

Summary of Question Period for Wed. Mar. 29/17

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Please see the select and full summaries of today's Question Period.

At the conclusion of Question Period:

>> The Speaker: Thank you. **We have a deferred vote on the motion of second reading of Bill 111, an act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.**

>> The Speaker: All members, please take their seats.

>> The on March 28, 2017 Ms. Sandals moved second reading of bill 111. All those in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the clerk.

>> The Clerk: Mrs. Sandals.

>> The Clerk: Mr. Naqvi. Mr. Del Duca. Ms. Sandals. Mr. Sousa. Ms. Wynne. Ms. Matthews. Mr. Hoskins. Mr. Chiarelli. Mr. Duguid. Ms. Maccharles. Mr. Mcmeekin. Mr. Takhar. Mr. Kwinter. Mr. Colle. Mr. Berardinetti. Mr. Delaney. Mr. Dhillon. Mr. Murray. Mr. CHAN. Mr. Moridi. Miss hunter. Mr. Leal. Mr. Flynn. Mr. Thibeault. Mr. Qaadri. Mr. Dickson. Ms. Mangat. Mr. Crack. Ms. Damerla. Mrs. McGarry. Mr. Mauro. Ms. Jaczek. Mr. Zimmer. Miss Albanese. Mr. Mcmann. Mr. Ballard. Ms. Naidoo-harris. Ms. Wong. Mr. Fraser. Mr. Anderson. Mr. Baker. Mr. Dong. Ms. Hoggarth. Ms. Kiwala. Ms. Malhi. Mrs. Martin. Mr. Milczyn. Mr. Potts. Mr. Rinaldi. Ms. Vernile. Madame des rosiers.

>> The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the clerk.

>> The Clerk: Mr. Macleod. Mr. Arnott. Mr. Hardeman. Mr. Clark. Mr. Fedeli. Mr. Wilson. Mr. Yakabuski. Mr. Hillier. Mr. Mcnaughton. Miss Thompson. Mrs. Munro. Mr. Yurek. Mr. Bailey. Mr. Oosterhoff. Mr. Walker. Mr. Smith. Mr. Harris. Mr. Nicholls. Mrs. Martow. Mr. Mcdonell. Mr. Pettapiece. Mr. Coe. Mr. Cho. Mr. Vanthof. Mr. Singh. Ms. Horwath. Monsieur Bisson. Miss Dinovo. Mr. Miller, Hamilton east-stoney creek. Miss Sattler. Miss Taylor. Mr. Natyshak. Ms. Armstrong. Madame gélinas. Miss fife. Mr. Hatfield. Mrs. Gretzky. Mr. Gates. Ms. French.

>> The Clerk: The ayes are 51. The nays are 42.

>> Ayes being 51 and nays 42 I declare the motion carried.

>> The Clerk: Order g-11 1 third reading every bill 111 an act to authorize expenditure for certain amounts fiscal year March 31st, 2017. Ms. Sandals.

>> The Speaker : **President of the Treasury Board.**

>> I moved Third Reading of Bill 111 an Act to Expenditure of the Fiscal Year March 31.

>> The Speaker: Ms. Sandals moves third reading an act to expenditure Tur. Is it the pleasure of the house the motion carried? I heard a no. All those in favour please say aye. All those opposed say nay. In my opinion the ayes have it. Call in the members, this will be a five minute. The same vote. The ayes being 51 and nays 42, I declare the motion carried.

>> The Clerk: Third reading of the bill. Troisieme lecture du projet de Loi.

>> The Speaker: Be it resolved the bill be now passed. There are no further deferred votes.

MPP Brown (PC) to the Premier, Minister Sandals and Minister Naqvi re: government advertising

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Premier has forced the auditor general to essentially become a rubber stamp to allow clearly partisan government advertising to be approved. This is not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing and restore the auditor general's oversight of government advertising?

>> Premier Wynne: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I would just say to the member opposite that Ontario was the first and remains the only jurisdiction in the entire country that had legislation to prevent partisan advertising, Mr. Speaker. That is the reality. And while partisan advertising is now banned, it is still mer miss -
- permissible and continue to be permissible and important for the government to inform the people of Ontario about initiatives that impact their lives. So let me give some examples of the kind of things people need to know about. Getting the flu shot, updates to the sex-ed curriculum, consumer protection, sexual violence and harassment awareness. Organ donations, Mr. Speaker. And letting families know about our fair hydro plan is important, too, Mr. Speaker. There are aspects of the plan, the increases to the Ontario energy support program, that are application based, Mr. Speaker. Premier Wynne: It's important that they go to the website and that they understand what's available to them, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Premier says this government hasn't, hasn't taken away the a.g.'s oversight. Who do we believe? This Liberal government, under multiple OPP Investigations or the auditor general who has clearly said that the powers have been stripped, that there's partisan ads running on the air right now as we speak? What fantasy world are they living in? They're running ads right now. They're abusing taxpayer dollars right now. They know it's wrong, Mr. Speaker. But this is a government that's had a history of abusing taxpayer dollars. So rather than pretend you have not stripped the auditor general of that right to have oversight, will the Premier do the right thing --Patrick Brown: And stop running these partisan Liberal ads at the expense of taxpayer dollars?

>> Premier Wynne: Treasury board.

>> Minister Sandals: Yes, thank you very much. You know government advertising plays an important role in informing Ontarians, and I think we all know that sexual violence has a devastating impact on the lives of victims and their families, and it's far too prevalent in our society. If you look at the who will you help campaign launched in March 2015, it challenged existing attitudes, and what were the results? The who will you help campaign was viewed by over 7 million. Generated more than 85 million views worldwide. The important thing is there were results. Within six months. 55% strongly agreed that they had an obligation to intervene when witnessing sexual harassment.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. These are diversion tactics. They're mentioning ads that the auditor general did not have problems with. What we're seeing right here is the auditor general has pointed back that the government took away oversight and has now taken advantage of that by running ads that are clearly partisan. That should be paid for by the Liberal party but instead they're charging the taxpayers. I don't want diversion tactics. I don't want talking points. They've stripped the powers from the auditor general to abuse taxpayer dollars for self-interest vanity ads. I'm asking the government to do the right thing. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Rather than talking points, yes or no? Will you restore the powers of oversight that you took away from the auditor general? Minister Naqvi:

>> Programs the leader of the opposition can explain why they did not do the right thing in 2004 and voted against the bill that introduced the most stringent limitations of partisan advertising in the province -- in our province. Why did, Speaker, the member from Simcoe- Grey, the member from Renfrew- Nipissing- Pembroke, the member from York Simcoe, the member from Parry Sound- Muskoka, the member from Haldimand- Norfolk, the member from Oxford All these members I just named, Speaker, still serve in this legislature. Why they did not -- Why did the E.C.E. Members did the right thing in 2004, Speaker, and voted for a bill that put an end to Mike Harris-style partisan advertising? Speaker, we all remember that advertisement of Mike Harris where he flicked the lights off on

MPP Horwath (NDP) to the Premier and Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: salary of CEO of Hydro One

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Premier, Speaker. The cost of electricity has gone up over 300% under the Liberal government, including 50% just since this Premier took office. Families, businesses, municipalities and public institutions like schools and hospitals are suffering under the crushing weight of their hydro bills. Yesterday it was revealed that the new C.E.O. Of Hydro One took home \$4.5 million in 2016. Does the Premier think there's anything at all wrong with this picture, Speaker ?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know I'm very concerned and have been for some time, starting in 2013, Mr. Speaker, we were working to take costs out of the electricity system in order to reduce people's electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that more needs to be done. That's why our fair hydro plan is going to

take 25% off people's bills come summer, Mr. Speaker, and for people who live in remote and rural communities, Mr. Speaker, they're going to see a 40 to 50% --

>> Premier Wynne: We're going to hold those increases for at least four years, Mr. Speaker. We understand, we understand that the improvements that have been made to the system had a cost associated with them, Mr. Speaker, and that's why the fair hydro plan is in place. That's why people will see that come summer, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, \$4.5 million for the new C.E.O. Of the privatized Hydro One, which is ten times more than the average of other hydro C.E.O.S in Canada. If the Premier plans to poll Ontarians to see what they think of this \$4.5 million C.E.O. Salary, she should save her money, because I can tell her straight up, people are outraged and they are insulted by this salary.

[Applause] When will this Premier stop the privatization of Hydro One and put an end to this outrageous situation?

>> Premier Wynne: Minister of energy.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please today rise and talk about the subject, Mr. Speaker, because I do know that the salaries are high and much higher than those of the vast majority of Ontarians. I know, Mr. Speaker, many Ontarians are struggling to pay their electricity bill and that's why we brought forward the 25% reduction for businesses, small businesses, farms and families, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, they've transitioned into a very good company, Mr. Speaker, publicly traded company and not a government agency, Mr. Speaker. And let's look at what they've done over the last little bit, Mr. Speaker. They've made \$60 million in productivity savings. They've improved their health and safety performance to the best on record, Mr. Speaker. They've advanced multiple initiatives for customers aimed at reducing their electricity rates, Mr. Speaker, and they took the initiative as well, Mr. Speaker, of reconnecting all of their disconnected customers back in December, Mr. Speaker. Now I know the majority of the executive compensation is contingent on --

>> Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker it's unfortunate that all of the benefits are going to the top executives and the shareholders of the corporation. Instead of the people of Ontario. But at the same time that the Premier is defending this \$4.5 million C.E.O. Salary, her Minister of energy seems completely comfortable with the idea that mandatory use pricing is no big deal. Talk about being out of touch, Speaker. \$4.5 million for a C.E.O., while this Premier is punishing parents for cooking their dinner at dinner time and seniors for staying home during the day. Does the Premier think this is the right thing for the people of Ontario, Speaker ?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course we're pleased to act and help those families, Mr. Speaker, with a plan that's actually going to reduce their bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. Not a plan that is pie in the sky, Mr. Speaker. Not a plan that's going to wait decades and decades before they'll even think about talking about helping low-income individuals, Mr. Speaker. We have acted. We have acted because we've listened to the people of Ontario and brought forward a plan that will reduce their bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. That's significant. When it comes to time of use, Mr. Speaker, again it shows that they have no idea on the system, Mr.

Speak. We are making significant savings. A 5% savings on conservation, Mr. Speaker, which then takes more costs out of the system because we don't have to build more generation. It just show that is they're pie in the sky when it comes to electric ris -- tristy, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Horwath (NDP) to the Premier and Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: Hydro One CEO salary

>> Andrea Horwath: My next question's for the Premier. Talk about pie in the sky, they didn't come anywhere near reaching the targets that they set in terms of taking energy off the P.Q. And conservation so let's not pretend what the facts are around here. The Premier told Ontarians repeatedly that the government would be able to maintain control over Hydro One, even when the sell-off was complete. If that's the case, and the Premier does have control over Hydro One, why hasn't she done anything about the outrageous salaries that the C.E.O. is currently Collecting?

>> Premier Wynne: Minister of energy.

>> Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are a shareholder in Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, and that is something that is very clear. And when it comes to -- again, Mr. Speaker, the importance of recognizing that, yes, these salaries are high and yes, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that they are much higher than the vast majority of Ontarians, and we also know that Ontarians are struggling to pay -- many Ontarians are struggling to pay their electricity bills. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we brought forward our plan. The fair hydro plan is the single largest electricity bill reduction in our province's history, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that low-income individuals will actually have their bills reduced by 25% plus, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario electricity support program which will help them even more. Low-income individuals. Were not even mentioned in the NDP's idea, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure we're helping every family in this province, Mr. Speaker ,.

>> Andrea Horwath: Somehow people are supposed to be happy that the Liberals have increased their bills by 275%, Mr. Speaker. I don't think they're happy about that.

[Applause] If the Premier is unable, unable to rein in the C.E.O. Salary even when she says the government maintains control at Hydro One, can she explain to Ontarians why she has spent years trying to sell the clearly false idea that even when the Hydro One sell-off is complete, the government will maintain control of it?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know once again we've talked often about sale of Hydro One and the benefits that we're going to be doing as investments and infrastructure. The one thing that the third party doesn't talk about, Mr. Speaker, is our government acting to eliminate coal. We now, Mr. Speaker, do not have coal part of our electricity system. And this morning, Mr. Speaker, we heard from kids. We heard from children that live in our province that now can actually go outside and play because we no longer have smog days, Mr. Speaker. Because of the investments that we've made as a government, we're

actually benefitting families right across the province, and we recognize, Mr. Speaker, that that costs more, that that costs more, Mr. Speaker. \$50 billion is what we invest today make sure that people can go outside and breathe. And while they wouldn't do that, Mr. Speaker.

>> We did. And now we're making that as affordable as possible for people right across the province, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker the Premier is defending a ludicrous \$4.5 million C.E.O. Salary. She refuses to stop her wrong-headed sell-off of Hydro One. Even though it's now very, very clear that the government will have no control whatsoever of this new corporation. She and her Minister clearly do not understand the struggles that families are facing with time-of-use pricing. When will this Premier show Ontarians that she is actually serious about more than buying support for the next election in the face of sinking poll numbers, do what's right for the people of Ontario, not her political party, and stop the disastrous sell-off of Hydro One?

>> Minister Thibault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's under the leadership of this Premier, Mr. Speaker, that we are investing in infrastructure right across the province, Mr. Speaker. It's under the leadership of this Premier, Mr. Speaker, that we are reducing bills by 25% on average, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we continue to talk about the investments that we made, we spent \$50 billion, Mr. Speaker, investing in a system that was left in tatters by both opposition parties, by freezing rates, cancelling ideas, not moving forward at all, Mr. Speaker. They kept kicking to the curb the electricity system. We didn't do that, Mr. Speaker. We invested. We built a clean system, a reliable system.

MPP Brown (PC) to the Premier – mention of OMA negotiations

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. We have many great phenomenal physicians here today with the Ontario medical association. And I'm sure members across the aisle have been hearing from these physicians in communities across Ontario. I know I heard about the Canadian institute for health information's annual report. The report revealed patients are waiting longer for cataract surgery. Last year, only 70% of patients had their surgery within medically accepted time frames. This was down from 86% in 2012. The facts speak for themselves. Patient care is being diminished. Mr. Speaker, cataract wait times are getting worse, not better. How much longer is this government going to fail patients?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me -- I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to speak to this as well. But I just want to welcome the O.M.A. And the members to Queen's Park today, Mr. Speaker. The doctors. Obviously doctors are an essential part of the health care system, Mr. Speaker. They're essential to the delivery of a strong and sustainable health care system. We're working to deliver on our mandate in health care, Mr. Speaker, to improve access, reduce wait times, improve the overall patient experience, and we want to do that in partnership with all of our health care providers. We want to do that in partnership with doctors, Mr. Speaker, so we are going to work to continue

to improve that partnership. I look forward to having an opportunity to meet with some of the membership today and I know that members across the House will be -
- Thank you very much to the O.M.A. For being here.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. It's a bit rich hearing from the government here today in the House when they vilify and disparage our physicians across the province. It's not right. Physicians devote passionately, dedicated in their work life to care for patients. The reality is we have 29,000 doctors who go to work and put patients first. And this government is not putting patients first. You know, I didn't get an answer about cataracts. Maybe I will in the second response. But what I want to know is what is this government going to do about the chronic underfunding of health care? Everywhere I go in Ontario, I hear about hospitals that are struggling to make ends meet. I hear about physicians --. Speaker, whether it's hospitals that are underfunded, whether it's nursing cuts or whether it's physicians who -- Patrick Brown: Diminished morale because of this government's cuts. It's not right. And what I'm asking of the government is can I get an answer on cataract times? \Patrick Brown: One physician in this province that actually support this is government? The record of health care is embarrassing, Mr. Speaker. Premier Wynne: So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I am going to take this opportunity to do a shout-out to my dad. He's 91 years old, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause] He started practising medicine in Richmond hill in 1952, Mr. Speaker. He practised with three other doctors. He was on call every other weekend. He did -- when York central hospital was built, which wasn't until I was in my teens, Mr. Speaker. Until then, he had his rounds at what is now south lake but was York county, Mr. Speaker. We'd go up with him while he did his rounds and we'd wait out on the lawn. Many Thanksgiving dinners, many Christmas dinners were interrupted by kids being born, Mr. Speaker, that he would go and deliver because of course he was practising during the baby boom. Mr. Speaker, I know exactly how hard doctors work. I know exactly how committed they are --

[Applause] To the system, Mr. Speaker. And I will do everything in my power to make sure that we work in partnership with the docs in this province.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. Unfortunately those words are hollow when you have a Minister of health who disparages and vilifies physicians across the province. Those words ring hollow when you introduce health legislation routinely in the House and don't consult -- This government introduces health legislation and doesn't include doctors. They're not at the table. They have no voice. It's not right. For three years they've been working without a contract. You know it's not a big secret that we have a pretty ugly relationship right now between the province's physicians and the government. We have 29,000 hardworking doctors, and they deserve some respect. They deserve a voice. And what I'm asking the Premier to actually -- if you're not going to answer my question on cataracts, can you at least tell us -- Mr. Speaker can the Premier at least tell us when physician also actually be at the table?

>> Premier Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

>> Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to welcome Ontario's doctors, including medical students who are here today for many meetings with -- and I encourage all of my Colleagues on all sides of the House to take those meetings and listen to what the doctors have to say. But, Mr. Speaker, we -- the Premier a number of weeks ago indicated that we were committed to binding arbitration, that we were committed to making that the first item to be discussed when we sit down with our doctors, and I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that last night those negotiations did begin with the first order of business, to negotiate a process and an agreement for binding interest arbitration with Ontario's doctors so we can move forward to other aspects of hopefully an agreement with our physicians in the weeks and months ahead, Mr. Speaker.