

Illegal Smokeshops and Landclaim Lawlessness

Statement by Merlyn Kinrade, Caledonia resident

I joined the Canadian Navy as a young man to defend freedom and democracy half a world away. I was not alone. Many Canadians served with me and many of them sacrificed their lives for this worthy cause. One of them is a 90 year old World War II veteran and Caledonia resident named Jack who was victimized by a group of native protesters who threw stones at his home while OPP officers watched. He later said, with tears in his eyes, "I spent 4 years in hell for Canada and now I don't even know if the police will protect me. It wasn't worth it."

The Premier of Ontario, the Commissioner of the Ipperwash Inquiry, and OPP Commissioner Fantino have stated that the role of law enforcement officers involved in landclaim occupations and protests is that of "peacekeepers." As someone who has actually served on a United Nations peacekeeping mission, I regard this as a very troubling attitude. Earlier this year I and another UN veteran sent a letter to Mr. McGuinty explaining the critical differences between the two:

'Law Enforcement' is a role performed by police officers in a functioning, vibrant, healthy First World democracy in order to preserve the Rule of Law and protect law-abiding citizens from criminals irrespective of their race, religion, national origin or grievance. It requires that citizens respect both the law and the willingness of police officers to enforce it justly.

'Peacekeeping' is a role performed mainly by soldiers trained to kill, and is used as a deterrent during civil war in failed states where the Rule of Law has broken down, or in the aftermath of international warfare to prevent further hostilities."

It disturbs me greatly that people in positions of power talk of 'peacekeeping' as if it were some kind of innocuous, refined and noble form of policing when, in fact, their use of this word is the surest confirmation that the foundation of our society - the rule of law - is collapsing.

Mr. Fantino – are we a failed state?

I share wholeheartedly the view that improving our communication with, and understanding of, Native peoples and our obligations to them is a must. I reject - out of hand - however, the notion that police should protect native criminals at the expense of innocent, law-abiding citizens. OPP racial policing policies are wrong-headed because they are victimizing innocent people, both native and non-native.

According to former Six Nations band chief David General, the occupied Douglas Creek Estates in Caledonia – which is by the way, not patrolled by any police force - is not sacred because two women have been raped there. Native media have also reported that some of the original occupiers don't visit because they don't feel safe there anymore.

These occupiers are the very people who launched cowardly and unprovoked attacks on peaceful demonstrators and police officers during Mr. Fleming's protest last Saturday. I am here today to support his efforts to hold governments and police forces accountable for their failure to enforce laws against illegal smokeshops. Together, we have seen the awful consequences of the OPP's so-called 'peacekeeping' approach that is more rightly known as - Two Tier Justice. These smokeshops are another obnoxious result of the failure to stem landclaim lawlessness against innocent residents.

How many women have to be raped? How many innocents must be assaulted? How many children must be traumatized? How many civil rights violations have to occur? How many towns must be terrorized before the rule of law and equality before the law is restored to my town? How many Mr. Premier? How many Mr. Fantino?

Our politicians tell us to be patient, not to rock the boat, not to protest, not to confront the police and criminals as they commit injustice upon injustice against us.

My councillor, Mr. Craig Grice, apparently disapproves of Mr. Fleming's protest, and has just issued a statement asking the following questions:

- What was gained by the actions that took place on Saturday (on all sides)?
- Where is the positive outcome?
- Are our communities now closer together?
- Have the smoke shop(s) been removed?
- Will our business' now see an upward spike in sales?
- Will residents now feel better about where they live?

Our communities will never heal... Our businesses will never again thrive until the root cause of Caledonia's malaise is dealt with – and that is - the restoration of the rule of law. Police must protect the victims, and arrest the criminals, irrespective of their race or grievance. That is what residents and businesses need. We don't want money as much as we want a real police force to protect us – to feel safe again.

I find it difficult to understand how the leaders of my province cannot grasp that when lawlessness is allowed, there will surely be more lawlessness. I find it even more difficult to understand how Commissioner Fantino and the Caledonia detachment of the OPP could possibly be so heartless, so biased and so detached from reality that they immediately and publicly blamed Saturday's violence on the bleeding and unconscious victims before any investigation had begun.

This of course, is in keeping with Mr. Fantino's continual attempts to try to divert attention from the many failures of his force by blaming 'outsiders' who have not committed a single crime in my community. Outsiders who have done their best to stop landclaim violence and expose the injustices of race-based policing.

Canadian troops have – and are – serving around the world to bring freedom and stability to others, yet Mr. Fantino has publicly slandered fellow Canadians like Mr. McHale who have come to help us, and in slandering him, he has slandered those of us who support their efforts.

Before Mr. McHale speaks about Saturday's violence and the role of the OPP in allowing it to happen, I would like to close by saying that I have been totally engaged in this vital struggle to restore the rule of law because I refuse to leave a legacy for the children of Ontario that causes them to be helpless victims of landclaim lawlessness.

I want you to know, Mr. Fantino, that I will not rest until the scourge of Two Tier Justice is a bad memory. I demand that you begin to do the job you were hired to do, and stop blaming others for the failures of your force.

Thank you.