

Summary of Question Period for March 22/17

From: "Flowers, Robert (TBS)" <robert.flowers@ontario.ca>
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Please see the select and full summaries of today's legislative Question Period.

MPP Brown (PC) to the Premier regarding partisan advertising

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. By now, everyone has seen or heard the taxpayer-funded Liberal advertisement. So, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the **Premier**, through you, Mr. Speaker, when will the **Premier** stop using taxpayer dollars to advertise for the Liberal party of Ontario?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would say to the leader of the opposition, I do understand why he's taking this particular tack in his questioning, Mr. Speaker, because he doesn't have a plan to reduce people's electricity bills. We do have a plan, Mr. Speaker. And that plan will cut people's electricity bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker, by summer. 17% on top of the 8%, Mr. Speaker. And if you are a low-income person in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, or you live in a rural or remote area under Hydro One and a number of other distribution companies, Mr. Speaker, your reduction could be 40 to 50%. Absolutely. That those -- those particular residents. Struggling with their electricity bills to an even larger extent. So we have a plan, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to move forward and implement it.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. The **Premier** speculates why we're raising this issue. Mr. Speaker, using taxpayer dollars to advertise for the Liberal party is wrong. That's why we're bringing it up. It is wrong. The **Premier** knows it is wrong. The Liberals have a fascinating talking point. They say they have to run these Liberal vanity ads so they can use this information to tell people how to manage their budgets. But for 13 years, they raised hydro bills 400%, did they ever run ads saying sorry, we're raising hydro rates 400%? You need to manage your budget? Not for a second. This is about one thing and only one thing and that's selling the Liberal party using taxpayer dollars to do so. It's wrong. My question is, Speaker, to the **Premier** -- you know it's wrong. Do the right thing. Stop running these ads.

>> **Premier Wynne**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not speculating on why the member's asking the question. I know exactly why he's asking the question because, Mr. Speaker, if he had a plan, he'd be pushing his plan. He'd be putting his -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So the other part of our plan, which is a real plan, which we are going to move forward to implement, is that we will hold rate increases to inflation for the next four years. So this is not about putting in place a reduction and then not holding those rates. Finally we're creating a \$200 million affordability fund for people who want to make investments -- And aren't able to do that.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. Yesterday the Attorney General alleged that they had strengthened the legislation to provide clear definition of partisan advertising. What auditor general say about this? She said I quote -- we caution when the government changed the law in 2015 that it was opening the door to spending taxpayer money on ads that appear partisan. And then the auditor general said -- sure enough the government walked right through that open door that they created. Clearly the Liberals are using a loophole they created to abuse taxpayer dollars. That's what it's about. They can do all the talking points they want. They can say they strengthened the laws or about budgeting. They created a loophole. They're driving a truck through t.as' abusive of taxpayer dollars. It's wrong Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** stop running these ads?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Mr. Speaker, we created the legislation. We put the legislation in place in the first place because Mike Harris's face was all over advertising consistently, Mr. Speaker. But let me tell you about the other part of our plan, Mr. Speaker, which again is a real plan that is going to reduce people's electricity prices, which is the issue that we are dealing with in this province because we have made huge investments. We are in a situation where we have a clean electricity grid, Mr. Speaker, clean air because they're shutting down the coal-fired plants but there's a cost associated with that. So the other part of our plan, Mr. Speaker, is we are removing delivery charges from all on-reserve first nation residential consumer groups, Mr. Speaker. And that is a huge issue at some of the leadership and first nations have said. This will be a huge amount to deal with electricity poverty on reserves, Mr. Speaker. It's a very important step forward.

MPP Brown (PC) to the Premier and auction of cap and trade

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. Today is the first auction of the Liberals' cap and trade scheme where the Liberals hope to rake in \$1.9 billion. That's \$1.9 billion that taxpayers are going to have to foot the bill for. Maybe the worst part of this Liberal scheme is that it's going to send hard earned dollars to California. Mr. Speaker, does the **Premier** think it's appropriate that her government will be encouraging businesses to subsidize those businesses in California?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I know the inminister of environment and climate change will want to speak about this. This is a very important program, Mr. Speaker. You know we really believe that taking real action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it's not just in the best interests of people today, Mr. Speaker. Most importantly it's in the best interests of the future of the planet. It has to be done and it has to be real, Mr. Speaker. And so what we've done is we have settled on the most cost effective way to do that. You know the leader of the opposition has said that he would remove Ontario from the cap and trade market and put in place, Mr. Speaker, a program that would cost the people of Ontario, individuals, four times the amount that cap and trade will cost, Mr. Speaker. Four times the amount. That's irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. If we look at other jurisdictions that have done just that, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Has not been as effective as --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. This government simply wants to Mack up numbers. It's more Liberal fake spin. What we do know factually is that under this Liberal scheme, Ontario will be sending upwards towards \$300 million a year to California under this western climate initiative. When businesses are struggling to stay afloat in Ontario, how this **Premier** thinks it's appropriate to be sending \$300 million

a year to California is beyond me. We don't need a government that's -- we need a government that's going to support Brantford, Toronto, Ottawa appear Timmins. Right now they'll be subsidizing Beverly hills and Hollywood. This from is the best Minister of economic development the United States has ever seen, and it has to stop. Will the **Premier** do the right thing and make sure we don't send hundreds of millions to California?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Minister of the environment and climate change.

>> Minister Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is an auction. An auction that should be free of political interference or actions by any member of this House that would seek to interfere or disrupt -- so I am not commenting on it and I would give that strong advice to the member of the opposition. But tomorrow, when the auction is closed, I'll have lots to say to the member of the opposition about some of this behaviour, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is proposing a system that cannot achieve the reductions we're getting and would move 5 mega tonnes of leakage or see the relocation of companies. The position he faces would see gasoline prices go up at four times the rate than they do under cap and trade. He is the best economic development leader for the United States that this legislature's ever seen.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. Enough of the Liberals' affection spin. What we know for fact is this is going to send \$300 million to California. Clearly the Minister and the **Premier** haven't read the auditor general's report. They're talking about emission reductions. The auditor general's report points out that these emission reductions are -- aren't going to happen in Ontario. They're going to happen in California. We want to see climate change tackled in Ontario. We want to see real emission reductions in Ontario. This is a shell game that big businesses in -- that makes businesses in Ontario less competitive. How does it make sense to take 300 million from Ontario businesses and send it to Beverly hills? This is as bad as the clean energy act. They're signing Ontario up for another scheme that makes this province less competitive. Will the **Premier** at least acknowledge this hurts Ontario? There's still time to walk this back and say Ontario does not need to be part of the western climate initiative because it subsidizes California.

>> Minister Murray: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy these conversations with the leader of the opposition. They're so enlightening. So let me explain something. The market price directly reduces 4 mega tonnes. 6 to \$8 billion in proceeds goes to nova corporation to support the reinvestment in their main or -- which is a quarter of a billion dollars -- in their major facility in Sarnia. Maybe you should talk to the member from Sarnia. Money is going into goldcorp racial net zero which will dramatically cut their operating costs because they don't need ventilation with electric vehicles. Maybe he should talk to his northern members because not only will he force out companies because it will cost \$74 a tonne under your system. You won't have any money to reinvest in industry being carbonized and you won't leave families with unaffordable energy bills --Terrible.