

Jerry J. Ouellette, MPP Oshawa

Appreciating Where We Came From

Are things bad?

Let's see.

Skyrocketing hydro rates; the HST; the Health Care tax; Just about everything is going up except for people's income. Look at the price of gas alone and how the HST has increased the already high prices. Oh ya and according to the media everything is a "crisis" – imagine that.

The history of my family in Canada on my father's side dates back to 1604 and my mother's parents came from the Ukraine and Poland and my wife's parents also came from Poland.

Children today have developed a culture of entitlement which prevents them from seeing their place as one with all the hope and opportunity of older generations. As a father of two this notion disappoints me, especially as it continues to grow and intensify among youth in today's society.

I would like to share with you an experience that really opened my eyes and changed my outlook with respect to our homeland and the things we take for granted each and every day that our forefathers fought to protect against and ensure our freedoms.

Last September, I had the opportunity to work with a community-based initiative that helps children and performs missionary work in Nairobi, Kenya. Under the leadership of Oshawa's Father Markarios Isaac, the former priest at St. Philip the Apostle Church, the mission provides hope, security, education, medicine and aid to needy children.

During my mission I gained first-hand knowledge and observation of the extreme poverty, despair and hopelessness that most Canadians could not comprehend. I visited the Kibera Slum, one of the largest in the world, where it is estimated that close to 1.2 million people live in extreme poverty, with poor sanitation, a lack of basic services, high rates of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, where the average life expectancy is under 45 years. It is a filthy, sweltering, foul-smelling environment where innocent children suffer and endure hardships that kids in our community could not imagine. Particularly troubling, is the fact that places like Nairobi, are overrun with corruption, crime and robbery even within their governing and security divisions. Without the infrastructure and formal competent body to guide improvements, this state of destitution and hopelessness will only persist.

I was proud to assist with the mission. I provided them with important medicine, vitamins, painkillers, bandages, clothing and supplies and worked towards elevating some of the children out of poverty, giving them comfort and hope for a better future. I applaud all those who contributed to the cause and commend them for their continued hard work.

My perspective has changed. Now when I travel within our great province or speak with the friendly people in our community and I hear those speak of how dreadful things are – I take the time to remind them how fortunate we really are. We still have our problems. Our neighbourhoods, communities and services, even our families are far from perfect. But we can always offer our input and expertise and continue to work together because we have the opportunity, the ability and the hope to change things for the future.

In Kenya, the President is announced as Commander and Chief of the Military and President of Kenya in that order. He is introduced this way to remind people who is in control. Just look at what is happening in the Middle East. People have had enough there as central control is just as prevalent.

The current provincial government has a big brother-knows-best attitude and is spending the populace into a debt that will impact generations to come. Just look at your bills and taxes and think if that's what Canada is all about.

We all need to appreciate what we have and it is crucial that we highlight this to our students and children and remind people how and why our forefathers fought the way they have – I know I have.



Constituency Office:
170 Athol St., E
Oshawa Ontario L1H 1K1
(905) 723-2411
email: jerry_ouelleteco@ontia.ola.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry J. Ouellette". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jerry J. Ouellette
MPP Oshawa