
NEWSTALK 1010 THE RUSH INTERVIEW WITH PC LEADER DOUG FORD

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CFRB: That's right, Progressive Conservative leader Doug Ford - newly minted Progressive Conservative leader Doug Ford. How's it going?

DOUG FORD, PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER: Good guys. Great to be here. Voice is a little hoarse but I'm doing great. I'm feeling like a champion and our team, reached out to them they're feeling great too. We're going to make sure that we take this province back for the people.

CFRB: I don't spend too much time on it. But there are a lot of frustrated PC members that didn't get the vote. And then on Saturday a lot of people in that room that were pretty disappointed that everybody got kicked out - myself included - who got the boot with the rest of the media. I'm thinking What the hell is this what's going on here. Party didn't really update the membership. You had people - I think even you

FORD: I was frustrated as anything.

CFRB: The group that - the committee that put this together - they're no longer around. They were put together, now that's dismantled. And I've never seen - I'll be very frank, I have never seen more incompetence in my life. Who books a convention knowing there's a wedding and the size of it. Again it was too small to handle the amount of people coming. It was too quick. I said over and over again it should have been on the 24th or the week after. But that's that. And I want to apologize on behalf of the party making sure our members that that's never going to happen again. There was 125,000 people were unable to vote or couldn't vote. But again that's not going to happen any longer under my watch.

CFRB: I understand you had a conversation in a meeting yesterday in a secret location with Christine Elliott who of course was the runner up. What was said there?

FORD: Well we've been long-time friends we've been friends for over 25 years and a great person. And I just wanted to clear the air and she's agreed to come on our team and she's going to be a great asset. And I really look forward to Christine playing a critical role in our government along with Caroline - I had a conversation with Caroline yesterday and Tanya the night before and everyone's gone home. I have talked to numerous people numerous candidates and everyone's excited to move forward.

CFRB: You also had a conversation with the Premier today.

FORD: I did.

CFRB: A lot of people listening will probably find that strange that Doug Ford and Kathleen Wynne - not only did you share that chair within the hour - that you're sitting in now –

FORD: The chair's a little cold. Oh I'm sorry.

CFRB: You also shared a phone call today. So what was that like? Was it a cold phone call?

FORD: No it wasn't at all. You know I got to put politics aside some time and I appreciate the premier giving me a call and I told her straight up like I've said numerous times: Never underestimate Kathleen Wynne or the Liberals. She's a great debater. She's a smart person. We totally disagree on the way she's run the province but I never underestimate her. And she's a she's a bright person. So I look forward to getting in a debate with her. I look forward to the campaign. She's a great campaigner. But as I always say, she's never debated on Ford before so this is going to be interesting.

CFRB: For you, has that switch officially flipped? Are you now in campaign mode? Was it a matter of making or your acceptance speech at that when you were given the leadership and now it's full on full on –

FORD: Full on campaign mode. I talked to our executive yesterday of the party. I said we are all transitioning into campaign mode now and we're going full steam ahead. The MPPs, they don't need to be told, the caucus members, they know, everyone knows the game is on and we're going full steam ahead.

CFRB: These campaigns as you probably found out when you were running to be mayor of the city of Toronto, can be pretty taxing. They can be take a lot of toll on the family to have a sit down. Have you had time to sit down and talk to your family because I mean we're talking about not just the localized race here, we're talking about a provincial race. You are going to be pulled all different parts of the province. Have you had a sit down with the family and if so what did you say?

FORD: Yeah well all my kids grew up with us for the last 30 years. They were born into the political arena. They understand what it takes. You have to give back to the people. You have to serve the people. They fully understand. So I didn't really need to talk to them. They were excited. They were making calls for the last couple of weeks. My wife Carla, she's been engaged making phone calls but they understand. They understand. Unfortunately I don't think I've been home for three weeks. You know rolling in at 1:00. Leaving the office at 1:00 or 1:30 in the morning. But they know they know what it takes to serve the people and they're 100 percent behind me. I couldn't do it without them.

CFRB: Tanya Granic Allen who you mentioned, was standing behind you when you were giving a very late in the evening, 10:30 at night victory speech. You described her as fantastic. Have you made any deals with her or the social conservatives?

FORD: I don't make deals. I don't make deals with anyone. I'll tell you one thing. Tanya is an incredible person. She stood up for what she believes in and I commend her for that. And she brought a big part of the party really opened the doors to another whole section of the party that's been ignored and alienated. So we welcome everyone. We're going to have a big tent. We welcome NDP voters. We welcome Liberal voters, Green Party voters, our traditional base is basically what I just described there. And we welcome them to the PC party.

CFRB: When you talk about not making deals, is that something that legitimately you can you can stick with moving forward? Is that not the inevitable part of politics that some sort of deals have to be made along the way? Can you maintain that rigidity?

FORD: Well yeah, I just don't make deals. We make sure that we put the best person in the right place not because of any deal. We have some great candidates and great caucus members and we're going to make sure that everyone has a place in our government and they're going to do a great job. But the first thing is we're going to make sure we take care of the taxpayers, the grassroots people of this province that have been ignored for 30 years.

CFRB: We've got some great audio of the Premier to play for you. Let's start with the first because there are many and you know she didn't mince words this afternoon. We talked to her a little bit about whether or not a Doug Ford Progressive Conservative Party was her worst nightmare or her dream come true. This is what she said.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: I have been really clear that no matter who won the leadership our plan is the same. You know, because whoever was going to win that leadership out of the four, they all were talking about cutting. They all were talking about rolling back policies that are helping the people of Ontario. So it really didn't matter who the who the leader was.

CFRB: Do you believe her when she says that?

FORD: No not at all because I never use the word cut. It's not my vocabulary. I've said that a million times so she must not be talking about Doug Ford. I look at efficiencies, driving efficiencies, managing the province, managing your hard earned tax dollars like we run a business and we're going to drive the efficiencies, we're going to find 4 cents on the dollar of efficiencies and that's what I believe. I'm not I don't believe in taking food off people's table and laying them off or getting rid of them. We never did that in the city. We are not going to it the province. But I'll tell you one thing when we have ten supervisors all reporting in each other, when they retire, we aren't replacing him. It is very simple. And when I ask people, when I crisscrossed the province, if you can find four cents on the dollar and government everyone breaks out laughing and then they say only 4 cents? We're going to start at 4 cents. Four cents is close to six billion dollars.

CFRB: We asked Kathleen Wynne whether or not she looks for efficiencies. When I come back in 60 seconds, I'll tell you what she said and see what your response is.

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CFRB: The new Progressive Conservative Leader of the province of Ontario, Doug Ford. Yes I said Doug Ford, don't adjust your radios folks it's the truth. It's happened. He is here in studio with us fresh off an appearance by Premier Kathleen Wynne. Now I asked her about your word, efficiencies, because you've used it a lot and I figured well it does the Premier look for efficiencies, is it top of her list? This is what she said.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: There is a change in the way we deliver services depending on new technology, depending on available resources. So there's a constant look at how we can do things better. Just some of the online provision of services. You know if you look at service Ontario, being able to do drivers licenses and those kinds of things online I mean we're constantly looking for ways to both save money for the Treasury because those are people's tax dollars but also provide better service.

CFRB: Alright. So it sounds like she's looking for some efficiencies in her day to day through the things she mentioned. Are you buying that?

FORD: No. We wouldn't be in a position we're in. We're \$311 billion in debt because of 15 years of this Liberal regime. That's the most indebted region in the whole world. Paying \$12 billion a year in servicing that debt. Running up a massive deficit again. You can't spend more than what you have. All they believe is tax, tax, tax, spend, spend, spend. Those days are over. The sole source deals and all the feathering in everybody's nests and lining their pockets. Those days are done. We're going to start respecting the taxpayer. We're going to put them first. We're going to start putting money back in the taxpayers back instead of the government's pocket. I have not seen one efficiency this Liberal government has ever done, absolutely ever, outside wasting billions of dollars on every boondoggle you could possibly think of. Those days are done.

CFRB: So when you hear talk about, you know, streamlining online services, getting your driver's license online, you're just not buying any of that.

FORD: No I'm not buying any of it. What we want to see is hardcore results. At the end of the day, it's the bottom line and the bottom line is a massive, massive negative position we're in right now in the province and our generations of children and grandchildren are going to be paying for this reckless spending that Kathleen Wynne and her Liberal regime has put on the backs of the taxpayers and backs of the businesses.

CFRB: So if elected and sworn in, what's the first thing that you'd want to tackle?

FORD: Finances right away. We're going to see if the deficit they're talking about is actually accurate numbers. We're going to start going line item by line item through the financial statements of the province and we're going to start drilling down every single minister will have that job to find and drive efficiencies through lean practices, best practices and technology and we'll make sure it gets done.

CFRB: When you say look over the books and see if what they're saying is true, are you saying you don't believe the numbers that they're putting out?

FORD: I don't believe anything these Liberals say. They just tell stories and stories and stories. Every single government that comes in there they get a shock and we already had a shock for 15 years. So we're going to find out. We're going to give the real numbers to the people. And then we're going to start reducing the deficit, reducing the debt. And we're - you know she's put us so far behind the eight ball already because she's trying to buy this election with all these special little gifts to the taxpayers but the taxpayers are too smart. They see right through it. They look at their hydro bill. They look at their personal taxes and they're fed up.

CFRB: Let's talk a little bit about hydro. Are we too committed to contracts and what have you for you to be able to come in and give people hydro relief? Are we too dedicated to these contracts that it would be just insanity to break the contracts and try to give the taxpayer relief on hydro?

FORD: No I don't believe that for a second. Then again, we're going to look at these contracts and we're going to make sure we get out of the contracts these hydro rates are artificially inflated. When they when they should be charging for instance 10 cents, they are charging 90

cents I'm using fictitious numbers. But again the Bay Street people, the investment people are making billions of dollars. I've heard as high as over 17, 18 billion dollars on the backs of the taxpayers, artificially inflating the hydro costs. The wind turbines, we are actually subsidizing the wind turbines. With the cap and trade we're giving \$469 million of our money over to California and Quebec. Why? We're going to keep that \$469 million right here in Ontario. We're going to invest it in health care, in transportation and roads.

CFRB: A lot of our listeners who are not in the 416 would say the Ontario government has paid way too much attention to Toronto. Now I want to ask you two questions about it. What would you do to make sure that everybody throughout, let's say the GTA and beyond, I mean you've traveled the province over the last three weeks, what would you do to make sure that Toronto wasn't just the center of attention.

FORD: Well I'm committed to the people of the north. We're going to start bringing jobs back to the north. Had an opportunity to go up to Thunder Bay and the Sault. I'll give an example of the Sault. They have 3,500 people working in a steel mill. I know that President Trump has backed off a little bit but they were in jeopardy of losing that whole facility up there. What the president didn't realize, all the ore was coming from down in Michigan. So it would have affected him and now he has sort of come to his senses. But we're going to create better jobs by reducing the burden of this carbon tax onto the backs of not only the people but the businesses. We're going to start building infrastructure until we can get access to the billions and billions of dollars' worth of minerals that are up north and the only thing stopping us is building roads. And the Liberal government they just haven't bothered building a road.

CFRB: Let me flip the question then and ask about the city of Toronto. You know it's been an interesting relationship between Mayor John Tory and Premier Kathleen Wynne. You're no stranger to having debates. I wouldn't call- I don't know if you and John Tory consider each other friends. How would that relationship look if Doug Ford is the premier of the province?

FORD: Well we are not enemies by any means. We saw each other, joking around the other day at some event, but we aren't enemies by any means but we're going to make sure that we upload the subway system to the province and start building a regional transportation system that works for not only Toronto but the GTA. Rapid underground transit, we need to do that. And I understand the needs of the city just as well as John or anyone in the city. But we have to make sure we support the people in the city and to the best of our ability.

CFRB: Something that's been a huge issue not only for people downtown but people all over the Greater Toronto Area has been housing, what is something that Doug Ford in mind for solving that problem down the road?

FORD: Yeah I've heard that right across the province especially with seniors and elder care. And as the baby boomers are getting older we're going to have a real crisis on our hands making sure they're taken care of. But we have to look at the existing stock we have, especially here in Toronto, and the existing stock needs so many repairs. We have to take care of the existing stock before we build more affordable housing. There's buildings that are apartments that are empty. A couple of thousand of them are sitting there empty because they haven't been repaired and then a lot of other houses are worth a million and a half dollars sitting there. Toronto Community Housing has a massive property that we should be selling off and building four homes for the price of the one that's sitting there. We have some really high end homes, believe it or not, expensive homes under Toronto Community Housing. We could sell that and build four homes or fix four condos or four apartments.

CFRB: We talked to the Premier obviously about minimum wage, 50,000 jobs lost in January. She pointed to some of the growth in jobs in February said listen, Cara Foods today has come out and said we're going to make our menu items more expensive. That's the result of the higher minimum wage. They link the two together themselves. Here's what the Premier had to say about the issue.

PREMIER WYNNE: What they said was that there was the potential that future jobs may not be created but that you know there are 50 economists who will tell you that by increasing the minimum wage you actually increase the economic growth and you increase job creation. So we can have the dueling economists but the reality is that people today are able to look after themselves because they're earning \$14 an hour instead of \$11.40 an hour.

CFRB: The big question has to do with minimum wage. You've got four years to figure it out. Would you freeze minimum wage the second you came in? What would you do different that this government isn't doing?

FORD: Well first of all, my heart breaks for people on minimum wage. It's tough to pay the bills on minimum wage but we would freeze the fourteen dollars. I've talked to so many people across the province saying Doug; I'd rather have a job than no job at all. Right now this is just the beginning. The prediction was 60,000; I think it is going to be a lot higher than that. What we took a different approach on it. So when you went from \$11 and change up to \$14 dollars, you're paying more tax and that's who's making the money. Kathleen Wynne is making the money. I'm taking a different approach. Anyone making \$30,000 or less, they're going to pay zero tax. That equals about \$160 dollars a month, cash, in the people's pocket that needs it the most.

CFRB: So just to be clear you'd freeze it for how long. At \$14?

FORD: Let's reach out to the businesses, I've got to talk to them. Small businesses make up 85 per cent of the jobs and right now they're hurting. They're hurting like I've never seen before. So we're going to freeze it for now and I'm going to put more money back in to the people's pocket that are making under \$30,000 a year.

CFRB: We're here with Doug Ford, the Progressive Conservative Party leader. We asked Kathleen Wynne, the Premier of the province in the last hour about what she hears from people on the streets and you know I said, your government is very unpopular. A lot of people have said your government's been around way too long and it's just a simple issue of voter fatigue. Here's how she addressed that.

PREMIER WYNNE: You know I've been the Premier since 2013. And of course I hear from people who love what we're doing, I hear from people who hate what we're doing. I hear from people who are somewhere in the middle. And that is all the time and I can tell you any day of the week, I can walk down the street, there will be people who don't want to give me the time of day, don't want to look at me but I can tell you there are people come up to me and thank me.

CFRB: So two worlds that she sees: The people who hate her and the people who like her. Ford Nation can be a bit of an echo chamber. People who love you, you know, you talk to the base. It's easy to hear people love you. Are you ready to deal with the people who don't like you? Because they exist.

CFRB: I've dealt with them for you know, five or six years. And those are the people that always want to get their hands in the taxpayer's pocket. And those days are done. But I understand what she's saying because you can't have everyone love you but I've never experienced this in 30 years. Guys, I have been door knocking for politics for 30 years and you get a mix a mixed bag about everything NDP, Liberal, PC, but every door knocking on, they do not like Kathleen Wynne. It's not personal. They're just – they don't like the way this province has been run. I hear it over and over again. As we've crisscrossed the province, there's a movement happening – it's not even an election or it's not even a leadership race, it was a movement of these grassroots people standing up and it wouldn't matter if we showed up to a restaurant – [inaudible] do a robocall less than 20 hours before we showed up and a place would be packed at 8:00 AM during the weekday and they'd be packed at 8:00 PM. So, we thought, "Wow." So many people came up to me, again, and said, "I've been lifelong NDP, lifelong liberals, I've been disengaged from your party for 20 years. We're back onboard we have confidence that you're going to voice our opinion."

CFRB: Is this the kind of groundswell that you're hoping to take into a debate situation? Are you looking forward to really mixing it up?

FORD: Oh, am I ever. I can't wait to debate Kathleen Wynne, and make no mistake about it I have a great deal of respect for Kathleen Wynne. She's a good campaigner, good debater but she's never debated me before. She's going to get a rude awakening – real quick.

CFRB: We're going to come back. We understand you're going to give us five more minute. We've been told in the other room. We appreciate that. We're going to come back with Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford as The Rush continues.

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CFRB: Very special afternoon here on the program between 4:00 PM and 4:30 PM. Premier Kathleen Wynne was here and she talked a lot about how she sees things. Somebody who even the Premier describes as having a polar opposite view of the province, Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford is here to give his take on how he sees the province. He's been kind enough to give us a few extra minutes this afternoon. We get a lot of text messages on both sides of things. So, let's just put it out there. I don't think you hide from questions. A lot of people are saying you're full of slogans, you're not full of substance - that you're somebody who puts out a large statement, but doesn't have anything to back it up. I'm sure you've heard that criticism as well. What do you say to those people?

FORD: Well, I have a proven track record. I have a proven track record of success no matter it it's in or at City Hall. We went down there and saved over a billion dollars for the taxpayers. I can't say it's just Doug Ford or Rob Ford. It was Mike Del Grande, best budget chief we had, and Doug Holyday, saved hundreds of millions of dollars on the labour deal. My point is no one has ever saved the taxpayers' money. No one has ever spent less the following year than they did the previous year, and that always impressed Prime Minister Harper, which I spoke to yesterday. Great guy, one of the best Prime Ministers we've ever had. It always amazed him how we spent less money - we drove efficiencies. We made sure we had better service, we put money into industry so they can say what they want. I have a proven record. The other ones don't.

CFRB: There will be some people, and we're getting [inaudible] who said, "Listen, I don't want my government run like a business because businesses can be cold. They don't have a heart."

They don't have that and that awareness of what's going on around them, so I want a little bit more love in a government as opposed to just a sterile business.”

FORD: Well, the way you create a lot of love - you put money into people's pockets. You make sure that you take care of the most vulnerable people in society. You get people jobs. You cut their hydro tax, I mean hydro rates bill in half. That's showing them a lot of love. I'll tell you, I could show a lot of love that. I get asked 99 per cent of the people that is out showing you love when they open up their hydro bill and 20 percent reduction off their hydro bills or their taxes - they're creating a job, that's showing love. On the social side, no on, and I call the rest of these politicians that talk about helping the most vulnerable, a bunch of poverty pimps. The reason I say that they talk about it, but they don't do anything. I'm in [inaudible] Toronto Community housing. I'm in there door knocking, meeting the people, helping them out - that's a real social conscience. When you when you propose reducing a zero per cent tax, which will implement to the most vulnerable people making under \$30,000, that's showing love and not gouging them like Kathleen Wynne is doing right now.

CFRB: Mike Harris, who was a part of our broadcast - full disclosure on Saturday afternoon with the former premier of the province. That name is brought up in a positive to Conservatives and sort of as the bogeyman to Liberals and people on the left. I've heard your name and Mike Harris's name in the same sentence over the last 48 hours and not in a positive way. What do you say to that?

FORD: I got to laugh because I got a lot of respect for Mike Harris. It makes me laugh when people throw up someone that was in power 22 years ago with my father and by the way, I also remind people the province was an absolute disaster under the NDP. Mike Harris and his government, my dad being one of them, went in and created 700,000 new jobs, ended up paying down the deficit, lowering taxes, creating jobs - so they may like him, dislike him – but, my name is Doug Ford. It's not Mike Harris, it's not anyone else. We're going to turn this province around.

CFRB: Let's talk a little bit about weaknesses because nobody likes to admit that they have them. But you have to look at this job as a bit of a learning curve as you move from municipal to provincial. What's something that Doug Ford recognizes he needs to get better at? What's something you're actively trying to learn more about?

FOD: Lose weight.

CFRB: You and me both brother. You and me, both.

FORD: Well, no. There's always room for improvement and understanding the systems and as I mentioned, one of my colleagues on the way down here, how much smarter – I think and I learned a lot – how much smarter I was after serving in the City of Toronto for four years. After leaving the city, four years later, you're a lot smarter than you were four years prior to that. So, you understand the system is a little - lot better actually, but just listening, always listening. One of the best listeners to ever met was my brother, Rob. He'd listen. Now, I'm sitting back and I'm listening more rather than reacting.

CFRB: Your brother was a master of what they call retail politics, being able to knock on the doors of people and they would welcome him into their home. He would call people back. You can't really do that on the provincial level.

FORD: Yeah, it's tough. You have 14 million people, but I'll tell you - I have over 3,000. I'm not exaggerating, it's well over 3,000 calls and texts I still have to return. If I call you at 12 AM, I apologize. But, my phone started to ring this morning at 5:30 AM. I'm still going to track that person down. It doesn't stop until 1:00 AM. I try to answer every single call. It's not about me returning every call, which I will, it's about implementing customer service excellence at the province. So when you call up the province, and you get a ministry press one, press seven, press six - you know, it drives you crazy. Someone's actually going to pick up the phone and, "Welcome to Minister, Ministry ABC. How can we help you?" That's customer service. Making sure that every MPP returns phone calls. Not having their assistant return phone calls. They return phone calls. That's customer service excellence, so we're going to make sure we have that mentality ingrained into all the bureaucrats in the province no matter where they are and ingrained into our team.

CFRB: Under the Premier's plan, they're going to run pot stores with unionized pot dealers. Let's call them that. People on the frontline selling pot similar to the way booze is sold. Now, would you scrap that and let the market run the business and perhaps just collect the taxes from that?

FORD: I've always been a strong [inaudible] for the [inaudible] market dictating, no matter what it is. No matter if it's real estate, pot, liquor. This is an avenue that we haven't went down before as a society. I want to see how this plays out and we always have to be cautious depending on what neighborhoods and children and so on so forth, we have to be very, very cautious. I have always believed in letting the market dictate.

CFRB: You mentioned your time as a city councillor, let's address some of the comments you made back in 2014 because the second you left that victory speech, I watched social media and people brought up comments you made about a home for developmentally disabled youth that was in your ward.

FORD: This is my speciality, I'll jump right all over this one. I can't wait.

CFRB: Okay. You said it was a nightmare for the neighbourhood, your opponents on social media wasted no time digging into that – do you want to set the record straight?

FORD: I do. I set the record straight a 100 times. So, what happens is someone comes into my office from an organization and says, "We have some children with – autistic children." My heart breaks right away. I'm a big proponent of helping families and children of autism [inaudible] Reena Foundation. I've been a [inaudible] for 20 some odd years. My whole focus is helping people no matter what disability they have. So, anyways – long story short, they come in. They say, Doug, they want to buy a house in the neighbourhood. Usually, you'd consult with the neighbourhood. Instantly, instantly I said, "Don't worry about it. It's yours. Done." "For children with autism -." "Yep, yep." Well, they misled me and they lied to me and lied to the people in the neighbourhood. They come in there with troubled youth. Now, there's a big difference between troubled youth that the firetrucks were being called every night because windows were being smashed, police were called every night on record for 30 days straight. The neighborhood was fed up and then the organization tried to twist it around. My whole neighborhood knew that they were lying. The reporter in there put some fake story out there, but no one has more passion to help children and families with autism than Doug Ford does and when I get elected, that's going to be my number one priority, to make sure we take care of that.

CFRB: Last question, very quickly, because I know you got to run. If you lose June 8th, if you lose – because it's a possibility –

FORD: Oh, everything's a possibility – absolutely.

CFRB: Are you going to stick in politics? Are you going to stick as the PC leader in opposition for four years?

FORD: Sure, I wouldn't leave the people of Etobicoke North. They put faith into my father, my brother, my nephew and myself. Etobicoke – people in Etobicoke we're so grateful. We'll always be loyal to them and we have a duty to serve the people and we're always going to serve the people and I can't wait to serve them as Premier of Ontario.