

# Caledonia homeowners want province to buy their house

## Couple says they're about to lose home next to protest site

October 24, 2008

BY DANA BROWN

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

CALEDONIA — Dave Brown wants the province to buy the beleaguered Caledonia home his family is on the verge of losing.

Brown, 41, and partner Dana Chatwell, 45, live next to the disputed Douglas Creek Estates, a site the province bought for \$16 million after it was occupied by Six Nations protesters in February 2006.

The couple, who are now both unemployed, have missed several mortgage payments and lenders have essentially demanded their \$160,000 balance be paid.

Today, Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory joined Brown in calling on the government to help the couple.

“They shouldn’t be left in a situation where this house is a place where they live under siege or in a state of constant discomfort through no fault of their own,” Tory said at a news conference in Caledonia.

Brown lost his job after the occupation began, something he attributes to the stress of the situation. Chatwell was also forced to close a hair salon she ran from the couple’s home because of the ongoing dispute.

Brown and Chatwell have a \$12-million lawsuit pending against the provincial government and the Ontario Provincial Police.

They claim the police failed to protect them from harassment during the dispute.

“We’ve lost everything,” Brown said. “We’ve put so much equity into our home — we’ve lost our RRSPs, our investments, benefits from where I worked before, (our son’s) college fund is gone.”

Michael Bordin, the couple’s lawyer, said a statement of claim and a notice of sale on the property have already been issued. The couple have until Nov. 2 to file a statement of defence. Tory said the province should offer to buy the couple’s home, but it would be up to each side whether to accept such an offer.

The province should compensate the pair, taking in mind what they’ve been through, pay to relocate them until the land claim matter is resolved and agree to protect their home while they’re gone, he said.

In 2007, Caledonia residents were offered \$430,000 in compensation, broken down into slots of up to \$6,000 each.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Brad Duguid, who was at Six Nations meeting with officials yesterday, said that in all, the government has put out a package worth about \$3 million to help with economic and personal impacts.

Duguid said he could not comment on the compensation idea because of the couple’s lawsuit and accused Tory of fanning the flames in a sensitive situation.

“Frankly, his time would be better spent calling Stephen Harper, his federal leader, and telling him to get on with the negotiations here,” he said.

Duguid said the government is sensitive to the concerns that have been raised.

Wes Elliott, a Six Nations resident who came to hear Tory yesterday, said help should go beyond the couple and extend to those living on Sixth Line and other spots near the Douglas Creek Estates site.

“There are a number of families that are really close by that should be given the opportunity to be out of there,” he said.

dbrown@thespec.com

905-526-4629