

TRANSCRIPT – John Vanthof Budget Announcement Response – March 7, 2018

MPP: John Vanthof

[START TRANSCRIPT]

Benzie: --runs on balancing the budget—

Vanthof:

- *laughter*

Benzie: --they haven't seen your election platform—

Vanthof:

- And, and you will see our election platform and it will be fully costed
- But the first thing I'd like to comment—when I was listening to the minister's speech and he said that a government should be evaluated based on this budget
- And to me the government should be judged on their last 15 years
- And across the province, we've got people waiting in hospital hallways, waiting in ERs
- We've got people who are cutting their prescriptions in half and ending up in ER because they can't afford their prescriptions
- You know, we've got a lot of issues in this province
- And it shouldn't be evaluated—an old, tired government like this shouldn't be evaluated—on a budget full of promises
- It should be evaluated on its history and where its direction has been and its direction, obviously, hasn't been [for] the ordinary people of this province

Benzie: is the NDP going to balance the books?

Vanthof:

- Like I said, you will, you will see our, our program—our, our platform—it'll be fully costed and at that time you're all welcome to come and we will talk about it

Media: when is that going to be?

Vanthof:

- *laughter*
- Well, we've, we've released some of our biggest platform pieces already
- Pharmacare we've released—quite a while ago—our platform for changing hydro, the hydro prices, which doesn't include the Fair Hydro Plan which is basically going to be—what their Fair Hydro Plan is is a credit card payment, paying your mortgage credit—it's not going to include that
- So we are releasing parts
- I can't give the exact date for the platform, but it will be soon

*Rath: John, the NDP seem to be—the NDP seem to be flying under the, under the radar *inaudible*. Are you blowing a golden opportunity to—*

Vanthof:

- Well, no, I don't—look, what we've seen in Ontario in the last month and a half—we've, we've got a, a tired government on one side, and the opposition, the loyal official opposition are a train-wreck
- So everybody's looking at the train-wreck
- And, quite frankly, there's a difference between looking a train-wreck or a car crash, or wanting to be in the car crash
- So I think once the car crash—once they're picking up the remnants, and people see what the options are, they'll realize that they do have a, a real option for change, a change for the better, and that's us, the NDP

*Media: *inaudible* poll *inaudible* morning—well, you're right, it suggested that 4 out of 5 in the province wanted to see a change in the party that *inaudible* Ontario. But mostly they seem to lean towards *inaudible* the Progressive Conservatives. You—what do the NDP have to do to become the first choice?*

Vanthof:

- Well, well, right now—you guys are, you're reporters, right?—you've seen all the oxygen that the PC train-wreck is taking
- It's hard to break that—that's the story right now
- I think once that dies down, and people realize—because, don't forget, the Tories have to come up with a platform yet, they don't really have one—
- They've got yesterday's platform, perhaps tomorrow's, they've—so once that dies down, and people start really take a look at the party who actually comes up with a lot of ideas, that actually are very beneficial to this province, they're going to take a long, serious look at the NDP and make the decision

*Media: *inaudible* a lot of investment in social programs. How do you create a platform that *inaudible* PC and the Liberal platform *inaudible*?*

Vanthof:

- Well, if you look, you know—look at the Liberal platforms *inaudible* look at Liberal governments we've had for the last 15 years, Liberals are really good at promising
- And they're not really that great at delivering
- And it's frustrating, it's frustrating for us, that we'd always come up with things that really help people, and we have to drag the Liberals kicking and screaming, to do it partway
- And I think people are coming to the, to the, to the conclusion that, you know what, let's actually elect the people who actually come up with the ideas and who are working for people and who are actually going to implement what they say they're going to do

*Media: are you cynical about the timing of announcing *inaudible* spending *inaudible* back in deficit right before an election?*

Vanthof:

- Yeah *scoffs*
- Let's face it, like, this, this budget is an election document
- You know, there's, there's no other way to describe it
- When you're going to drop a budget right before a fixed-election date
- And that's just the way it works out
- But of course this is an election budget

Media: are you guys waiting to see what's in their budget to, you know, to try to change up anything with your platform?

Vanthof:

- No, not necessarily
- You, you, you've seen—like, what I've just *inaudible*, we put out a pharmacare plan, we put out an elec-, the, the hydro plan
- We are, you know, we're being thoughtful, we're being careful
- The last thing we want is to actually put something out there that isn't going to work for the people of Ontario

*Media: *inaudible* promises, right? *inaudible* their *inaudible* investments in childcare, affordable care for seniors, *inaudible*--*

Vanthof:

- I, I think people in general are becoming quite cynical with promising the world and everyone knows—a lot of people assume that when a politician says something, it's not true anyway
- And, and that's one thing, that's one thing, that when I decided to run for the NDP—and my colleagues—we're not in that business
- What we're going to—we're going to tell people what, what we think should be done, based on what they've told us, and we're going to, we're going to deliver on that

Media: OK, thank you.

Vanthof:

- Thank you

[END TRANSCRIPT]