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Media: Platt, Leslie, Morrow, Benzie, Howorun

Brown:

- I wanted to make a statement along with John Yakabuski who of course is our energy critic
- A statement with regards to the Ombudsman report on Hydro one
- The report of the Ombudsman is an indictment on Hydro one, on how it deals with its costumers
- A huge number have filed complaints
- About billing irregularities, customer service and what are likely only a small representation of those affected
- These complaints are substantive
- These people who have had huge bills or have had money retrieved from their accounts
- When they hadn't even been billed by hydro one for the month at the time
- There's examples, I think we've all heard them this morning
- Examples are frankly astonishing
- One example I read of a client who was billed 15 million dollars when the actual bill was only 4 thousand
- I know Yak knows of a pretty significant example in his own riding as well
- These examples and many others can't be called typographical errors
- Rather they are a complete disregard for customers and a lack of attention to detail in hydro one's business operations
- These problems with hydro one are obviously systemic and are so numerous and have been going on for so long
- There's a cultural problem
- The culture at hydro one needs to be changed
- Selling a portion of it won't necessarily accomplish this
- Customers can't be left without somewhere to turn
- If privatized, some type of independent oversight should be put in place to make sure that hydro one isn't allowed to run wild
- It is unfortunate that the minister of energy wouldn't accept the one recommendation that was absolutely critical, that being, we must make some form of oversight, a reality
- This government and hydro one needs to be accountable to Ontarians
- Which given the ombudsman's report they obviously haven't bee
- I'd be pleased to take any questions

Morrow: Do you think any of this would have come to light had it not been for Andre Marin, and I guess the second part of that is, you know, the government says that this corporate ombudsman that they will create is going to provide, excellent oversight for the people of Ontario. Do you think that is true?

Brown:

- Certainly I don't think it would have come to light had it not been for the ombudsman
- And I think the comment today

- Do you think you'd see this type of detailed report by an independent internal ombudsman
- I would agree with the ombudsman's assessment on that
- They certainly wouldn't
- So I am very concerned by the losing oversight
- You know, 10 thousand complaints since 2013 is absolutely overwhelming
- I think every Ontarian should be concerned that we're losing oversight

Leslie: *How could you maintain it though, Patrick, if it becomes 60% privatized utility. You can't have a government officer oversee a privatized, utility. Could you see that working at 60%?*

Brown:

- Well first of all let's go back to the whole issue of the sale of Hydro 1
- Jim Wilson, when it was first introduced, the MPP Jim Wilson, set out some of his concerns with the sale
- One, that we felt as a PC caucus that, as a PC Party that it should be, the government should retain majority ownership
- That the sale should be looked at by the Auditor General and by the financial accountability officer
- And certainly, I think those concerns that Jim Wilson articulated are still very valid today
- You know, Hydro One has got 1.3 million customers
- This is, it's essential that we maintain some form of oversight given the fact that this is one of the areas where there has been the most complaints in government
- You know, I would be particularly concerned to lose that oversight
- So I think there are two issues here
- One, losing control of Hydro One as a government
- And two, losing oversight
- And, you know, I would
- I hope that we don't lose majority control and I hope there is some time to, for the government to rethink this
- But secondly, even if they, even if we do lose control of Hydro One I think it's important we maintain oversight
- It's that significant to Ontario that it would merit continued oversight

Leslie: *After you have that though, can you think of another entity that is a private, essentially a privately owned corporation that has a government oversight as an ombudsman activity here? I mean I know the 407, the Ombudsman pointed out today, the 407 and Tarion New Home Warranty both have internal ombudsmen whom we've never heard from. What would give a government agency or an ombudsman over a public agency?*

Brown:

- I'll let, I'll let Yak touch upon this but I think the unique situation here is that customers don't have a choice
- You may have a choice to use the 407, you do not have a choice if you are a hydro one customer

Yakabuski:

- And I just wanted to come here today to formally pay my appreciation to nurses
- And I'm not sure if Laurie wanted to add anything additional on behalf of our party

Scott:

- Happy Nurses Week
- It's wonderful
- Congratulations
- I say you're never not a nurse
- I'm always out at functions being now an MPP and there is always someone either falling or fainting
- So you are always the nurse, you always run to the rescue
- We have about four nurses in the legislature so we pull on each other's strings
- See what maybe needs to be tweaked or changed
- And I'll be telling Patrick and keeping him advised the nurses and the needs
- and certainly we all know you are the front line staff that sees the patients the first time and I just wanted ...
- Thank you for the work that you do, I think that nurses are undervalued
- So you are never thanked enough
- From me and all the nurses (inaudible) Thank you very much

PC Staffer: *We can take a couple questions from the media*

Media: *Ready to make an announcement about a seat in the legislature yet?*

Brown:

- Not today... but you know I've got a lot of work to do organizationally rebuilding the party, like you know I set out the goal of a party of 100,000 members
- I want to put the party on secure financial footing
- I fully intend to be in the legislature before the next election
- But that's not an announcement I'm going to make in the next few weeks

Platt: *So what did you spend your first week as leader doing? What took up most of your time this week?*

Brown:

- Well there was a lot on the go this week
- From the Quebec Premier coming on Monday to chairing our first caucus meeting to going to Ottawa to, to say goodbye to my colleagues there and formally resign my seat as the member of parliament in Barrie
- And there's been an assortment of events with cultural community stakeholders
- I've been trying to meet every caucus member one-on-one
- So during the campaign I said it was 7am to midnight
- Some people said to me after the leadership, "Aren't you glad you don't need to work 'till midnight?" and I said there hasn't been a day yet where we haven't worked 'till midnight
- So it's been very occupied

Fairchild: *[Inaudible] Does that mean that you're going to bring more members to the party?*

Brown:

- Well two-fold, I see two responsibilities
- One, fundraising for the party and organizationally bringing more members in
- I do want to be in the legislature prior to 2018 but this time I have right now, I can focus on, what is the lifeblood of a, the strength of a political party which is raising funds and recruiting members
- We've had a lot of success in the last year doing that and I hope to continue doing that as much as possible in the upcoming week

Rath: Is the party in pretty rough shape right now Patrick?

Brown:

- No, you know, I feel that we're feeling a bit of a wind in our sails right now after what was a successful leadership
- That fact that we've grown from 10 000 to 76 000 members
- We're the most diverse political party in Ontario
- We've got, attracted people from every walk of life
- I have a goal of 100 000 members
- I would say we're well on our way to that but we still have some work to do

Rath: Is the caucus rallying behind you now or is there—

Brown:

- I have to say

Rath: Some bumpy ground there?

Brown:

- Well I have to say, meeting with caucus has been phenomenal
- One thing that I, I think is a testament to the strength of our caucus is day one of the leadership everyone was saying, "We work together. We're on the same team"
- And I've been quickly learning how lucky I am to have a caucus of this calibre

[French]

Media: [Question inaudible]

[French begins]

Brown:

- For me, it is very important
- When I was an MP
- The best volunteer during my electoral campaign was a nurse
- And other doctors and nurses
- They were the best, those who worked in the health care sector
- This is something that I hope to re-create in the provincial level
- Health is the heart of the province

- I want to write an electoral platform where these people will understand the party will protect them

[French ends]

[French begins]

Media: What do you see for Mr. Elliott in your [inaudible]

Brown:

- For me, Ms. Elliott is a star of the PC party
- I would like her to stay beside me
- That will be important for the future of the party

Patrick Brown Post QP Scrum – May 14, 2015

Summary:

- Two tier system is a disaster
- The government doesn't have the situation under control
- I am not here to criticize teachers, only government
- I would study the option of forcing teachers back to work
- Letter from independent officers a concern
- I think it is alarming that we are losing oversight, and don't want to lose it to foreign companies

Media: Ferguson, Cohn, Rath, CityTv, Geoff, Artuso, Platt, Jones, Blizzard, Morrow, Boissenault, Fairchild, Jamie, TFO, Benzie

Brown:

- The process set up by the liberals isn't working
- It is unfortunate this situation when this education minister says that she is perplexed and mystified why there's even a strike
- Doesn't know why there's one happening
- There doesn't appear like there's any progress
- And the losers in this are the students
- So obviously this is a mounting problem and we have said from the get go
- We are thankful that we have our education critic Garfield Dunlop who has been pushing this at Queen's Park
- But ultimately this education minister is responsible and the Premier is responsible

Media: What's the fix for the system?

Brown:

- Well let me just say that we're in this position because of years of mismanagement
- We're in this position because the liberals have spent recklessly
- I think the starting point is that actually you have to have a dialogue

- I can tell you that in my leadership campaign
- A lot was noted that we had support from police officers, nurses, paramedics, signing up in droves
- And the reason was that we actually sit down
- We have to sit down
- You can get great ideas
- If you sit down
- And so obviously that's not happening today

Media: The government is sitting down, they are at the table, the union has walked away from the table

Brown:

- You see this two tier disaster and it is obviously not working
- Obviously, when they are coming to the table
- The government doesn't appear interested in offering anything
- Even talking, even having the conversation
- I think it's got to this point because it is a two tier disaster
- You have an education minister who at the starting point of the negotiations
- Is saying that she is mystified and perplexed why there's even a strike
- So it does not appear that there is progress

Media: Do you understand why there's a strike out there, aren't these people you know, more than properly compensated?

Brown:

- Let me say this, we're in this situation today for a number of reasons
- One we have a government that has mismanaged the finances
- We're spending exorbitant amounts on interest because of this
- And it is forcing the government to cut in areas that we hold dear
- In education, and health care
- I realize we're in this position, also partly because of the fact that we have a government that has created higher expectations
- We've got a government that was very much, got the overwhelming support of these teaching unions and I understand why they feel misled
- And today, seeing the growing numbers outside of Queen's park that speak to that

Media: But the compensation packages are they enough? Most people in society look at that and think "my god I wish I had that, I never will".

Brown:

- Well I understand some of the primary issues are on prep time and classroom sizes

Media: Do you believe that?

Brown:

- I think there are some important conversations to have there

- Do I believe it, yes absolutely
- My own mother was a school teacher for years before she retired
- I know that prep time is critical
- The classroom size, in terms of the quality of education you get is critical

Media: So I am not understanding this, you're saying the government is not offering the teachers. What would you offer the teachers?

Brown:

- What I am saying is that obviously there is no progress, obviously there is dialogue that needs to happen is not happening.
- And part of that is that you have this two tier disaster
- The system set up by the liberals is not working
- And that is evident by the crowds you are seeing out today
- And the fact that we have 870,000 elementary students who are on a work to rule situation
- And the fact that you've got 72,000 secondary students who aren't getting the critical education they need at this point

Media: So because the teachers are such a political force, are you not wanting to talk bad about the situation because you're afraid of the wrath of their abilities?

Brown:

- I am speaking bad about the government's management of it

Media: I am talking about the teachers side, not the government's side. Are you worried that the teachers, if you speak poorly of the teachers and their position, even though they're not at the table, that you will suffer the wrath?

Brown:

- I am not here to today to criticize the teachers
- I am criticizing the process
- I see a lot of value in what our educators are doing
- It is not about wrath or not wrath
- It is about placing value in education
- Someone that comes from a family that is full of educators
- I've seen it first hand
- I do believe that the issue is being raised
- On classroom sizes, on prep times
- I think it is important the government have those conversations
- The fact that we have a situation where the government doesn't even know why there is a strike
- The government is mystified and confused about the origins of the strike
- It speaks to the challenge
- There is no progress
- So we're all alarmed

Boissenault: [French beings] can you say in French how do you think the system functions in this moment, at this point in negotiations?

Brown:

- I think it is a disaster
- The new system is a disaster, with two tiers
- I would like progress
- And there is no progress now

Boissenault: what do you think of the idea of forcing teachers to teach? We're in front of the labour board. What do you think of forcing the teachers to go back to work?

Brown:

- I think the former system is better
- I would like to study this option further though

[French ends]

Artuso: On the eight independent officers of the Legislature have signed a joint letter raising concerns about losing oversight of Hydro One. Do you share their position?

Brown:

- Yeah I'm very concerned with what is happening with Hydro One
- I think it's quite significant that you have the eight independent officers all expressing this common concern
- Its historic
- And the Conservatives, the government is going to lose all oversight
- It is alarming, its concerning, and we should be concerned
- Especially given the fact that one of the number one areas of complaints is with Hydro One
- So it is something that independent officers are very correct to raise
- And we will be championing their concerns

Platt: So you support having a legislative officer though still having oversight over a publically traded company?

Brown:

- Well it hasn't gotten to that point
- There's an issue of timing here
- So if it was a private company, then that's a different conversation
- But Bill 91 is going to take away that oversight before that privatization even happens
- And so that's an important distinction to make

Boissenault: [French begins] What do you think about the letter from the independent officers?

Brown:

- It is scary when 8 people in these positions, who have big problems with this
- I would like to be a voice for their frustration
- It is important that they can look at what happened to Hydro one