

mailbox...your letters

Don't be swayed by NDP hypocrisy

Re: Hypocrisy rears ugly head (Todd Whitcombe column, May 4).

If we are going to talk about hypocrisy, why don't we actually talk about government policy, not some crap that the leaders don't ever know about until after the fact?

Why don't we talk about the NDP granting permits to dam rivers while they were in power and now condemning the practice? The NDP would like to point out government overspending on projects like the convention centre; let's just forget about the fast ferries.

Carole James was in Prince George to talk about mismanagement of our forests. I witnessed the longest line of unemployed logging truck drivers ever assembled converging to protest the NDP's forestry practices the last time they were in power, and that was when the world's economy was strong.

Whitcombe wants to talk about two ministers, both of whom resigned. I think he's grasping at straws. I have a question for Whitcombe: Once the NDP forces businesses that employ people out of B.C., there will be less people employed. Less people em-

ployed means less tax collected. Less tax collected means less money to spend on health care, decreasing child poverty, looking after our senior citizens, and less money to pay for education.

I would really like to know why so many teachers (like Whitcombe) are pro-NDP. You would think that they were educated enough to know that if we obliterate our workforce by overtaxing businesses that employ people and crippling free enterprise projects like the run of the river, there will not be enough tax money to pay for all the things we need to fix.

The government can't just print more you know, they have to collect it if they want to spend it. I think all the socialists would like to see B.C.'s debt try to keep up with the U.S.'s.

Don't you guys remember when we could not afford to get doctors to come to B.C.? It has not been that long, about eight years ago, just after the last time we let the socialists run the Animal Farm.

Larry Ochitwa
Prince George

Liberals manipulating the truth

Gordon Campbell's B.C. Liberals manipulate the truth to complete radical reforms of important issues facing British Columbia.

B.C. supported the Winter Olympics when they were first announced, but no one gave the Liberals the mandate to spend \$6 billion to host the Games.

Why did the Liberals not warn the taxpayer that something like Olympic security would cost more than \$1 billion? How can Vancouver's new convention centre really be a great billion-dollar investment, as the Liberals claim, when the last conference building that was built only 22 years ago was an overwhelming failure because of Vancouver's satellite location?

What is the reality about self-efficiency with green electric hydro, without costing

the taxpayer?

It is hard to believe that hydro self-sufficiency can only happen by stopping the growth of B.C. Hydro and by selling the water rights to hundreds of B.C.'s world-class rivers to private investors. These privately-owned mini dams are certainly not green and hydro ratepayers will pay dearly in the years ahead.

The Liberals introduced a new carbon green incentive tax on gas and at the same time, wildly sold oil and gas rights to the petroleum industry

The B.C. Liberals promised openness and financial prudence and delivered excessive spending and the hidden agenda.

Mark Clements
Prince George

Let's end the same old, same old voting system

We have an opportunity to modernize our political system and make our votes count. I think it's the most significant democratic opportunity that will happen in my lifetime.

The people of B.C. have a chance to become leaders in redefining what it means to be citizens in a democratic society. I think we should embrace this new system and try it. If it has problems, they can be adjusted. If we say no, we are stuck with a system that seems to serve the few, but is unfair to a large number of citizens in an increasingly diverse populace.

In 2004 the provincial (Liberal) government did an amazing thing when it established the independent Citizens' Assembly: 160 ordinary people spent 11 months learning and listening to the people of B.C. They studied a wide variety of systems.

They learned from political scientists and they also travelled the province and listened

to the people in public meetings. I went to some of these meetings and there were big crowds.

The Citizens' Assembly members constructed and deconstructed different systems. They ran mock elections and studied the results following a scientific method. Ninety-five per cent of the assembly members chose STV as the best system. This process was paid for with our tax dollars.

Why are we afraid of it? Here is an observation about human behaviour. Tell someone 100 good things about something. We'll say, "Yeah, yeah, I know that, I heard that."

Tell someone one bad thing. Guess what sticks in our minds?

The one bad thing sticks, and seems to take on the highest value in our judgment. Let's be brave. Let's try the new system.

Vince DeCoste
Prince George

Broken promises

Gordon Campbell's slick Vancouver-centred Liberals, or the NDP with a damaged-goods label because of the problems when last in power, or the wacky Greens?

The Liberals are supposed to be a shoo-in to win this election. We hear Campbell repeatedly on TV telling us what good things the Liberals have done and will do for education, health care and forestry.

But what will he really do if he gets a majority? He assured us nine years ago that he would never sell B.C. Rail, and then he sold it immediately when he got into power. He said he would create jobs then had new ferries built in Germany.

We are told our forests will be tended and new trees planted, but we see no sign of this. One-hundred million fewer trees will be planted this year than in previous years and plans are for planting even fewer next year.

There is a need to plant tens of thousands of hectares where young forests have been wiped out by the beetles. Instead, Campbell has taken money given by Ottawa to help with the beetle problem to pay for things that have nothing to do with forestry, such as 18 million for the new Fraser Bridge and

money for airports and roads - things that should have been paid for out of general revenue.

It is no wonder that Ottawa now has suspended further payments of the \$1 billion over 10 years promised to help with the beetle problem.

So what about Carole James and the NDP? We do not see her much on TV, but she says no to Campbell's gas tax, which will be seven cents a litre if he has his way. I am against this tax. It costs us enough to drive without this cost, and there is no real evidence that humans have much effect on the world temperature, which is in a cooling trend.

If only we had workable referenda laws, then the people could have a say about some of these issues to the betterment of our province. Of course, Campbell promised us a workable referenda law nine years ago and then forgot about this as soon as he trotted into power.

The above are issues that must be considered when voting.

Svend Serup
Prince George

Voting for STV leads to 'wag the dog' politics

One of the biggest problems with STV is that sooner or later it leads to "wag the dog" politics. In wag the dog politics, small splinter parties are able to hold larger parties hostage and thereby force through policies that only a small minority of citizens want.

Israel is an excellent example of wag the dog politics. Small religious parties force their programs on larger parties in return for support in crucial confidence votes. This has been one of the main stumbling blocks to peace in the Middle East and makes it difficult for governments to pass necessary legislation if it is opposed by small minorities. These splinter parties sometimes play off one major party against another to get their way, in effect, selling their parliamentary votes to the highest bidder. This leads to ongoing instability - and sometimes paralysis - in government. Consequently, the whole democratic process is distorted as small minorities foist their policies on the majority. Is this what we want in B.C.?

STV will also encourage the formation of splinter parties and could even lead to the formation of parties on ethnic and religious lines. Instead of uniting British Columbians, this would divide and polarize them even more than they are now. This does not bode well for the future of our politics or social fabric.

STV may be a good recipe, but what looks good in a recipe book doesn't always work out well in the kitchen.

Ian Kluge
Prince George

Pop cans stolen

I just want to thank the person or persons who stole three garbage bags full of pop cans from my yard.

How does it feel to have stolen from a five-year-old?

Gina Harris
Prince George

Electing NDP sends wrong message

I am writing because of my concern regarding the upcoming election.

About four years ago I was in Hamilton, Ont., and met with a businessman who had many investments throughout Ontario and Alberta. I asked him if he ever considered investing in B.C. His answer: "I have considered it many times; unfortunately you have the habit of putting in a socialistic government every few years."

I have lived in Prince George all my life and am proud of B.C. It disturbed me to see how other parts of Canada viewed us.

When the NDP was last elected, unemployment skyrocketed. We only had to travel a short distance to Alberta to see the difference a government could make. While we were mired in our own recession, other parts of Canada were booming.

Why would the voters of B.C. think of going backward by putting the NDP back in power? I look though the NDP slate of candidates and see absolutely no business backgrounds whatsoever. And we think they could run a province?

What a horrible message we would send to the businessmen who could create a multitude of jobs we need during this global recession.

Byron Roberts
Prince George

**Smart Growth on the Ground - Design Charrette**

What will *your downtown* look like in 2035?

Smart Growth on the Ground is hosting a design charrette May 12th - 15th. This is an exciting, intense design event where interested community members and professionals come together to create land use, transportation, and urban design plans & policies. The goal is to produce a future vision and plan for a sustainable and vibrant downtown Prince George. Please join us and provide your input:

Wednesday, May 13th, 6:00pm - 8:30pm
Public Gallery: See early evolving plans and concepts. Provide your feedback and let the team know if they're on the right track.

Friday, May 15th, 6:00pm - 8:30pm
Public Presentation: Review final ideas and concepts for the downtown area created at the charrette. Provide your feedback.

Both events are free and will be held in the Ballroom of the **Ramada Prince George** (444 George Street). Refreshments will be served.

For more information contact:
Shana Johnstone shana@smartgrowth.bc.ca

www.sgog.bc.ca

**Northern Development INITIATIVE TRUST**

SGOG would like to thank our supporters: BC Heritage Branch, BC Hydro Powersmart, CMHC, Green Streets Canada, Ministry of Environment, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Natural Resources Canada, Prince George Community Foundation, Ramada Prince George, the Real Estate Institute of BC, Transport Canada, and Vancity

**Please try to walk, cycle or bus to the events.*

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**RBC® Shred-A-Thon™**

Saturday May 9th
11:00-3:00

at the College Height Branch
6111 Southridge Ave, Prince George

BBQ with proceeds going to the Hospice Society
Join us for lunch with all donations going to this very worthwhile cause!

Protect yourself from identity theft at the RBC® Shred-A-Thon™ with DOCU-SHRED

Enjoy some peace of mind courtesy of RBC. If you have sensitive documents you no longer need that contain your private details, then bring them with you. The following can all be disposed of securely, in a matter of minutes, while you wait:

- Pre-approved credit card applications
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plus

Learn more about identity theft and what else you can do to prevent it from happening to you.

Fun Activities for the Kids

MEET LOCAL RBC OLYMPIAN CHRIS WONG!!!

Freestyle skier Chris Wong, 2006 Olympian, from Prince George will be in attendance. Chris is working towards his goal to qualify to compete in the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver and hopes to win a medal for Canada. Come out at 12pm, meet Chris and cheer him on!

Grand Prize Draw 2:30pm \$200 Esso Gas Card



ARRIVE EARLY TO ENTER DRAWS! Prizes drawn every 10 minutes starting at 12pm (safety deposit boxes for one year; \$25.00 Visa giftcards and much more!)

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