



Mr. Harper, we showed you our finances, now show us yours

By Isadore Day, Wiindawtegowinini, Ontario Regional Chief

Dear Mr. Harper,

Recently, my community filed our financial report and I realized something then: The Party of Small Government creates a lot of red tape trying to make sure we're transparent, but they've never been transparent to us.

So, I challenge you Mr. Harper: We showed you our finances, now show us yours.

The last 11 years has been death by micromanagement for First Nations. As a Chief, I spent as much time filling out federal reports as I spent administering Treaty dollars. Requests for support have been buried in bureaucracy; minor rounding errors have become long-term headaches holding up much needed funds for education and housing.

In the name of transparency, Mr. Harper, you created a mindless First Nation bureaucratic machine you campaigned against for your federal system. Sounds like another one of your double standards!

I worked with First Nations officials on a proposal to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. We wanted to launch a program with top industry experts on financial literacy and the energy sector. After filling out detailed timelines and carefully accounting for every dollar, the proposal sat in the Minister's Office for four months. Ultimately, the Minister's Office denied it because they didn't believe it was feasible.

I'm not sure why it wasn't feasible. Maybe it's because the Minister's Office didn't think Canada's top engineering companies have sufficient internal capacity. Maybe it's because they or Mr. Harper doubted First Nations had any capacity left after 80% reductions in federal funding. Be transparent with us - which reason is it?

This week, I learned more about how Treaty money paid corrupt staff in the Prime Minister's Office to undermine democracy. I'm sure Mr. Duffy wasn't the only expense you buried. What other expenses are hidden in the accounting books and paid by the Conservative war chest?

Two weeks ago, Mr. Harper you launched the longest election in Canadian history. It will cost Canadians at least \$85 million more than the 2011 election. That's money that could

have gone to First Nations homes or to combat third-world conditions on reserves – money that was allocated last year but never spent. It appears you're accounting for the political campaign efforts you need to quell the concerns and attention to scandal, yet you refuse to account for the the impacted lives in remote First Nations that are impacted by perpetual boil water advisories.

Over the last five years, INAC held back over \$1 billion in funding for critical infrastructure for First Nations. The government says they spent it somewhere, at some point. Perhaps it funded the Universal Child Care Benefit?

In 2012-13, Mr. Harper, you spent \$106 million litigating against communities in 2012-13. There is no report on the Treasury Board website analysing whether the money could have been spent better. No one disclosed which budget envelope paid legal fights against mothers and children trying to access medical care.

With an election well under way, I think it's time that the Conservatives let First Nations know how they spent their money. Now is a great time to clarify what happened to all the money promised to implement our Treaties that was never spent.

Mr. Harper, we were transparent with you. Will you be transparent with us?