

Bob Speller Statement

Caledonia:

The Land Claims dispute in Caledonia has been dragging on for far too long. Five long years. Our present Member of Parliament has adopted a strategy of completely dodging the issue.

Total silence. We all see the signs in Caledonia Where is Diane?

In fact, the only real action the Conservative government has taken with respect to the Caledonia issue was to install Julian Fantino, the former OPP Commissioner, into the Conservative cabinet, in effect endorsing his approach to policing in Caledonia.

What was our present Member of Parliament's response? She said that issues involving native affairs were not her responsibility.

I am putting forward a solution based upon my many meetings with the residents of this community, and publicly endorsed by my Leader. My plan to solve the Land Claims issue includes the appointment of a panel of three judges, one appointed by Haldimand County, and put them to work with a firm deadline.

I will also have our Government send the issue of valuation in Land Claims, which is why so many are stalled, directly to the Supreme Court of Canada.

I will show the leadership needed and take the necessary steps to solve this situation once and for all.

Illegal Tobacco Trade

We all know that illegal smoke shacks have popped up around Caledonia, but no one is doing anything about it.

They are unsightly and cause traffic problems. Taxes are not being charged making the price of cigarettes much lower than tobacco sold in regular stores.

Tobacco sales from these illegal smoke shacks deprive the federal and provincial governments of millions of dollars in needed tax revenue that could be used for important programs that we all benefit from, like health care.

Illegal smoke shacks hurt legitimate store proprietors who are following the law.

Non-native customers of these illegal smoke shacks are targeted by police and charged as they drive away while the smoke shacks are allowed to continue operating with impunity.

Illegal smoke shacks fail to comply with Ontario and federal government tobacco control laws and appear to do virtually no age testing to keep tobacco from children. Young people are getting access to cheap cigarettes and will suffer serious health problems as a result. The Conservative government has put the health of our young people at risk.

Contraband tobacco is increasingly being sold on and off the reserve. Criminal elements including organized crime are profiting from the contraband tobacco trade.

Our present Member of Parliament and the Conservative government has failed to act or really do anything at all. Criminal elements are being allowed to exploit and profit from this situation.

Enough is enough

In office, I will take action to ensure that we start getting leadership from the federal government to deal with illegal tobacco sales. The federal government and federal law enforcement authorities need to take action and coordinate law enforcement from all levels of government against these illegal smoke shacks. The contraband tobacco trade is subject to complex jurisdictional issues, cross border issues, and constitutional issues that can only be handled by the federal government.

I will exercise the necessary leadership to provide federal law enforcement authorities the resources they need to co-ordinate an end to illegal smoke shacks and the contraband tobacco trade. These illegal smoke shacks have got to go. The contraband tobacco trade has to be stopped.

Our present Member of Parliament's approach is to ignore the entire issue. She has been completely silent on the issue.

I will never be silent on issues that affect our community in such a profound way.

The Rule of Law

There is nothing more important than the rule of law.

We have troops in Afghanistan and our air force flying in the skies of Libya to ensure those countries have the rule of law.

You can't have democracy without the rule of law.

We all know what happened in Caledonia. The rule of law took a hit.

Policing in Caledonia was all over the map. Sometimes the law was enforced and sometimes it was not. Anyone who has read Christie Blatchford's book as I have knows what happened. It is not acceptable.

Our present Member of Parliament is getting away with ignoring the situation. In fact, the only action taken by the Conservative government was to put Julian Fantino in cabinet. In effect, the Conservatives endorsed his approach to policing.

If the Conservatives are returned to office how long before Julian Fantino is made public safety minister responsible for all federal law enforcement including the RCMP.

That is not acceptable. A vote for Finley is a vote for Fantino. We need to stop the Conservatives.

Property Rights

We all know that property rights took a hit in Caledonia. We need to have the rule of law upheld and we need law and order in Caledonia just like we do everywhere in Canada.

Our present Member of Parliament and her Conservative government have taken a very deliberate approach of dodging this issue. So far they are getting away with it.

In office I will show the leadership needed so that the federal government gets involved and ends the lawlessness and helps solve the Caledonia situation once and for all.

Helping victims of crime

I have read Christie Blatchford's book and there is no more searing indictment of what happened to innocent victims in Caledonia.

People who have suffered violence need to be compensated, plain and simple.

People who suffered financial loss to their property values or their business deserve compensation, plain and simple.

And they should not have to resort to the courts to get the compensation they deserve.

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In office I will show the leadership needed so that the federal government gets involved and helps solve the Caledonia situation and ends lawlessness and helps victims of crime.