a response to the draft plan.

Mr. Elias: The Minister of Environment remains silent. I don't expect the Minister of Environment to stand on the floor of this House and provide a final blueprint to Yukoners, but what I do expect of him is to be responsive to Yukoners on the number one environmental issue facing issue today. That's what Yukoners expect of their Environment minister and the silence is deafening.

A whole other process must be undertaken if this Yukon Party government decides to modify or reject the plan. A whole other process — that's of concern.

Does the minister really expect Yukoners to believe that the government has no idea whatsoever how it intends to proceed, after having had eight months to review the recommended plan? It seems obvious that this government hopes to get all the way to an election before having to say anything real about the Peel. Will this government commit to stating a position on the recommended Peel plan well in advance of the next election?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the member opposite's recognition that there is no final blueprint. Certainly we do not have one, because that would preclude the opportunity for the consultation, dialogue and careful consideration that has to be given to this issue. All of the parties involved in the Peel planning process have agreed to work collaboratively toward a final plan that incorporates a variety of land use activities within the Peel watershed and addresses the interests of Yukoners in a balanced approach. We know we have large issues to deal with. We are certainly working on those. We are certainly taking into consideration the thoughts and opinions of Yukoners for now and into the future.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY**Notice of opposition private members' business**

Mr. Fairclough: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, September 22, 2010.

It is Motion No. 1022, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt.

Mr. Cardiff: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, September 22. It is Motion No. 122.

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

Unanimous consent re calling Motion No. 1036

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to call Motion No. 1036, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, at this time.

Speaker: The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the Assembly to call Motion No. 1036, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike at this time. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been denied.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled September 21, 2010:

10-1-173

Notice (dated July 30, 2010) respecting the vacancy in the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre caused by the death of Todd Hardy (Speaker Staffen)

10-1-174

Vacancy in Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre: copy of letter dated August 9, 2010, from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to Commissioner Van Bibber (Speaker Staffen)

10-1-175

Conflict of Interest Commission Annual Report for the period from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 (Speaker Staffen)

10-1-176

Absence of Members from Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees: Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly (dated September 21, 2010) (Speaker Staffen)

10-1-177

Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, Standing Committee on: Fifteenth Report (dated July 6, 2010) (Taylor)

10-1-178

Public Accounts, Standing Committee on: Fifth Report (dated June 2010) (Mitchell)