

Radio Transcript: CFRB Newstalk 1010 Interview with Patrick Brown

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*as requested by Jordan Lazarus

CFRB NEWSTALK 1010 INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK BROWN

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Speaker(s): Patrick Brown, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party

CFRB: Patrick Brown is here; leader of the opposition, head of Ontario's PC. Nice to see you again.

PATRICK BROWN, LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY: Great to be back in.

CFRB: Yesterday's Auditor General report on hydro had to almost be Christmas for the opposition parties; although Christmas at a pretty high cost.

BROWN: A high cost for Ontario families. It was shocking. I've never seen an AG report that scathing. When they use words like 'the government is making up their own accounting rules to hide deficits and debt'; making up their own rules? When a government makes up their own rules and you've passed a line that we haven't seen passed before....

CFRB: You don't buy their line of defense where they said these rules are being used in American business? Deloitte yesterday said that that was true.

BROWN: The Auditor General said these rules that they have made up don't apply to accounting rules in Canada; that there is huge new debt that's going to be on the back of Ontario families that make the terms the government use like 'balanced budget' words that they can't use; that they are false. And this is not the opposition party saying it, this is the independent, legislative oversight; this is the Auditor General who has no political agenda. This is simply to offer the facts to the people of Ontario. And not only are they saying right now the government is making up their own accounting rules; that's unheard of, the report also said that the way they're doing this, the way they're trying to hide it will have Ontario families paying an additional \$4 billion interest. This is like four gas plants; like that's astronomical. \$4 billion because the government wanted to have a political agenda to serve their self-interest before the election.

CFRB: Right. But it's also a political agenda that put more money in the pockets of the average person. Do you think that the sort of argle-bargle of the accounting means anything when somebody gets their monthly bill and goes, "Oh, it's lower."

BROWN: What the -- I think, AG was trying to say is that this is a charade. And so you will get a little bit more money before the election and then you're going to have that money taken back and much, much more. And so hydro rates are not only going to go up after the election, they are going to go

up astronomically; up 61 per cent. And so when the AG is saying the government is playing this accounting game; they're playing this charade to trick the public, by using -- by making up rules think about that; that every family in Ontario after the election is going to pay more. And right now people can barely afford their hydro bills. So it's cynical politics at its worst.

CFRB: Now we have both seen these memos that date back several years; I think 2014, about the file, and the casinos, and the slot machines and horse racing and stuff like that. I look at this stuff and I see a government that's quite callous in how it communicates internally. But I'm still not sure what the scandal is.

BROWN: Well you know what we learnt from the court documents in Guelph are actually quite shocking. This all goes back to the 2012 decision by the Liberal government to end a slot revenue sharing program at the horse racing industry. But if you look at the documents you've got John Wilkinson, a former Liberal cabinet minister, who was responsible for the file saying, I quote, "There will be 23,000 job losses and 27,000 dead horses." He then says, I quote, "This will be wedging both Tim and Andrea." That is the former PC leader and NDP leader. The fact that you've got a Liberal cabinet minister saying that there'll be 23,000 jobs lost and 27,000 dead horses for political gain, like....

CFRB: Well, they had already taken the decision. They're just offering some analysis back channel about something they've already done. I mean has there - what have been the job losses, were there dead horses?

BROWN: Well, you know they haven't shared that number.

CFRB: Certainly that's available to the public. You must talk to people in the business?

BROWN: Yeah and so when we've heard cases around the province of significant job losses and dead horses that you talk to anyone in the industry and they tell you tragic stories. But the fact that the government was saying 'this will result in'; like before the -- and I quote here, "This will result in;" that cynicism of the Liberal government knowing that this was the case and they thought it would wedge their political opponents I just don't think a government should be so callous with job losses and dead animals. And for that reason I have to say these court documents are explosive.

CFRB: Would you then favour that the government should have stayed in a deal that was costing us money with an industry that's going out of business?

BROWN: Well, I think the horse racing industry in rural Ontario was quite popular and yes the way they went about this was a big mistake. But I don't think anyone in Ontario, whether you live in the city of Toronto or whether you live in a rural community, I don't think anyone would be okay with -- as John Wilkinson said, "27,000 dead horses." The fact that that is something they were fine with, it just -- it makes my stomach turn John.

CFRB: This strikes me with respect to yesterday's news. So my question to you would be this; with what seven months to go to the election and Kathleen Wynne with 11 per cent favourability, are you going to pivot from running against Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals to what your government's actually going to look like.

BROWN: So two quick things here, John. First of all this isn't yesterday's news because it's going to civil trials. This is going to be --you're going to....

CFRB: Right but politically you're going after a government for something they did in 2014.

BROWN: But let me just say; this right now it would be 2018, where the top members of the Liberal government including Dalton McGuinty himself will have to testify at the civil trial. So this is not yesterday's news this is about to happen. In terms of where I want to take the province; I'm having my policy conference on -- at the end of November in Toronto and we've already got 139 resolutions. We'll be releasing a platform at some point after the convention and we will be talking about exactly

how I intend to get Ontario back on track and make this province the job-creating engine of Canada. And I can tell you when I'm talking about around the province, when I give speeches, is about the modern, inclusive PC Party that I'm building; about my four pillars of economic development, about investing in infrastructure, linking education to employment, affordable hydro rates, cutting red tape to make the promise more agile and more effective. I just want to create an environment where businesses of all size-- small business industry can invest again, grow again and hire again.

CFRB: Always good to see you. Hope you come back.

BROWN: Well thanks for having me on.

CFRB: Thank you sir. Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown.