
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
3 Nations

Premier travels to Lower Post to meet with First Nations, visits former residential school

VICTORIA – Representatives from the Taku River Tlingit, Tahltan and Kaska Dena First Nations met with Premier John Horgan on Oct. 1, 2019, in Lower Post to have important community conversations about the next steps on reconciliation.

These meetings in Lower Post were part of a 2018 commitment to visit the community along with the 3 Nations and discuss the next steps toward working with the Nations, the Province and the Government of Canada to tear down and replace the former residential school building in Lower Post.

"For generations, the former residential school has brought so much pain to the community in Lower Post. It is unacceptable that this building remains today as the community's administration building," said Premier Horgan. "I was honoured to be invited to hear the concerns and possible solutions from the Nations and front-line workers, and our government will work with federal government partners to replace the building with something that we can all be proud of."

Premier Horgan held private meetings with each of the Taku River Tlingit, Tahltan and Kaska Dena First Nations, which together form the 3 Nations Society. As the 3 Nations, the Tahltan, Kaska and Taku River Tlingit are leading a new, innovative approach to social policy, specifically around child and family well-being. Reconciliation is a journey that respects the rights, interests and circumstances of Indigenous peoples to determine their own futures.

"I'm so thankful that the Premier hasn't forgotten about the little communities in the North, and we all thank him for coming to visit our community of Lower Post," said Deputy Chief Fred Lutz Sr.

"The Premier's acknowledgement of our past and his commitment to the future of our children left our community feeling hopeful that together with this provincial government, we can finally change the course of history," said Danny Case, Chair of Kaska Dena Council.

The B.C. government is working with Indigenous partners in a variety of ways to support self-determining communities. The Province is also investing in community-based language revitalization, providing more affordable housing for Indigenous families, and making sure that the care of children remains in Indigenous communities.

"This was the first time a premier has come to the far north and demonstrated such willingness to learn and share powerful moments with us as leaders and communities," said Chad Norman Day, President of the Tahltan Central Government. "To walk the halls of that former residential school, and to hear from the former students themselves, is very difficult. To do so walking side

by side as 3 Nation leaders with the Premier shows how far we've all come. This was a powerful day, but there is work to do, and we will be relentless until that building is torn down and there is a new building in its place that symbolizes the words of reconciliation we heard today."

"I'd like to express my gratitude to the Premier for meeting with the 3 Nations as a whole, as well as the individual Nations. It was important to have a first-hand account of what is really going on in our communities and look towards the future, together, " said John D. Ward, Spokesperson, Taku River Tlingit First Nation.

This fall, British Columbia will become the first province to introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into law. Implementing the principles of the Declaration, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, is central to the B.C. government's commitment to meaningful reconciliation, as well as acknowledging that words must translate into positive and tangible change for Indigenous communities and the province.

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