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[CBC News](#)

N.L. Finance Minister Jerome Kennedy is accusing the Liberal Opposition leader of spreading misinformation, and Yvonne Jones is accusing him of repeating her comments from a closed-door meeting of the house of assembly management commission.

A war of words erupted between Kennedy and Jones on Wednesday after Kennedy called a news conference and accused her of spreading misinformation when she criticized government's handling of the suspension of the province's child and youth advocate, Darlene Neville, on Aug. 21.

The province said Neville's handling of an investigation into the deaths of two children under the care of child protection in Labrador in June of last year was the tipping point in suspending her. However, Jones said Tuesday that government got it wrong, and Neville should still be on the job.

According to Kennedy, Jones is playing politics with a serious issue.

"And essentially undermined or further undermined, the confidence of the people of this province in ... the acting child and youth advocate himself and the office," he said.

He also said while Darlene Neville is suspended, the work of the office will continue under Judge John Rorke.

"As early as today, Ms. Jones questioned the integrity of Judge Rorke, an individual who was a judge for 18 years," he said.

Jones was quick to respond and fire back at Kennedy for repeating comments to reporters that she made in a confidential meeting of the legislature's management commission that morning. She said it wasn't Rorke's integrity she questioned, but Rorke calling the clerk of the house of assembly to complain about her.

"He has a responsibility to show some integrity to the position, and pick up the phone and call me himself. Not [to] send someone else to be a messenger to stifle me in my role as a leader of the Opposition," she said.

"I will not be stifled on this issue and I will not be shut down by some talking head in government like Jerome Kennedy."

Calls for public disclosure

Jones said there should be no more secret meetings of the management commission on the issue and that the whole story on this dragged-out controversy should be made public for once and for all.

On Tuesday, Jones criticized the province's suspension of Neville. She said she feared that an investigation into the deaths of two children in Labrador in 2008 wouldn't happen, because staff in the office of the child and youth advocate who had decided not to investigate and hadn't informed Neville

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that referral had been made were still on the job.

Instead of removing Neville, Jones said the province should have removed whoever decided not to proceed with the investigation. A referral was made to the child and youth advocate's office in January concerning the deaths of five-year-old Charlotte Robinson Jacque and 13-year-old Matthew Gear Allen.

In his role as Treasury Board president, Kennedy announced Aug. 21 that Neville had been suspended with pay, and a former provincial court judge, John Rorke, had been appointed interim advocate.

Kennedy said the Speaker of the house of assembly had serious concerns about the child and youth advocate's office dating back to 2008. However, he said the tipping point was Neville's public announcement on Aug. 7 that she would investigate the Labrador case her own staff had dismissed.

Neville has been suspended with pay. A news release issued at the time didn't say how long the suspension would last.