

[Transcript] Peter Tabuns in the Media Studio - May 12, 2017

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MPP: Peter Tabuns

Media: Jeffords, Zochodne, Ferguson, Jones, Bliss

[START TRANSCRIPT]

Tabuns:

- --potential cabinet documents leaked by a whistleblower confirm what people already suspected
- Ontarians will be paying for Wynne's hydro plan, one way or another
- Yesterday, the Minister of Energy hinted that there were more—perhaps updated—secret numbers on this plan
- I'm calling for the Financial Accountability Officer to look at all numbers
- And I'm calling on Premier Wynne to turn over all documents to allow that to happen
- Wynne is borrowing billions to get herself and her Liberal through the election
- Bills will skyrocket after that
- And that shows her priorities—votes for Kathleen Wynne, not affordability for

families

- The NDP has a plan to get hydro bills down by as much as 30 percent and keep them down
- That includes putting Hydro One back into public hands
- That's still a plan that we support and put forward
- And with that, I'm open to questions

*Jeffords: I'm wondering about *inaudible* what the FAO can, I guess, uncover when he, if he looked into this plan?*

Tabuns:

- Well, I think we need to know fully the scale of what's going on here
- We had the Minister yesterday saying that, in fact, the numbers that had been leaked weren't accurate, weren't the real story
- I guess there'll be question marks about that
- I think having the FAO actually go through the numbers and provide what people will see is an objective assessment—an evaluation—of what's there would help everyone understand what's going on
- And, frankly, we're going to be asked to vote on this in the next 8 days
- I don't know about you—I don't trust Liberal numbers
- I would like to have the Financial Accountability Officer do his assessment so that we're making a somewhat-more informed decision on what's before us

Jeffords: so do you think the FAO needs to look at this and issue some sort of finding before there's a vote on the act—

Tabuns:

- I would prefer that he do that
- If he can't do it in time—and I think it'll be very good if he did it in time—if he can't do it in time, at least get the information out so people know what they're dealing with, as this goes forward
- Because, as you're aware, Kathleen Wynne is going to try to jam this through the legislature in the next 8 days

Jones: and you just want him to request the documents, get the documents, then just make them public somewhere, rather than taking the time to do that—

Tabuns:

- But, but, but also do his analysis
- He's a smart guy

Media: in [2] weeks?

Tabuns:

- It's a tough one

Media: he's got almost 3 weeks, right?

Tabuns:

- Actually, that's true
- Because there's a constituency week—the 8 sitting days—yes, that's true
- Thank you
- Once again, the media proves its worth in a democratic society

Bliss: are there any procedural delays you guys can, sort of, throw into the mix to buy more time?

Tabuns:

- Paul, that's a good question
- There are—as you're aware, around this place, there are occasionally some delays that can be useful
- But I've also dealt with governments that have been able to push their way through
- It's not clear that we'll be able to hold things up enough to actually have an informed debate with public consultation
- Certainly that's not what the Liberals are interested in
- They just want to push this through, jam it through, in the 8 sitting days left

Media: Do you think the government should table immediately, its long term energy plan? Instead of doing it post legislation passing, post-FAO analysis and so much, this minister's here telling us yesterday well these numbers are inaccurate. OK well, you're weeks, months away from the [L-Tab] you obviously have some numbers you are dealing with, should they table it immediately?

Tabuns:

- Well first I should say yeah
- They should table it immediately
- But beyond that two things
- One, they were working on this last year
- I expected this long term energy plan to be out in February or march
- So I think there are real questions as to, why is it taking them this long to put out that plan
- Secondly, my experience with their long-term energy plan it's not always clear what's going on there, it's hard to get at the back numbers
- So, I'm not sure the long-term energy plan is going to illuminate all that needs to be illuminated
- It won't necessary clarify all that has to be clarified

Ferguson: are you concerned at all that, you know, Thibeault was saying that yesterday, Peter, that they want the opposition to pass this and they're going to tar you guys with holding up an immediate 25 percent rate cut for people. So how are you going to, you know, fight that, that, that angle that the Liberals are going to be pushing?

Tabuns:

- Well I guess there are a few things
- First they already gave the eight percent cut by taking the HST off
- The Ontario Energy Board declared a rate cut May 1st
- So I'm not sure how much is left to actually to, to come through
- But the other part of this is that I think a lot of people are upset at the idea that they are going to get a short-term break before the election and then get hit with skyrocketing bills in a few years
- People like the idea that the long term problems in the energy system, the electricity system, are dealt with

- They don't like the idea that their money is going to be used to make things look good before an election and they are going to be hit with a big bill afterwards
- They don't like that at all
- Other questions?

Ferguson: Do you think the Liberals have structured this – you know the inflation for the next 4 or 5 years, limiting the increases to inflation – so if they get reelected they've got time to – fix these future increases?

- I think they've structured it so that there will be two elections that will be fought with this plan in place
- And the judgement day will come after - that
- They wanted a 4 year gap
- Whether they are actually going to correct problems-
- They are not going to bring hydro one back into public ownership
- I haven't seen an interest in dealing with the substantial structural problems that arise from privatization
- So I don't think they are going to deal with those deep problems
- I just don't see it
- It's not who they are

Bliss: The Minister says those numbers are wrong, do you think he knows what the numbers are?
inaudible

Tabuns:

- That's an open question Paul
- I don't know
- What I saw today was he was saying they were draft
- Well, something that's draft doesn't mean that it didn't necessarily make it to the end of the process
- We want the financial accountability officer- who we have some confidence in- to actually go through and come out and say this is what the numbers are
- I don't want to have to rely on a Minister who doesn't know which draft of the plan he is dealing with

Zochodne: - FAO can actually turn it around in time for a vote on the legislation, or are you just going to end up flying blind on – on it?

Tabuns:

- I – I'm not sure he can turn it around in time
- I'm hopeful
- Even if he can't turn it around in time at least the people of Ontario will know what they are dealing with if he does the analysis and brings out the numbers

- And I think that alone is worth the exercise
- People need to know what's real and what's not

Bliss: How long before you hear back from the FAO on something like this?

Tabuns:

- Paul I can't – I can't tell you
- In the past the FAO –

Bliss: Will they get back to you before end of business day today. What's the process? Would you send a letter?

Tabuns

- In the past I've had the FAO at least get back to me in a few days
- Saying I've got it, I'm looking at it
- Or I've got it and it's going to take me a while to do an analysis

Zochodne: Can you undo the Liberal plan? Or have they structured it in a way that they sort of, like, salted the earth and you can't go back on it?

Tabuns:

- The Hydro One sale, we know we can undo
- We know it's going to be tough
- We're still analyzing the bill that's before us
- So Geoff, I can't give you a definitive answer
- I don't know what sort of traps are built into it
- And until I do, I can't give you a definitive answer
- Sorry

Zochodne: According to the Globe and Mail some of these banks still have Hydro One shares and so. So you might have an opportunity there?

Tabuns:

- We will see
- We will see
- Other questions?
- Allison?

Jones: Another topic, what's your reaction to the government's announcement this morning that it's going around Bombardier to strike this deal with Alstom?

Tabuns:

- Well, as someone who has waited at a street car stop for a street car, I can understand the frustration
- I, I, I think what's maddening is they've known for years that there's problem with Bombardier delivering
- They could have a few years ago gone to Bombardier and say, 'look, you're not delivering on the street cars in Toronto, we have this deal with you, what are you doing to make sure we don't get stuck in the same position as the TTC is stuck in?'
- So I think this is like the, the way they've handled other problems
- They, they wait until things are really desperate, and then they may act
- I wish that there was a problem they'd talked to Bombardier years ago

Jeffords: Are you concerned maybe that you're paying a premium to get this deal in place to offset the Bombardier problems?

Brown:

- *Shawn I don't actually know*
- *All I know is they are looking at or they have talked to Alstom*
- *I haven't seen the numbers*
- *It's possible they're paying a premium to offset the problem*
- *But I don't know that*

Press Secretary: Anything else? Thank you very much

Tabuns:

- Thank you

[END TRANSCRIPT]