

McGuinty breaks promise to Caledonia

Native protesters in Caledonia are destroying the faith of all Canadians in the rule of law which forms the basic social contract of our society.

The native occupation of disputed land has gone on for nearly a year. In addition natives have destroyed public property: they've torn up a road, toppled a hydro tower, blocked a rail line, burned a bridge, and have been involved in several violent clashes.

The Ontario Provincial Police have refused to act despite these provocations which are clearly illegal. It certainly appears that the OPP have orders from the provincial government not to intervene in actions by native protesters.

Just this weekend Garry McHale was arrested by the OPP for allegedly causing a breach of the peace, by standing near the disputed land holding a Canadian flag. Mr. McHale was simply mirroring the native's use of their Mohawk warrior flag at the protest site. He was trying to draw attention to two sets of laws that appear to apply—one for the native protesters and another for law-abiding members of the public.

Despite his assurances in June Premier Dalton McGuinty still has not addressed the issue of native occupation of disputed land and compensation for Caledonia residents.

Caledonians have faced road restrictions, loss of business, property damage and general lawlessness. It is evident the McGuinty government is treating natives differently than they are the general population.

Conservative Leader John Tory recently pressed Premier McGuinty to explain why

Ted Chudleigh



the protest has been allowed to continue in the face of his promise to end it by winter. Compensation promises have also gone up in smoke.

The McGuinty government has backtracked on this issue before— first requiring conditions to be met before resuming negotiations— and then resuming them anyway without those conditions being met.

Now it appears natives are building on the disputed site despite an agreement not to.

A refusal to act by the government is only going to invite additional provocation by the natives who have seen no consequences to their illegal activities. More worrisome perhaps is the possibility that this display of weakness by the Ontario government will invite other native protests in other parts of Ontario and indeed Canada.

It is obvious to any observer that the issue has morphed beyond the use of the disputed land and is now one of the legitimacy of law and order and the government's direction to the OPP which has created two tiered enforcement.

—Ted Chudleigh is the MPP for Halton

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