

Yukon Party MLAs' indifference was shameful

I was ashamed of the Yukon Party government's behaviour Wednesday in the legislative assembly during and after the reading of Jim Tredger's Motion 275 asking for a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing.

Mr. Tredger was reading some scientific research done in Canada and throughout the world, explaining the dangers of hydraulic fracturing.

Can you believe it?

For nearly two hours, the premier and his Yukon Party's MLAs were reading books, newspapers, texting on cell-phones (even the premier), chatting in each other's ears and paying attention to everything except what they are *paid* for.

It seems to me that they were not conscious of the importance of the scientific information that was explained to the house and completely unaware of what it means to deal with Big Oil.

We clearly lost the premier's attention. He seemingly had more important things to do than to hear information about the amount of water being used in just one frack well and what that can do to our life-sustain-

ing water.

I wonder where he went for the rest of the day without addressing the house.

Does he or his wife, who he introduced in the gallery, even recognize – or, more worrisome – actually *believe* that climate change is a growing problem of major significance?

I am happy that Darius Elias, who represents the Vuntut Gwitchin, woke them up with his excellent and passionate speech, and could bring points that neither side had seen.

He described how splendid northern Yukon has been for millennia, and how his ancestors struggled to keep it that way.

The premier was also not present to hear that outstanding speech of Darius, who spoke from the heart about his ancestors.

Neither was he there to hear what his minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Brad Cathers, had to say because he is possibly the one who scripted the text.

My opinion is that the strategy of amending Motion 275 was based in his mind on the

idea that we don't need a moratorium, as there is sufficient consultation, such as:

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Yukon Party has a letter signed between the Yukon Conservation Society and Northern Cross and engaged them in some process of dialogue; and

- they also have and will continue to consult the Vuntut Gwitchin.

It looks like synergy strategy in action. It means there have been players in the background who have been working for this to happen for a long time so the oil and gas could move in easily with few regulations.

When it comes to the danger or even possibility of hydraulic fracturing, they will offer a so-called open dialogue on the issue, with experienced PR people twisting people's words to pre-determine what Cathers called "outcome science".

Now that government controls one First Nations community and one conservation

group, it wanted to amend Motion 275 with the goal of creating the illusion of community consultation.

I feel sorry for Darius and the Vuntut Gwitchin, who will certainly suffer sooner than others.

What can happen under the pretense of community engagement, regulations and so-called "dialogue" is that the ancestral lands will be destroyed.

Promises to abide by regulations that have no teeth to begin with is what the oil and gas industries are known for. Once they have the foot in the door, all these things are idle talk, and its petroleum wild west.

I am also sorry for the conservation society, which has been fooled into a trap.

The Yukon Party is using it as their fig leave to avoid real public consultation and to present a false amendment to Motion 275.

Such a situation is not good for the YCS, which wanted to do "good".

It put stress on its staff as now, one or two of them will

pretend or have to represent the whole Yukon.

This synergy wants to make one forget there is a petition signed by 1,806 people who demand a *ban* on fracking, and there is a real need of public consultation.

That is why many jurisdictions have been understanding this (fenced-in situation) and have decided on a moratorium or even ban.

So far, my understanding is that the Yukon Party MLAs in the house have been manipulated.

And to hear the Liberal's opinion on the amendment, there are big doubts there too. They cannot say what they think without losing their jobs.

How can family people like them just sit there and allow Motion 275 to be devalued by an amendment aimed at diminishing our democratic rights?

Our water is at risk, and without it, we cannot survive.

Jacqueline Vigneux
Whitehorse

P.S. I wonder when there will be a French translator at the gallery.