Summary of Question Period for Tues. Apr. 17, 2018

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Please the attached select and full summaries of Question Period for today.

MPP Smith (PC) to Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: Hydro One executive salary

>> MPP Smith: Thank you and good morning. My question this morning is for the **Premier**. Does the **Premier** believe that a $6 million salary is acceptable for the C.E.O. Of Hydro One?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we recognize that executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority every Ontario ss and you know, Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to Hydro One's regulationccountability and transparency through our government's involvement as a majority shareholder, Mr. Speaker. And that said, we've already seen the chaos created bythe man in the white House who's governing by firing people all the time and that's not working too well. You know, Mr. Speaker, the opposition's gimmick and their leader's gimmick will drag us down into that same mess and actually won't do anything to reduce hydrobills either. As the company and its rates continue, Mr. Speaker, to be regulated by the Ontario energy board, the member opposite knows that as well, Mr. Speaker. The Ontario energy board is our province's independent regulator. Who has a mandate to prohe province's electricity consumers and it continues to deliver on that mandate, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Smith: Mr. Speaker, the **Premier** has said in the House on numerous occasions that, with the sale of Hydro One, the very unpopular sale of Hydro One, she retained an the government retained the right to remove the board and ultimately remove the C.E.O. So I'll ask the **Premier** again, does she believe that a $6 million salary for the C.E.O. At Hydro One is acceptable? Yes or no?

>> Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, making sure that we reduce rates for the people of Ontario, that's what this government chose to do and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we brought forward the fair hydro plan that reduced rates by 25%. What they're talking about on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, what their leader is talking about, won't reduce anything off of anyone's bills, Mr. Speaker. We actually brought forward a plan that they voted against, Mr. Speaker. They voted against a 25% reduction. That reduction, Mr. Speaker, they then decided to keep in their people's guarantee. And then immediately -- well, not immediately, a couplf months later, Mr. Speaker, they actually tossed that out and are now back as the party that has no plan when it comes to the electricity sector and -- Helping people reduce their rates, Mr. Speaker. We came forward with a plan, reduced those rates by 25%And we'll continue to advocate for the people of Ontario.

>> MPP Smith: Thanks, Speaker. The salary that they're paying the C.E.O. At Hydro One is five times the salary of the previous C.E.O. It's ten times the salary of his peers in other jurisdictions across Canada. $500,000 is the average salary for a C.E.O. At a provincial run utility. Why in the world -- and it astonishes me, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals will stand up in the House and defend this outrageous salary and compensation package of $6 million for the C.E.O. Of Hydro One. So why won't the **Premier** stand up in her place, after saying on numerous occasions that she retained the right, the government retained the rights to remove the board and the C.E.O. At Hydro One? My question for the **Premier** is why are you defending your $6 million man?

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker ,. It's actually this **Premier** and this government that is defending the people of Ontario from cuts that that party wants to bring in, Mr. Speaker. It is this party that is making sure that we brought forward a plan to reduce bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. They voted against it. It is very clear, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear what they will continue to do. They will continue to cut. They will bring forward bumper sticker slogans, Mr. Speaker, while we will bring substantive policy that actually helps the people of Ontario when it comes to the electricity sector. We've reduced rates by 25% right across the province. Hydro One customers have seen a reduction of anywhere between 35 and 50%, Mr. Speaker, and they have voted against it. Each and every time. We will put policy over bumper stickers, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Smith (PC) to Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: rate regulated accounting and the fair hydro plan

>> MPP Smith: Thanks, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of energy this morning. There remains serious questions, Mr. Speaker, about the Liberals' very expensive hydro plan that the Minister was just talking about. In regards to Ernst & young, deloitte and KPMG, the auditor general has said the sum of all this work does not equate to the approval of the accounting of their scheme and the financial books. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of energy, is the auditor general correct?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's be cle, Mr. Speaker. Families in this province asked for real and immediate relief on their electricity bills, and that's what we delivered, Mr. Speaker. We made a policy choice, not a bumper sticker slogan but a policy choice, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we continue to have clean, reliable and affordable electricity for ratepayers of today and the ratepayers of tomorrow. Fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, keeps the cost of borrowing within the rate base, not the tax base, because that's the logical thing to do, Mr. Speaker. Elety financing should remain within the electricity system. So officials from the treasury board, finance, O.P.G., the ieso and the Ontario financing authority, along with external advisors, that included Ian wise, KPMG and deloitte, worked with the accounting related to the fair hydro plan. They along with the office of the. Provincial controller, ensured that this plan was in accordance with public sector accounting, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Smith: Thank you, Speaker. That was a lot of rubbish that really said nothing at all, Mr. Speaker. The fact that the Minister can even after to this very expensive hydro plan as fair is unbelievable to the people of Ontario who are going to be paying record high electricity rates after the next election because they're doing nothing to address the costs of electricity in Ontario. So to the Minister of energy. He said this a while ago --

our plan has been approved by her, speaking of the auditor general -- by her peers at some of Canada's top accounting firms like kg, Ernst & young and Deloitte. The auditor general has said that that's not true, Mr. Speaker. Did the accounting firms really approve the plan? That's what we want to know. To the Minister of energy. Did those accounting firms really approve the plan?

>> Minister Thibeault: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The official opposition is again up here criticizing a plan that has reduced electricity rates by 25% on average for all families and as many as half a million small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker .that plan is savg families in eligible and rural and northern communities up to 40 and 50% on their hydro buys. First, Mr. Speaker, they voted against it and then they included in their own platform just a few months back and now their five-month-old people's guarantee is absolutely gone and so is any type of plan for the electricity sector, Mr. Speaker. But let's see, Mr. Speaker, what two world-class accounting firms had to say in their statements regarding rate regulated accounting. Mr. Speake pmg said -- on the basis of our extensive research, deliberations and an opinion from another major accounting firm, we believe that the accounting policies adopted by the ieso. Are in accordance with the Canadian public sector accounting. Deloitte concluded that regulatory assets and liabilities recognized are appropriate to the applications of these policies -- and I'll have more in the supplementary.

>> MPP Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of energy said and I quote -- of course we work with KPMG. We worked with Ernst & young. We worked with deloitte. All of them agree that the accounting standards are accurate. The auditor general, the independent officer of the legislature, has said that that's not true. You know, I think anybody looking at this will realize that we can trust the auditor general a heck of a lot more than we can trust the Liberal government in Ontario. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is was the Minister telling the truth when he said these things?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, KPMG said, on the basis of our extensive research, deliberations and an opinion from another major accounting firm, we believe that accounting policies adopted by the ieso are in accordance with the Canadian public sector accounting standards. Deloitte concluded that any regulatory assets and liabilities recognized through the appropriate application of these policies would meet the criteria for recognition under the Canadian public sector accounting standards. Additionally, Ernst & young is o.p.g.'s financial auditor and has Sult -- is consulted on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker. And finally the officials that work within these departments, the treasury board, finance, O.P.G., ieso and the Ontario financing authority worked on the accounting related to the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, and all agreed with the Canadian accounting standards that we've moved forward, Mr. Speaker. So we'll continue --

MPP Wilson (PC) to the Premier and Minister Naqvi (Government House Leader) re: government members campaigning and the taxpayer

>> MPP Wilson: My question's for the **Premier**, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Liberals hosted four campaign-style events. Three more scheduled for today. They are clearlypaigning on thepayer dime each and every day. So I ask the **Premier**, will the Liberal party reimburse taxpayers for their campaign-style events?

>> **Premier** Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite I comely understand why he doesn't want me to be talking about a fair wage policy in this province, Mr. Speaker. I completely understand why he doesn't want me to be talking about child care or care for seniors or more funding for hospitals, Mr. Speaker, because none of those things would be pole under the leader, under their leader Doug Ford, because he's going to cut across government. Mr. Speaker, when we bring in a budget, every year we bring in a budget, we go out into the province and talk about that budget. That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker. That is what their party did, Mr. Speaker. That is what the third party did. That is what governments do to make sure that people understand what is in the budget so that they will know what to expect, Mr. Speaker. That's how it works, and I know the member opposite knows that.

>> MPP Wilson: Back to the **Premier**. **Premier**, you have told the people of Ontario that the budget that you just presented in this House is your campaign platform. So that means every event you have is promoting your campaign platform using your own -- stop doing t.it's wrong and repay the taxpayers. The Liberal party owes the taxpayers for thousands and thousands of dollars on these campaign style events. Will you do the right thing and pay back the taxpayer?

>> Minister Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, the **Premier** of this province is the elected leader of the province and of the government. In her capacity, she attends many events. In her capacity, she is out talking about important government policy that is going to improve the lives of Ontarians every single day. In that capacity, Speaker, she will speak about the budget that is pviding plan for care and opportunity. I totally get it why the opposition is all worked up on this because they know they will be cutting all those important programs. They know if they come into government they're going to cut ohip plus that is going to provide pharmacare for youth under the age of 25 and for seniors over 55. If they're in government, they're going to cut funding for our hospitals. So that they can reduce wait times. If they're in government, they will cancel the osap program, Speaker. That's why -- They don't watt the **Premier** --