

Summary of Question Period for Tues. May 09/17

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

MPP Clark (PC) to Minister Naqvi (House Leader) re: ministerial staff and lobbying

>> MPP Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the government House leader. There's a one-year cooling off period for Ministerial staffers [who](#) leave government that doesn't go far enough. Staffers should not be permitted to lobby for any companies or organizations [that they have](#) had direct dealings with while in government. That's regardless of whichever ministry the lobbying is directed at. We saw what happened in the Minister of Environment's chief of staff went motoring over to Tesla. In the same month, the government announced lucrative subsidies for buyers. Mr. Speaker, will the government House leader help us close that loophole. Does he want the Liberal revolving door to continue?

>> Minister Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Speaker, we have very strict rules when it comes to the requirements for lobbyists. Speaker will know under the lobby registration, we have enhanced those rules to ensure that any staff that works here, when they go in private sector, the restriction that's placed upon them to lobby the same ministry, Speaker, those rules remain. And if there is any opportunity for us to ensure that there are stricter rules in place, we always look at them. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is we have done a tremendous amount of work in making sure that our government is transparent and our government is accountable. In fact, Speaker, what we have seen most of those times, the opposition has opposed those initiatives. -- Initiatives. They have not supported those initiatives. Where your focus remains on serving the people of Ontario. We're not interested in the partisan game they continue to play.

>> MPP Clark: The saddest thing about the Liberal lobbyist revolving door is a lack of accountability. Integrity commissioner investigations involving Ministerial staff are publicly unavailable. These investigations which review cases such as conflicts of interest should be transparent and made public. It's unacceptable that the commissioner's report currently can be stuffed away on a Minister's desk. Ministers shouldn't decide if the information is made public. It should be a legislative requirement. So, Mr. Speaker, will the government House leader commit to ending the secrecy by making the results of those investigations public, yes or no? Thank you.

>> Minister Naqvi: I think our integrity commissioner does a very good and thorough job when it comes to investigating matters. Tiff opportunity to sit on the board of internal

economy. I have had the chance to meet with the integrity commissioner as members from all parties on that board as well. And he continues to talk about how he is investing more resources in ensuring that lobbyist register extradition and all the accountability associated within the legislation is fully met. Clearly, Speaker, you know, this line of questioning is nothing but a distraction tactic from the opposition because they don't want to talk about a very good budget that is going to build a stronger and healthier Ontario. They don't want to talk about -- Speaker, the Conservatives do not want to talk about -- How we're making medicine free for children under 25 years old and under, we're lowering the electricity bill by 5%, we have a fair housing plan that is going to make housing more affordable.

MPP Brown (PC) to Minister Naqvi (Attorney General and House Leader) re: government accountability

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House lead. Since he did not resign and would not take responsibility, let me ask him this: a few of Mr. Speaker, it comes as no surprise to the Liberals that some people over the last 14 years have questioned the integrity of this government. You know, gas plant scandal, e-health, orange spending scandal and now Canada Goose. Mr. Speaker, that is why I ask, will the Liberals help cleaning up Queen's Park and the government of Ontario?

>> Minister Naqvi: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm very glad to respond to the question that the member opposite has raised. Speaker, we are very proud of the work we have done in strengthening accountability when it comes to government and government of Ontario. Speaker, you may recall when we came into office in 2003, that party, the opposition party, left almost a \$6 billion deficit. That was hidden. That was hidden from the eyes of Ontarians. They told everybody the books are balanced. When we came in office and we -- Speaker, when we came in office in 2003 and asked the auditor general at that time to look at the books, what we found was a huge billion dollar deficit that the Conservative party under Mike Harris and this leader left behind.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the government House leader, I asked a serious question about ethics and accountability and the government is talking about 2003. This is a government that faced five Opp investigations and they are proud of their record on ethics and accountability. It's unbelievable. They're that out to lunch. Now, Mr. Speaker. There are loopholes out there. New rules stop Ministers and staff from attending fundraisers, there are no rules that Ministers and their staff can't elicit personal donations. There's still cash for access in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, will the Liberals commit today -- Will the government House leader commit that this Liberal government will ensure that there will be no more soliciting donations from their own Ministerial stakeholders, yes or no? It's a very clear question.

>> Minister Naqvi: Well, Speaker, it is important to remember what happened in 2003 when the opposition were in government hit a \$6 billion deficit. As a result of that, Speaker, we made sure that we brought in very specific important accountable measures in place so that that type of behaviour never takes place. As a result, Speaker, one of the things we did was to require the auditor general to look at -- As a result of that, Speaker, we changed the law and we required the auditor general to ensure that before any election, the public books

are audited by the auditor general so that the numbers are provided in clarity in full rights to all parties, Mr. Speaker. That was a very important step. Not to mention, Mr. Speaker -- And, Speaker, as a result, we also brought in regulation on government advertising in which the opposition, the Conservatives voted against.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the government House leader, once again, I ask a serious question about ethics and accountability ensuring that Minister s do not fundraise off their own stakeholders. And I got an answer that was completely irrelevant. The government should be ashamed of the record on ethics and kbility. Accountability. Five open investigations. We talk about criminal investigations. We have to ask, which one? Mr. Speaker, I will ask again, right now, there are big loopholes in this cash for access reform. Minister s had fundraising targets to raise off jheir stakeholders. And so if I can't get a commitment from the government House leader to stop fundraising off stakeholders, will he work with us to make sure that having these fundraising targets for Minister s becomes illegal in the province of Ontario, yes or no? Please answer the question for the first time today.

>> Minister Naqvi: Well, Mr. Speaker, this feels like the member opposite, the leader of the opposition is making things as he's going along because I think he's totally forgotten bill 2, the extensive work we did in reforming fundraising in the province of Ontario, making it one of the most accountable and stringent rules around fundraising. I think he's forgotten that we have banned corporate and union donations, that we have required all MPP s and other candidates from attending fundraising events, Speaker. We have limited donations, donation limits significantly by 90%, Speaker, and then we are opposed to third party advertising. Somehow he's forgotten. He's choosing to forget. He's trying to distract. He's trying to distract from a very positive budget that we have put forward that's going to build a strong and healthy Ontario. Mr. Speaker, he's trying to distract from the fact he has no policy.

MPP Horwath (NDP) to Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: sale of another portion of Hydro One

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question is for the acting Premier. Yesterday we learned the Premier is selling off another batch of shares from Hydro One. They're still refusing to listen to the majority of Ontarians who say no to privatization of our electricity system. When will the Premier actually start listening to the people that she's supposed to be serving, Speaker ?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise to say that yesterday's ranch of broadening the ownership of Hydro One brought in an additional \$2.8 billion for the province, Mr. Speaker. That \$2.8 billion exceeds, Mr. Speaker, the \$9 billion target that we had, 5 billion to pay down debit, 4 billion to go into infrastructure. Well, guess what, Mr. Speaker ? That number is now \$9.6 billion, Mr. Speaker, with more money going into infrastructure. And where is that infrastructure going, Mr. Speaker ? Well, let me talk about this. Right across our province, we're going to have infrastructure built. And I can start off and look at the

one here. Hamilton lrt, the Hamilton go bus facility on Wentworth, Mr. Speaker, that's in the leader of the third party's own riding, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that we're going to invest billions of dollars right now, Mr. Speaker, across the province building Ontario up.

>> Andrea Horwath: Nobody buys that nonsense for a minute, Speaker. 80% of Ontarians oppose the privatization of Hydro One. And it's really sad that this is the only government in the history of Ontario that can't figure out how to build infrastructure without selling off a treasured revenue generating public asset when the vast majority of Ontarians don't want it sold off. Families, business owners, municipalities, ngos, they have all told the Premier loud and clear to stop this wrong headed selloff. People need relief from their soaring energy bills, not to hear that the Premier is going to do even more damage to our already broken system. Why does the Premier insist on moving ahead with this ridiculous selloff when what the people of Ontario need is for her to finally admit that she is wrong and abandon this scheme once and for all? Thank you.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the people of Ontario need is infrastructure investment, Mr. Speaker. That's what this party is doing. That's what this government is doing, Mr. Speaker, investing in infrastructure right across the province. In Kitchener- Waterloo, the ion regional lrt, in welland the niagara health region is actually getting significant investments, in Oshawa, and, of course, Mr. Speaker the list continues to go on and on with investments. And that's what we can do, Mr. Speaker, when we actually make \$2.8 billion, a total of \$9.6 billion, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, Mr. Speaker, this was a difficult decision. But doing the right thing for the province, Mr. Speaker, takes difficult decisions. Mr. Speaker, we're very happy to make sure that we're investing in infrastructure from Kenora to Ottawa to Sudbury to Toronto and Windsor and everywhere else in between, Mr. Speaker, unlike that party.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, you know, the people of Ontario know numbers better than the people that are sitting across the aisle here. \$9 billion doesn't come close to the \$190 billion that they claim that they're going to be spending on infrastructure. The bottom line is the figures don't match, Speaker. They didn't need to sell off Hydro One to build infrastructure in the province and they darn well know it. And you know what, Speaker ? Ontarians did not vote for this. The Premier has no mandate to sell off our public hydro utility. Ontarians have been very, very clear that they don't want this selloff to continue. Why does this Premier think that her opinion matters more than the opinion of millions and millions of Ontarians?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the billions and billions of dollars that we're investing in infrastructure, paying down debt, Mr. Speaker, is actually going to have a benefit for this province for decades to come, Mr. Speaker, unlike that party over there, Mr. Speaker, that once again has no understanding of how this system works or even the energy system, Mr. Speaker. A firm commitment offering means, Mr. Speaker, that we get that money from the investors right away and we're able to take that money, Mr. Speaker, and invest that in lrt in Hamilton. And I know she doesn't like the lrt investment in Hamilton, Mr. Speaker, which makes you scratch your head, Mr. Speaker. What kind of investment in infrastructure do they like? Obviously none, Mr. Speaker, because all they do is stand up and complain, Mr. Speaker. They have no plan on any of this. As I said, I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that this was a tough decision. I

recognize it was the right decision, Mr. Speaker. And when you make the right decision, you invest that in the people of Ontario and that's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. We're building Ontario up.