

Claire Trevena
North Island
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4
Phone (250) 387-3655
Fax (250) 387-4680



Constituency Office
908 Island Hwy
Campbell River BC V9W 2C3
Phone (250) 287-5100
Fax (250) 287-5105

December 8, 2008

Honourable Michael de Jong
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Room 310, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Honourable Tom Christensen
Minister of Children and Family Development
Room 347, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Honourable George Abbott
Minister of Health Services
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Ministers de Jong, Christensen, and Abbott:

In this year's Speech from the Throne, the premier made a specific important commitment to act according to Jordan's Principle.

Jordan's Principle is about taking care of First Nations children first and worrying about who's responsibility it is later. That's why we pushed the government to adopt this principle, and celebrated when it was included in the Throne Speech.

When we raised the issue of third world housing conditions in the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation near Port Hardy in question period we expected this government to respond in a manner appropriate to the magnitude of the problem and the devastating effects it is having on children.

However, the Minister of Children and Families refused to pledge immediate action to remediate the situation.

Mould-infested, overcrowded, substandard housing is putting children at risk in many First Nations communities.

The premier is out of touch and arrogant to believe that hollow Throne Speech slogans are a substitute for real action to help First Nations families.

By continuing to ignore the dire health risks facing children on many reserves in this province you are perpetuating the federal-provincial jurisdiction debate which hurts children, their families, and their communities. It is also exactly what Jordan's principle is supposed to address.

Minister Christensen ducked responsibility for this issue, saying it was the responsibility of the federal government.

Minister de Jong, as Minister for Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, how are you and your Ministry showing your commitment to this principle?

Minister Abbott, as Health Minister what have you done to speak up for these vulnerable children and to take responsibility for protecting their health?

Your government continues to waste millions of dollars on ads telling us all how wonderful things are in this province while failing to protect those who need it the most.

It is time to reassess your priorities and put action to the words of the Throne Speech – to enact Jordan's Principle and put children first.

Sincerely,



Claire Trevena, MLA
North Island
Opposition Critic for Child Care, Early Childhood Development, & Women's Issues



Scott Fraser, MLA
Alberni Qualicum
Opposition Critic for Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation



Nicholas Simons, MLA
Powell River Sunshine Coast
Opposition Critic for Children & Family Development

cc: Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Band