

Canadian Advocates for Charter Equality



When Freedom demands action

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www.CANACE.ca

OPP take first steps toward ending Race Based Policing

When you are dealing with an institution the size of the Ontario Provincial Police which is part of an even larger institution, the Ontario Government, bringing about real change to institutionalized racist policies is like walking down a road on a long journey requiring many thousands of seemingly endless steps.

Although we cannot declare that Race Based Policing has been ended, we are pleased to announce that the OPP has made several important steps towards the day when that can be declared. We wish to acknowledge a few of these steps that have occurred in the past two months.

1. Following 30 months of attempts by Gary McHale to have direct communication with senior OPP officers, all of which failed, approximately two months ago Supt. Gentle wrote a letter to Mr. McHale stating that "the OPP recognizes the rights of citizens to engage in lawful protest and demonstration". This was an important first step - willingness to communicate and acknowledge that all citizens had rights. This change in tone was in sharp contrast to the refusal to communicate and the attempts to slander us in the media.
2. A few weeks later the OPP arranged to have a meeting with Mr. McHale and other members of CANACE regarding the May 24/09 flag raising protest. Prior to this the OPP had refused such communications due to what we believe was a fear that such meetings would send the message that the OPP recognized CANACE as a legitimate group. Although this meeting did not live up to the full potential of Supt. Gentle's words it still represented an important step on the part of the OPP – the willingness to hold face to face communications.
3. With the illegal arrest of Randy Fleming and the direct interference with our 'right' to 'engage in lawful protest and demonstration' on May 24th. Mr. McHale published 'OPP: Your Actions Speak Louder than Words' in the Regional News. ([link](#)) The OPP were then informed that a special rally would be held in Caledonia in support of Randy Fleming, and also that the Flag Raising Events would be held the second Sunday of each month until the OPP respected the rights of non-natives.

On Friday June 12/09, in a meeting called by the OPP CANACE founders Merlyn Kinrade and Gary McHale were informed by Sgt. Phil Carter that the OPP **would** permit the planned rally in support of Randy Fleming to march down Argyle St. past the Douglas Creek Estates occupation site. Residents will be carrying the Canadian Flag as they march. This historic march will take place on Saturday, June 20 at 1:30. ([Link](#)) For additional information regarding Randy Fleming's arrest see [Link](#).

The OPP have now not merely acknowledged that all citizens have rights but have made a conscious decision that those rights must be respected and protected in a free democratic society. In so doing they have acknowledged that no one race can be permitted to limit or control the rights of another – even during a land claim dispute. This represents a radical breakthrough in OPP policy.

In two short months the OPP has opened up communications, had face to face talks and consented to a planned non-Native rally which will occur directly in front of DCE. While these are certainly not the last big steps the OPP will need to make over the coming year to eliminate racial policing they are important milestones on the road to equality and justice for all citizens of Ontario – native and non-native.

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