



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Michael Prue, MPP
Beaches - East York

21 October 2002

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Mr. Steve Xanthopoulos' Role in the East York Pontian Monument

Mr. Steve Xanthopoulos requested that I write this statement to clarify his role in the erection of the Pontian Monument in East York (Toronto), Ontario, Canada. Throughout the period in question I was Mayor of the former Borough of East York, until its amalgamation into the City of Toronto (1 January 1998), after which I was a City of Toronto Councillor representing East York.

My clear recollection of the events is as follows:

- Mr. Steve Xanthopoulos approached me requesting permission to build a Pontian monument on the grounds of the East York Civic Centre. This request occurred in May 1994.
- We continued to have discussions about this request until Mr. Xanthopoulos made a formal request to Borough Council to seek permission to build the monument.
- The request was formally considered by Council and involved reports from senior Borough staff outlining the process, building by-laws, wording on the monument, venue and legal issues.
- There was also considerable public input involving the community, arts groups and the Royal Canadian Legion (the Civic Centre grounds is a designated war memorial).

Throughout all of this period Mr. Xanthopoulos attended the meetings, answered questions, made depositions and represented those who wished to build the monument. Because of problems related to the placing of the monument at the Civic Centre, an alternate site was needed. Mr. Xanthopoulos accompanied me on a tour of the Borough of East York to look at other sites; he ultimately chose the site on which the statue now sits at Memorial Park Drive and Roosevelt Street.

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Because of legal restrictions, the land had to be conveyed from the East York Public Library to an incorporated organisation (the Pontian Brotherhood, which was eager to assist in seeing the project completed). Such a monument was included in its constitution from the foundation of the Brotherhood nearly thirty years earlier.

When the building permit was finally secured it became the legal responsibility of the Pontian Brotherhood to see it through. This they did.

Mr. Steve Xanthopoulos deserves much credit for his tireless work in promoting the monument until such time as the Pontian Brotherhood received the building permit. I honestly believe that without Mr. Xanthopoulos' drive and determination it might never have happened.

We are also very thankful that the Brotherhood saw the merits of this project, saw it through to completion, and continues to maintain the monument so that the world might know what happened in the Pontus between 1914 and 1923.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Prue". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

MICHAEL D. PRUE, MPP
Beaches-East York



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Michael Prue, MPP
Beaches - East York

From the Ontario Hansard, May 21, 2002

PONTIAN COMMUNITY

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): It is my honour to stand today and to speak of a group in my community, the Pontian community, some of whom are here in the gallery today. For those who may not be aware, the Pontian community is a group that traces its ancestry to an ancestral land called the Pontus, which is in modern-day Turkey.

Between the years 1914 and 1923, there were many disturbances there, and many of the Pontians were forced to flee for their lives, settling first in Greece and most recently in Canada. They have flourished in this community. They have done wonderful work.

I rise today to talk about their continuing campaign to inform the world of the atrocities and what was committed in that homeland between 1914 and 1923. On Sunday, there was a solemn gathering in East York, where they met at the only monument they have in Canada. They were there to remember the time of sacrifice and sorrow of their grandfathers, their grandmothers, their great-grandfathers and the fact that they continue today throughout the world to talk about this time and to get people to understand it.

We have heard many times over the years of other atrocities committed around the world which are much better documented and which people understand and accept. The Pontian community is here today to try to get the world to understand about what happened to them and hopefully one day to have the world understand their plight.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Prue".

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Michael Prue, MPP
Beaches - East York

October 16, 2002

Mr. Steve Xanthapoulous
17 Delbert Drive
Scarborough, ON M1P 1X3

Dear Steve:

Re: My statement in the Legislature

Further to your request that background be given concerning my speech to the Ontario Legislature on the Pontian community, the following is provided:

1. Each member of the Legislature—except Cabinet Ministers—may make a statement to the House about once every two weeks.
2. The subject of the statement is entirely discretionary but usually concerns people or events in the member's constituency.
3. The statement is not debated, nor are any votes held. It is simply an expression of the member's view of events and forms part of the record of debate.
4. On 21 May 2002, I rose to speak about the Pontian genocide and the event at the Pontian monument in East York. Since statements are limited to 90 seconds, this was all that could be said that day.
5. Watching the proceedings from the Speakers gallery were David Warner, former MPP and Speaker, as well as members of the Pontian Brotherhood and a Member of the Swedish Parliament.

I hope this clarifies what was said, and the fact that it was intended to inform the Legislature and the public who watch the proceedings on television. It was not subject to any vote nor should my statement be construed as government policy.

As always your continuing interest to inform the peoples of the world of the atrocities in the Pontus is much appreciated.

Yours truly,

MICHAEL D. PRUE, MPP
Beaches-East York

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