

## 'Systemic failures'

### **CORNWALL PUBLIC INQUIRY: Comm. Glaude slams institutions in final report for letting down victims of abuse**

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The Cornwall Public Inquiry has determined there were "systemic failures" in the institutional response to allegations of sexual abuse in the Cornwall area, however Comm. Normand Glaude stopped short of quashing the long-rumoured claims of a pedophile ring in his final report.

Glaude failed to make a final pronouncement on whether a pedophile ring existed in his final report, saying the issue was not fully explored and it was not within his mandate to make such a finding.

"The Ontario Provincial Police concluded (the) Project Truth (investigation) by saying there was no pedophile ring in Cornwall. Since they did not investigate this, they could not have reasonably come to this conclusion," said Glaude in a statement upon the release of his final report on Tuesday. "This does not mean that I find there was a ring of pedophiles. It is not my role to make such a finding. But I do find that no investigation provided conclusive evidence on this point."

Glaude did, however, quash rumours of a cover-up between Cornwall police and the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall over the \$32,000 confidential settlement that was paid out by the diocese to David Silmsler in 1992 over sex abuse allegations. The settlement included an "illegal clause" requiring Silmsler to withdraw his criminal complaint against the priest, Rev. Charles MacDonald.

The allegations were eventually forwarded on to the Children's Aid Society by former Cornwall police Const. Perry Dunlop.

"All this led to community rumours and allegations of a conspiracy to cover up," Glaude said in his remarks.

The commissioner said he found no evidence of a conspiracy between city police and the diocese with respect to the Silmsler settlement, however he stated the police service's investigation of the Silmsler complaint -- and the illegal clause in the settlement -- was "deeply flawed."

As for his view on Dunlop's role in the whole affair, Glaude neither faulted nor praised the former city police officer, who spent seven months in jail on contempt charges for refusing to testify at the inquiry.

"In the course of this inquiry, I have been asked to find that Perry Dunlop is a hero. And that he is a villain. I do neither. His is a mixed legacy," the commissioner said.

Glaude also finds flaws in the OPP's Project Truth investigation, saying it lacked adequate funding and organizational support and failed to pursue all available evidence.

In his massive four-volume, 2,400-page final report, Glaude finds fault with the local probation office, police agencies, the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall and other institutions for their handling of historical sex abuse allegations, saying they were ill-equipped to deal with such situations.

Some institutions were reluctant to be forthright and own up to mistakes, "fearing scandal or criticism more than they feared the breach of their duty to the vulnerable and the public," he added.

"Sometimes these organizations looked for scapegoats instead of looking in the mirror."

The systemic failure to respond to allegations along with an insensitivity in dealing with complainants, a reluctance to act and "partial or non-existent" communication created opportunities for speculation, Glaude noted, and some media coverage of the Project Truth investigation and surrounding events only served to fan the speculation further.

"This community was simply not well served by those speculations," he told the large crowd that assembled at the Ramada Inn for the report's release.

Among his myriad recommendations, Glaude called on four institutions -- the diocese, the English public and Catholic school boards and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (which oversees probation services) -- to offer a public apology to confirmed victims and issue an appeal to local sex abuse victims to come forward and receive counseling and support.

"I ask them to undertake a response of respect, dignity and compassion," said the commissioner.

Bishop Paul-Andre Durocher wasted little time in acting on the commissioner's request as he took to the stage shortly after Glaude concluded his remarks and delivered an apology and an appeal.

The first phase of the inquiry yielded more than 150 recommendations for various institutions to act on. Among other things, they include more stringent reporting requirements for sex abuse allegations, improvements to professional training, implementing processes and protocols to ensure institutions give priority to sexual assault

and abuse, support to complainants and better management of complex, multi-victim investigations and prosecutions.

The report also contains a five-year agenda for healing and reconciliation for Cornwall and S, D and G. Among other things, the second phase of the inquiry includes recommendations for unsealing support, the establishment of a \$5 million Reconciliation Trust Fund and the creation of new support centres in Cornwall.

Cornwall Deputy Police Chief Danny Aikman and S, D and G OPP Sgt. Kristine Rae both welcomed the commissioner's recommendations and said their respective agencies will be reviewing them in greater detail in the days and weeks ahead. Rae said the OPP has already enacted some changes -- such as better sexual abuse and sexual assault training for officers -- in response to the inquiry.

Meanwhile, the Phase 2 recommendations carry a number of price tags, and it will be up to the province to foot the bill should Queen's Park agree to enact the proposals.

Attorney General Chris Bentley said he will be actively reviewing the final report's contents before deciding whether to embrace the recommendations in full.

"Having just received the recommendations, we don't know when that will be," he told the Standard-Freeholder.

Bentley did not promise direct consultation when the ministry's intentions are ready "when (Glaude) already did that" during the inquiry hearings.

He said improvements will probably not be required through new laws, but rather revamped programs that serve victims and policies that shape institutions' "approach" to the issue.

"We're going to see how much support we need for victims in the future, and take the strongest possible approach to prosecutions," he added.

By moving ahead with the recommendations, Glaude said Cornwall can become a beacon of hope for other communities, and he believes the healing and reconciliation is already well underway.

"Cornwall is not a community eclipsed by the dark cloud of scandal. It is a community where the work of healing and reconciliation has started and where there are people of good intentions and sensitivity who are involved and eager to keep going," he said.

Established by the provincial government on April 14, 2005, the Cornwall Public Inquiry spanned nearly four years and 345 hearing days, making it one of the longest inquiry's in the province's history. The final tab for the commission is expected to surpass the \$50-million mark.

For his part, the attorney general -- whose office was responsible for footing the inquiry's huge bill -- defended the cost.

"It was important for the victims . . . to have (this issue) receive a complete and full hearing," Bentley noted.

As for Glaude's request that changes be made to improve the efficiencies of public inquiries, Bentley said the Inquiry Act had been tweaked last week.

The report's release garnered mostly positive reviews from those in attendance at the Ramada Inn.

Dallas Lee, a lawyer for The Victims Group, said the majority of his 50 clients will be pleased with the outcome. Like Glaude, he's hoping the recommendations will become a reality.

"I'm hoping that part of the story doesn't get lost in the shuffle," he said. "It doesn't mean a whole lot if the recommendations are ignored."

Paul Scott of Citizen's for Community Renewal (CCR) said they will be putting pressure on the province to embrace the recommendations in the report.

"This is our opportunity," he said. "We're being given it on a silver platter."

Meanwhile, Dunlop's brother-in-law Carson Chisholm said he was impressed with some of the recommendations put forward, but he feels Glaude missed the boat by not pushing for more stringent legislation to protect whistleblowers.

"If they're treated one-tenth as badly as Dunlop was, they won't come forward," he said.

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