

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 December 2007

ORAL QUESTIONS

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: Minister, over the past few months, confrontations in Caledonia have resulted in people being knocked unconscious and sent to the hospital. As a result of this violence and as a representative for Caledonia, I have received countless phone calls and e-mails. People are asking me one specific question. They are asking, “Who’s in charge? Who’s in charge of the OPP?”

Minister, can you assure the people in my riding that you are accountable, that you are the one who sets the policy and you are the one who sets the direction for our OPP?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

Certainly the role of the OPP is to ensure that the community and its residents are safe, and I have to tell you and the people of Ontario that I am very, very pleased with the way the OPP has acted throughout this entire incident. I believe that we should be very proud of the very excellent and professional nature of engagement with the community that has taken place over the course of the last little while.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister, I’ll go back to my question. Subsection 17[2] of the Ontario Police Services Act states that the OPP is subject to the Solicitor General’s direction. That’s you. Going back to my question, Minister, do you agree—perhaps you do not agree with the police act—that you have ministerial responsibility for setting direction for the OPP? Are you the one, or are you not the one? Are you the one my constituents can go to with respect to some of the concerns with the OPP with respect to democratic responsibility concerning OPP services in Caledonia? Are you the guy?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: If the member is suggesting that the solicitor general or any other minister or member should interfere with the operation of the OPP, he’s wrong. He’s dead wrong.

What I would suggest to this member, and to everyone in the province of Ontario, is that we understand, when tensions are high, that we do everything in our power to ensure that those tensions aren’t escalated, that we have confidence in the Ontario Provincial Police and the very professional way they carry out their mandate.