

Mark Vandermaas, CANACE

From: Barrett, Toby [toby.barrett@pc.ola.org]
Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2008 9:30 AM
Subject: Caledonia email update

Re: 'Caledonia Cover-Up' continued and Cayuga

Toby here,

Yesterday Bob Runciman continued to hammer the Liberals on the 'Caledonia Cover-Up'. I also asked questions about builder Mike Corrado's site in Cayuga. I have attached the final Hansard transcript.

The feedback to these updates over the past week or so has been invaluable and I thank you for your responses.

Toby

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Attorney General. It's regarding the letter sent by Six Nations Council Chief William Montour clearly suggesting that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs intervened in an ongoing police investigation and prevented the laying of charges. That's potentially a serious criminal offence. Minister, given the clear and serious implications of what Chief Montour is saying in his letter-and you were copied on that letter as well-what did you do about it?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's right, I was copied on the letter.

The issue in the letter that the Leader of the Opposition makes reference to is answered directly by OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino in his letter to the Dunnville Chronicle, which the member should have had a copy of before raising the question. He says, "At no time during this event, or in relation to any police operation, did anyone in government or elsewhere tell the OPP to stand down or direct the operations of the OPP."

That thoroughly and completely addresses the issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I would suggest that's an abdication of responsibility on the part of the Attorney General. Certainly we appreciate Commissioner Fantino's perspective, but what about Chief Montour's perspective? You're going to completely ignore it.

Given the seriousness of Chief Montour's comments and his request for further interventions with the police, can the Attorney General explain why he didn't bother to correct them? These are written criminal allegations made by a credible individual. Now you're getting up and the minister's getting up later and saying, "Well, now we're going to do it," after the letter became public. Why didn't you act? It was your responsibility to react.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm not sure what part of Commissioner Fantino's letter you disagree with, so let me continue.

In the third paragraph: "The decisions that resulted in the peaceful resolution of the road closure in Caledonia were based on ongoing dialogue between the OPP and Six Nations leadership and on the OPP commitment to resolve such situations in the safest manner possible."

Caledonia email update

I'll continue on with the next paragraph: "The suggestion that political interference played a part is regrettable and untrue. OPP operational decisions are the purview of the police officers in charge. Decision-making is influenced by factors related to the event and the overall need to maintain order and preserve the peace. This is fully in keeping with the police role and authority."

This government does not direct the police. We do not direct the OPP. The commissioner is on the record. What part of that letter do you disagree with? Stand up and be counted.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I don't know who you're performing for, but it's certainly not the people of the province in terms of upholding the rule of law.

Chief Montour is a respected, credible individual. He's not someone who would fabricate a story about a minister of the crown interfering with police. He has nothing to gain, but this Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has a lot to lose even if he left the impression with Chief Montour that he was influencing police decisions.

Again, these are serious allegations coming from a credible source. They merit a full investigation, and I ask the Attorney General to take off his political hat, do the right thing, stop protecting a colleague and call in the RCMP.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We have the commissioner of the OPP, who has not only called in but written in to the Chronicle on the very-

Mr. Peter Kormos: You're in the back pocket of the police.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the member for Welland to withdraw the comment that he directed to the Attorney General, please.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: He has written on the very issue that is raised by the Leader of the Opposition, making clear the suggestion political interference played a part is regrettable and untrue. It is direct, it is clear, it is unequivocal.

We have lots of letters that are received in lots of places over lots of issues. You've heard from the ministers involved. Now you've heard from the OPP commissioner. I say to you again, what part of the OPP commissioner's direct response to the direct suggestion do you disagree with?

Interjection: Rumours.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's right. You want me to act on rumours.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Mike Corrado is the owner of a multi-residential site in Cayuga and he met with HDI several weeks ago, along with municipal and provincial officials. HDI requested this meeting after protesters blocked access to Mr. Corrado's land. In addition to a demand for a \$3,000 application fee, they also demanded Mr. Corrado transfer title to his property to HDI and lease it back from them for the next 50 years.

You're a lawyer; you're the government. Is this not illegal? Is this not extortion? More specifically, Minister, are home builders now required to transfer title of their lands to Six Nations?

Hon. Michael Bryant: No.

5/16/2008

Mr. Toby Barrett: Mr. Corrado would really appreciate a more fulsome answer. We've spoken with Mr. Corrado this morning. The blockades at his construction site are still up in spite of your "no." He's been told by Ruby Montour that the protesters will not leave and they'll never leave until he complies with HDI's demands, meaning transferring title of his land.

Again, Minister, is this not blackmail? Are deeds worth nothing? How many thousands of jobs are going to be lost; how many millions of dollars have to be spent on policing? The OPP have told Mr. Corrado they will merely act as peacekeepers; they will not intervene. My question is, do you agree with Mr. Corrado asking the OPP to lay criminal charges, asking the OPP to enforce the Criminal Code of Canada?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I spoke to the mayor of Brantford to discuss the municipal council's great frustration, the community's great frustration and the developer's great frustration with respect to what is taking place. A lot of efforts have been made to try and bring people together, to get them off of the streets and on to the negotiating table.

As the mayor said to me yesterday, at the heart of this are, in fact, unresolved claims, primarily along the Haldimand tract. Both the mayor and I agreed that it really is time for the federal government to set a deadline and say, "We're going to put all of our resources into resolving these claims. It is through that, that we are going to achieve justice." So I certainly want to add my voice to the mayor's and the local members when we say to the federal government, with respect to this 200-year-old dispute, that it is time for them to set a deadline and set it now.

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