

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

September 10, 2007

The Editor
The Globe and Mail

With all due respect to Mr. Spector, the position of our government on free votes has been consistent for over six years and should not come as a surprise.

As stated in the July 24, 2001 Throne Speech, “Beginning this session, my government will allow free votes in the Legislature on all matters not specifically identified as confidence votes. Fundamental matters of confidence are votes on the throne speech, the budget and laws giving force to my government's election commitments. All MLAs deserve the opportunity to help define the solutions to the problems we all confront.”

I also note that opposition and government MLAs were permitted a free vote on the Nisga'a Treaty in 1999.

Under the leadership of Premier Gordon Campbell, B.C. is leading the country in democratic reform. We created the Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform, doubled the length of question period to 30 minutes, appointed a member of the Opposition as Deputy Speaker, set fixed election dates, and allotted more time for private members' bills.

Today citizens expect their MLAs to not only represent their party's interests but also the wishes of their constituents who elect them.

Honourable Michael de Jong
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and Government House Leader