

Summary of Question Period for Wed. April 26/17

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MPP Brown (PC) to Minister Sousa (Finance) re: the upcoming budget

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. Tomorrow is a big day. The Liberals are allegedly tabling their first balanced budget in many years. But, Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns of the financial accountability officer and the auditor general that the government's numbers don't add up. We've heard descriptions in the media "Cooking the books," "It's a shell game," it's smoke and mirrors. Regardless of -- don't want to get into this accusation before or after the budget about anything that's happening between individuals and making an accusation so I'd like you to withdraw. Regardless of the term used, the evidence is that the independent officers are highlighting speaks to the fact the government's numbers do not add up. And when things don't add up for Liberal Ontario, there's usually only one result, and that's big tax increases or severe budget cuts. If the **Premier** could share with the legislature today which is it going to be? Given independent officers say the numbers don't add up, is it going to be a tax increase or deep cuts?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I know that the leader of the opposition will be in the legislature, will hear the budget speech tomorrow and I would think, Mr. Speaker, given his Conservative outlook on life he would be pleased that the books in the province are being brought to balance. He would see that as a positive thing. Mr. Speaker, I would say where we perhaps diverge is from my perspective and from our perspective, a balanced budget means that we have the opportunity to build on the foundation that we have already put in place in this province. We've been building infrastructure. We've been building roads and schools and hospitals and bridges, Mr. Speaker, and transit. We've been investing in children's education and in the education of our postsecondary students, Mr. Speaker. We now, Mr. Speaker, with a balanced budget have a responsibility to make -- Make sure we tackle the needs people are confronting in this globally uncertain economy, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, if it actually avs balanced budget, then I would be pleased. But when independent officers of parliament are saying the numbers don't add up, that rings alarm bells across the province. The Minister of finance has been claim interesting will be a major booster shock for health care funding. But in January the financial accountability officer reported that the government would need to slash

its health care budget by 2.8 billion over the next years if it was to meet their balanced budget targets. Once again my question to the **Premier** is who are we to believe the financial accountability officer or Jeff Sousa? Please enlighten the legislature.

>>Minister Sousa: We have a recipe for success, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the numbers do speak for themselves. We're increasing our revenues. We're growing our economy. We're exceeding Canada, the US And the g-7, and we're balancing the books tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. We're balancing the books next year. We're balancing the books the year after that and we're investing in the people of Ontario.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. The reality is no one believes this recipe the Minister of finance is putting forward. No one believes this recipe. Let me share the words of the financial accountability officer. I quote -- the outlook for the budget balance has deteriorated and concluded Ontario's budget would be expected to remain in deficit over the next five years. Will the Liberals come clean? You've got the financial accountability officer saying one thing. You've got the Minister of finance saying something entirely different. So to the **Premier** -- who do you expect Ontarians to believe? The independent legislative oversight or the Minister of finance?

>>Minister Sousa: So, Mr. Speaker, independent agencies around the world, here in Canada, the conference board of Canada has cited that Ontario's numbers are the most transparent with the greatest integrity of any other government in Canada. Every year, every year the opposition and naysayers say Ontario could never come to balance. Ontario cannot do say WHA they say it will do and we exceed -- Exceeded target year over year, Mr. Speaker. We've been deliberate, consistent and we're balancing the budget. More importantly the people who believe it are the people who have job this is year, Mr. Speaker. Over 700,000 more jobs since the depth of the recession. It's families who have more to care for their families, Mr. Speaker. It's about them and we're delivering for the people of Ontario.