

Summary of Question Period for Monday March 27/17

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Date: Mon, 27 Mar 2017 12:07:10 -0400
Attachments: Q.P. SummaryMar27-17.doc (59.9 kB); 20170327 - Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript.doc (122.88 kB)

Please see the select or full summaries of today's Question Period.

MPP Miller/Jones (PC) to Minister Sandals and Minister Naqvi re: government advertising

>>MPP Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the **Premier**. Mr. Speaker, despite this government creating many of its own problems, they are once again using taxpayer dollars in an attempt to save themselves. The auditor general has stated that the **Premier's** recent hydro ads, quote, convey a positive impression of the current government -- Pat-on-the-back type of advertisement. The ads would not have had under the previous legislation, close quote. Two years ago, when the government reduced the oversight of the auditor general, the Deputy **Premier** stated, quote -- this legislation expands the oversight of our advertising and clarifies what is in fact considered partisan, close quote. Speaker, given the auditor's comments, can the **Premier** really say that the auditor's powers to block partisan advertising have been expanded?

>> Minister Sandals: Yes. Thank you very much. I want to point out that we need a little bit of a reality check here. The Ontario legislature, the Ontario government is the only government in Canada that actually has an advertising act that lays out the rules. And in fact the ads in question follow the legislation, are consistent with the rules that are set out and the budget has been set out by the legislature. And they are not in contempt of the legislature, and I would point out that this much loved legislation in original form, that they voted against it.

>>MPP Miller: I think the Minister 's forget ago couple other facts. Two years ago you changed the legislation to make the auditor general --

[Applause] These hydro ads are not the first time this government has funded partisan ads through taxpayer funds. The government's pension panel cost Ontarians almost \$800,000. The auditor called those ads self-congratulatory and stated that they had added no value to the public. In the last two years, this government has spent nearly \$6 million Of taxpayer money on a s Eries of ads containing on the environment. The auditor says -- Self-congratulatory and in some cases misleading. Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** restore the auditor general's authority to review government funded ads?

>> Minister Naqvi: Member opposite is forgetting some fact was that it was her government when they were in power that ran under Mike Harris's leadership advertising words \$400 million. Speaker, \$400 million. And when this party and this government came into office, one of the undertakings they took brought in a piece of legislation that would ensure that we do not have that kind of Mike Harris style government. And, Speaker, you wonder how Tories vote about that bill? They voted against that bill. So did the NDP. So I would like to ask the member opposite what were you thinking then? Why did you not support for that bill that creates one of the most strictest and stringent restriction on government advertising in Canada, Speaker. The only legislature that has a law like this. They have very little ground to stand on, Speaker.

MPP McNaughton (PC) to Minister Duguid (Economic Development and Trade) re: Ontario Chamber of Commerce

>> MPP McNaughton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier. Many groups and organizations are simply ignored when they come to Queen's Park to meet with this government. So I strongly urge the Premier and her government to listen and act upon what is being said here today in the legislature. Speaker, as the past president of the Strathroy and District Chamber of Commerce I can tell you that the members and leaders of the chamber of commerce are some of the most active, engaged and involved people in our community as a vital organization here in the province. But, Speaker, only 24% of the Ontario chamber of commerce membership is confident in the Ontario economy. Speaker, how can the Premier stand here and say that the economy is on track when three out of four members of the chamber of commerce lack confidence in the economic outlook in the province of Ontario?

>> Premier Wynne: Minister of economic development and growth.

>> Minister Duguid: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by welcoming the Ontario chamber of commerce here to Queen's Park today. I don't know if this government has a partner that we've worked more closely with than our friends at the Ontario chamber of commerce. When it comes to developing the economic strategies, Mr. Speaker, that have taken Ontario to the forefront in Canada in economic growth, the Ontario chamber of commerce has been with us every step of the way -- chamber of commerce. They supported and urged us to make the investments in infrastructure. The \$100 billion over the last ten years. 160 billion we're investing over the next 12. They've urged us and supported us in making investments in our people in building one of the best education systems anywhere in the world today. And, Mr. Speaker, they've urged us and supported us in our commitment to innovation. That's building the next generation economy here in Ontario so we're in a position to lead the world.

>> Minister McNaughton: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the Premier. Speaker, the tilt of the business confidence survey Canadian that -- indicate that Ontario business is in a

delicate position. Chamber members are unsure of the stability of the provincial economy and critical of the impact Liberal policy will have on their organizations. This lack of confidence is causing businesses to hold off on hiring, investment and ultimately growth here in Ontario. Speaker, the most recent example is fiat Chrysler, which is now planning to wind down its transport operations in Windsor, affecting nearly 300 jobs. Speaker, all of this stems from the burden of input costs that this Liberal government is placing on businesses. Speaker, the Ontario chamber of commerce is our largest, most inclusive incredible business network. Why does the Premier refuse to listen to Ontario's business leaders like the Ontario chamber of commerce?

>> Minister Duguid: There's never been a time that I can recall when our business community should be more confident in our economy here in Ontario than today. We're talking about an economy, Mr. Speaker, whose unemployment rate is at a level not seen for over a decade, Mr. Speaker. The lowest level it's been in ten years. We're talking about an economy that's seen the creation of 700,000 net new jobs across this province, Mr. Speaker. We're talking an economy that's not only leading the country in growth. It's leading the g-7 in growth, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about an economy that's attracting more foreign direct investment here in this province than any other jurisdiction in north America. Mr. Speaker, our business leaders are confident in this economy. They're investing in this economy in record amounts. They're creating jobs in this economy. And they're doing it in partnership with our government, in synch with our economic development strategy. This is a great time to invest in --