

FAXED
03/01/08

January 3, 2008

Office of the Premier

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Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Happy New Year to you and your loved ones. I trust you had some time to relax and enjoy the holiday season.

I am writing today to bring to your attention the comments of your Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Loyola Hearn over the Christmas break. Frankly, I am disappointed to have to write on this matter as both you and I should be focused on much more important issues – not the least of which is moving forward with matters of importance to the people of my province and indeed the country as a whole. However, his remarks have created much controversy and concern in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In an interview with the CBC, Minister Hearn indicated that he has “ears and eyes” inside of my Cabinet, my Caucus and my office directly. He claimed to have briefings on our government business and to know more of our government’s business than I do as Premier, saying “That’s why we can always be a step ahead of him”. These remarks have offended all of our Cabinet, Caucus and staff by insulting their integrity. The substance of the claims does not concern me, as I have every confidence in the integrity of these individuals. However, the principle of his comments is very troubling. For a Federal Minister to openly support and encourage the very significant principle of breaking Cabinet and Caucus confidentiality is very serious indeed. I am confident that you would never support the idea of the breaking of these confidences, as you know personally the very serious ramifications of such actions not only in terms of governing but also in terms of the fundamental principles of democracy.

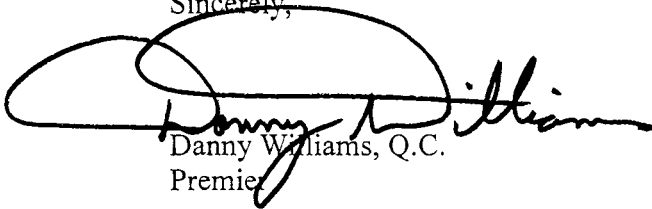
In addition to the underlying message that such comments send to the public, these remarks are coming at a time when our government is making a very sincere and genuine attempt to resolve the outstanding issues between our governments. The continued rhetoric and inflammatory statements from Minister Hearn does absolutely nothing to further this cause. Indeed, such actions actually motivate the people of this province to feel less confidence and faith in the Federal Government. This is something that is unnecessary and damaging during this time. I would appreciate it if you would confirm for me that these comments are neither condoned nor encouraged by you or your office.

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

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I thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing back from you prior to January 11 regarding the options I presented to you in our meeting of November 30, 2007. As an aside, I am confident of a constructive FMM next week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danny Williams". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the beginning and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Danny Williams, Q.C.
Premier