

Mark Vandermaas, CANACE

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Subject: Caledonia update

Brantford questions from Runciman

Toby here.

I have cut and pasted the full Hansard transcript from Question Period yesterday when my colleague Bob Runciman took the Premier to task for his inaction, and lack of support for the City of Brantford.

Take care and it is my hope that all remains quiet over the next several days.

Toby

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question's to the Premier. It deals with the city of Brantford, a community his Liberal government has left high and dry. Recently, Brantford city council passed two bylaws, one to prohibit protests at three specific development sites and another to stop HDI's extortion demands for development fees. Premier, do you and your colleagues support the steps that Brantford's municipal leaders have been forced to take as a result of your government's lack of support?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to say-in the supplementary I'll refer to my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs-at the outset that I know that the community of Brantford has been working hard on this, that they have brought a great deal of patience and goodwill to the table. They're building on a foundation of goodwill that's been in place for over 100 years in that community. We want to continue to work with the community and the First Nations community involved to ensure that we maintain this peaceful co-existence, grounded in a progressive, positive relationship.

I know things have not been easy there. We've heard time and time again from my colleague Dave Levac on this score, who has presented us with some of the concerns. He's played an instrumental role in terms of keeping the temperature down, bringing the parties together and trying to resolve those standing issues in a peaceful manner. I know that it's challenging and I know that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will be able to speak to some of the details connected with this.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I think that response will be cold comfort to the community, because as the Premier well knows, policing and property rights are strictly provincial matters. They have nothing to do with the federal government, which they frequently lob this off to.

Brantford has asked the Premier for help with increasing policing costs, lost tax revenues and to see the law enforced. They see investors who brought jobs and prosperity to Brantford being chased away by your refusal to protect property rights and to enforce the rule of law evenly. Calls for assistance are ignored and your government continues to throw up its hands and say that you can't doing anything. The mayor says, "We realize we're very much on our own in this. We're not getting the help we need."

Premier, it's your inaction, your lack of leadership that's forced Brantford to take these measures. No one disputes that there's a role for the feds on this issue, but there is for your government as well. Why don't you roll up your sleeves and get the job done, or are you just not up to it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I've certainly spoken to the mayor and council and developers in that region on several occasions. The province is absolutely dedicated to rolling up their sleeves and finding every avenue of assistance to that

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fantastic part of Ontario.

I have to just say what my colleague the member for Brant said. As he said, efforts that are made to increase the tensions are not positive and anything that decreases the tensions is positive. We try and work with council, with the community and with the leadership of the member for Brant, Mr. Levac. We will continue to do that.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The reality is, Brantford has been forced to bring in these bylaws because this Liberal government has washed its hands of any responsibility for property rights, development fees, policing and the administration of justice. These are not federal matters; they're strictly provincial responsibilities.

Brantford's lawyers describe the situation as a critical problem that threatens the life of their city, yet you and your government sit by. Your silent MPP for that riding sits by. You sit on your hands and force the city to seek a court injunction to enforce those bylaws. You're forcing them to go it alone in dealing with lawlessness. I ask the minister, and through him to the Premier, when is the Premier going to stop the excuses and start doing his job by fulfilling his constitutional responsibilities to the people of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I have to take issue-and I know that he cannot possibly believe it for a second-with his statement with respect to the efforts of the member for Brant. I cannot imagine any member of provincial Parliament who could have done more for his community and continues to do more for his community than the member for Brant, Mr. David Levac. The member has brought the community, Haudenosaunee Six Nations and developers into the same room. He is dedicated to providing solutions. He works every single day on this, not only to build bridges but to get solutions for his community, and it's thanks to him that we've had-

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