

Kelly McParland: The high cost of Dalton McGuinty's native terror

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I was wrong.

In my unbiased and evenhanded assault on Dalton McGuinty, I suggested we'd never know how much the Ontario premier had wasted making life miserable for an innocent couple caught in the crossfire of a native land dispute in Caledonia, a town near Hamilton.

This assertion was based on no research whatsoever, and appears to be wrong. Right here in the *Toronto Star*, one of my all-time favourite publications, the ridiculous cost is spelled out in nauseating detail:

HAMILTON—The taxpayer bill for the simmering land dispute with Six Nations protesters in Caledonia is \$64.3 million and counting.

The running tab, according to Ontario's Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, does not include \$15.8 million the province paid for the former Douglas Creek Estates, which was seized and occupied on Feb. 28, 2006 by protesters from the nearby Six Nations reserve.

Ottawa kicked in \$26.4 million to reimburse Queen's Park for the cost of purchasing the residential subdivision that was then under construction. The money included \$10.6 million to offset extraordinary policing costs.

The tab also does not include the recent out-of-court settlement between the Ontario government and a Caledonia couple, Dana Chatwell and Dave Brown, who were suing the province and OPP for \$7 million for abandoning them to the lawlessness that surrounded the disputed 27-hectare site adjacent to their home.

\$64 million? Not including the original payment to the developers, and whatever the government eventually paid to Chatwell and Brown.

Well done, Dalton McGuinty. A responsible use of taxpayers' money, no question at all.

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