

December 18, 2007

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

I write to bring to your attention commentary made by your Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Loyola Hearn in the press yesterday and today.

To quote from today's Telegram: *"It's something like demanding Santa give you all you want, when all you have to do, instead of standing on the chair and shouting up the chimney, 'Santa, I want everything or I'll light the fire' (is) sit down and write a letter and make sure it gets to the right people, and you might get what you want," Hearn said. "That's providing you've been a good boy – if you haven't been a good boy then it depends." Hearn said he hasn't seen any written list of demands or options from Williams, adding there isn't anything that comes to this province "Not a project, not a cent," that doesn't go through his office.*

As you know, you and I had a very cordial and productive meeting on November 30, 2007, where we discussed several options to address the outstanding issues between our two governments. I immediately wrote to your office to outline our proposals, and I continue to await your response.

In that meeting, we agreed to disagree on issues; however, we also agreed that it was in everyone's best interest if we find a resolution to our issues. Our government has made a sincere effort to do so, both through my letters to you and by indicating so publicly. The recent public comments being made by Minister Hearn are extremely disappointing and counterproductive, not to mention inaccurate. These, in conjunction with public comments by your Atlantic Caucus Chair, Fabian Manning as outlined in my most recent letter to you dated December 11, 2007, lead us to believe that the efforts of the Federal Government are less than sincere. I can only hope that comments from both of these individuals are being made without your knowledge and consent, as they are directly contrary to the spirit in which we agreed to work after our November meeting.

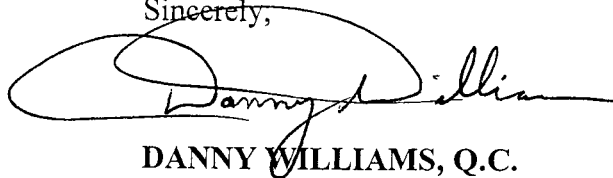
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block, 80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Most startling to me, are Minister Hearn's assertions that the province has not provided a written list of options to your government. Clearly, this is not the case as evidenced by my letter of December 3, 2007. I find it very disturbing that a Federal Minister would knowingly mislead the public in this way. This most certainly does not serve the people of our province or the Canadian public in general.

Unfortunately, the public commentary by Minister Hearn and Fabian Manning has left with me with no choice but to respond publicly. While I will continue to do everything possible to find a positive resolution for the people of the province, I simply cannot sit back quietly and allow their negativity and inaccuracies to go unaddressed.

I would ask that you clarify your government's position at the earliest opportunity. Your prompt attention to this matter of great importance to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danny Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

DANNY WILLIAMS, Q.C.
Premier