

MEDIA EVENT: MINISTERS' PRE-CAUCUS SCRUMS

From: "Lepage, Guy (CAB)" <guy.lepage@ontario.ca>
To: "@CAB-QPscrums" <cab-qpscrums@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Cc: "@CAB-Issues" <cab-issues@msgov.gov.on.ca>
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MEDIA EVENT: MINISTERS' PRE-CAUCUS SCRUMS

Oct. 17, 2017

Location:

Outside East Doors in the Legislature

Speakers:

Minister Matthews; PC Leader Brown; NDP MPP Tabuns

Media Attendance:

Print – 4

TV – 5

Radio – 0

Media Outlets:

Rushowy – Star; Reynolds – QP Briefing; Smith – QP Today; Global; Rath - CHCH Television; Tumelty - City TV; Wu – Fairchild TV; Lagogianes – CP24; Jeffords – CP

Media Questions:

Questions for Minister Matthews:

Q: (Joined in progress)

We'd like this to be resolved but we do have to let the collective bargaining system work. And part of that system is strike. And if there is any way to get students back in the classroom and faculty back in the classroom of course (Inaudible) in doing that. But this is between the colleges through the College Employer Council and OPSEU. So I believe that the solution is at the table. I know that they can find a solution without interference from us.

Q: Unidentified: So if you reached out to both sides and encourage them to go back to the table?

So we are letting the process unfold.

Q: Jeffords: So you have not been in contact with them then?

I personally have not.

Q: Unidentified: So it's just that you are publicly calling on them to return?

Exactly.

Q: McGrath: So when the Premier says she is encouraging this, is that just rhetoric that we are supposed to believe?

There is a collective bargaining process. And the two sides have the solution. They just have to find that together. So we're we are really concerned about the students, right? And obviously our college system is there to support and support students and when it's not working, when they're not in school, we're all concerned about that.

Q: Jeffords: What do you think about the plight of contract faculty? And some of the assertions that the union is making. Their conditions, their work at the colleges and how they would like to see those slots pulled back and full-time positions created?

I'm not going to comment on the issues that are being discussed at the table. But I can tell you that about half of the teaching hours, about half are delivered by full time faculty. So it's not as out of balance as some might think.

Q: Unidentified: What do you want to say to students who are worried about missing midterms or losing their semester?

I know this is sacrifice for students going to school right. They're not working or not working as much as if they were in school. This is their future. So I hear their anxiety and I share their anxiety. But I think we have to let the process work. And I guess the other thing I would say to students is it is very very rare we've had labor disruptions in the past and it's very very rare for students to actually lose credits. And they figure out a way to get students back on track.

Q: Unidentified: What about for college that have programs with universities? Is your ministry clarifying what their role should be? Because I know there's been some confusion if classes should continue in that case?

So I'd have to look at the specific issue. Thank you all.

Q: Lagogianes: Minister quick question. Putting Your Best Foot Forward, what is your take on that?

I think it's a good bill and I'm a bit surprised actually by how many people are standing up, both men and women, and saying Yeah why should any employer require you to do something that hurts them.

Questions for PC Leader Brown:

Q: Wu: The Auditor General said in the report there would be \$26B net that doesn't show on the government's books. so what's your take on that?

Well, I think this shows again you can't trust anything Kathleen says. The Auditor General in the report, it's scathing. It says the government is making up their own rules for accounting. Like when you read that in an official Auditor-General's document, that the government is making up their own rules for accounting to hide deficit and debt, it's wrong. Kathleen Wynne should come clean and tell the people that for political purposes she's wasting \$4B. The way they're doing this is going to blow \$4B and that's, you know, I can't, I can't even imagine she's pulling this weight on Ontario families.

Q: Lagogianes: Do you think this is going to be the key issue out on the stump as we go forward?

Well there's a lot of areas where I think the government has really let down the public. But I have to say on Hydro, the fact they've seen these skyrocketing hydro rates and now we're going to find, now we find out, that hydro rates are going to skyrocket after the election and everyone is going to pay more and the government is making up their own rules for accounting. Yeah. This is absolutely a serious election issue. Their incompetence, their untrustworthiness on hydro has meant every Ontario family is paying more. What Kathleen Wynne has done is give every Ontarian another, another mortgage payment. And that's her government's conduct on hydro. And frankly, you know, the reason we got in this mess is they taking care of their own. They were helping liberal insiders. If you look at the Auditor-General's previous report that we've overpaid by 9.2B on hydro for these contracts that Kathleen when Dalton McGuinty signed. Of the 30 mega deals those companies donated 1.3 million dollars to the Ontario Liberal Party. Now they're trying to borrow money to hide it but they're doing it in a fashion that just wastes billions more. This is, this is well beyond the size of the gas plant scandal. This is. this is an astonishing number -- \$4B that Ontario families are going to have to struggle to pay because of the dishonesty of Kathleen Wynne.

Q: Lagogianes: Fraser Institute report that came out today as well talking hundreds thousands of jobs lost as well, between '08 and only 15 directly tied to electricity, energy.

Everywhere I go in Ontario I hear examples in every community. A business that did their expansion elsewhere or couldn't afford. To keep the doors open. We have lost tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ontario because of hydro prices. The fact that Frasers to report just makes the factual case for how that's been it puts an end to the fake spin we've been from this government saying that everything's rosy. They're trying to say everything is great in Ontario and that, you know, that the businesses have not lost jobs because of their hydro negligence. The reality is very different and I am proud to be a leader of the only party at Queens Park that has said from the beginning that the Green Energy Act has been an unmitigated disaster. It was used to support liberal friends. You know, the NDP and the liberals supported all along. They haven't come clean, they haven't told Ontario they apologize for their support. For those bad contracts, we're still paying for today and the Fraser Institute report makes

that very clear.

Q: Wu: So if you are going to get elected next year as the Premier, will you scrap the Fair hydro plan?

It is an unmitigated disaster. I voted against it. We're going to have to see the obligations that are now put on Ontario. On the Green Energy Act, I've made it abundantly clear that we are going to end the Green Energy Act. They created a monster here in hydro policy and frankly we're going to have to clean up their mess.

Questions for NDP MPP Tabuns:

Q:Rath: What do you think of the AG's report?

Well it's a damning report. Let's face it people all over Ontario are having trouble with our hydro bills. What the A.G. came out and said was the Premier has borrowed an extra \$4B or is going to spend an extra \$4B to make the books look good. And we're going to have to pay for it. So people should be aware their bills are high and they're going to get a lot higher as this scheme goes forward. People are having a tough time. They don't want to spend the equivalent of four gas plant scandals to make the government look good.

Q: Wu: So the \$26B net debt wasn't showing in the government's books. What does that say to the government for the next election?

They are doing everything to make their books look good before the election and they don't care what it costs people who pay their hydro bills. As you're probably aware after the next election bills are going to shoot up like a rocket because they're just spending this extra money to make the bills look good now. They don't care what happens after the election.

Q: Wu: So the ratepayers are going to pay \$4B for interest that...

They're going to pay an extra \$4B in interest beyond what they would have paid because they've set up this convoluted scheme to hide the expense, keep it off the government's books, we are borrowing money at a much more expensive rate and that's where that extra \$4B is going to hit your bill. Really, there are alternative. The NDP has come forward with a plan that does not involve borrowing tens of billions of dollars just to make the bills look good for a few years. Thank you all.

N.B.: Comments captured are not verbatim quotes

Prepared by:

Guy Lepage, Senior Issues Analyst
Craig Sumi, Manager, Corporate Issues