

Summary of Question Period for Wed. May 17/17

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MPP Brown (PC) to the Premier and Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: advertising

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. Surprise, surprise recent hydro bills across the province were stuffed with what appears to be partisan advertising. It appears like there's no line this Liberal government will not cross. Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to know specifically from this **Premier** is how much did this partisan Liberal advertising cost in hydro bills?

>> **Premier Wynne**: I not Minister of energy's going to want to speak to the supplementary but let me just say that what is happening across the province is people are seeing their electricity bills go down, Mr. Speaker. They're seeing reductions of their electricity bills. That's what our fair hydro plan is about, Mr. Speaker. I understand the leader of the opposition wants to talk about anything but the fact that he doesn't have a plan and did not ever have a plan to reduce people's electricity bills. We are doing that people are seeing those reductions on their bills millimetre and that's exactly as it should be as people struggle to manage their finances on a day-to-day basis, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that the **Premier** can defend this propaganda with a straight stays -- face. It's wrong. She knows it's wrong. The member for Prince Edward- Hastings wrote to the auditor general about these Liberal ads stuffed in hydro bills n.her response she essentially said this is not the first time the Liberals have used hydro bills for partisan purposes. They jammed election-style ads in hydro bills just before the 2011 election. Now we know the government has no shame. They will continue to cross lines to try to pitch this alternate reality of their farce of a hydro plan. As usual the Liberals will do anything to look out for the Liberal party, not for ratepayers in Ontario. I ask this. When do they realize that they have to stop using Ontario taxpayer resources to push their own partisan agenda? It's getting worse and worse. Will you listen to the auditor general and do the right thing?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things we continue to do as a government, Mr. Speaker, is bring forward a plan that will reduce rates by 25% by July 1st of course, Mr. Speaker, if this legislation passed. That's 25% reduction for small businesses. That's 25% reduction for farms, Mr. Speaker, and 25% -- For all families right across the province. When it comes to making sure people -- this government that brought forward that plan. It's this government that is making sure that those 800,000 families in this province that live in the rural or northern -- Actually will see a 40 to 50% reduction. What they also know, Mr. Speaker, is the opposition have no plan and when they have no plan for electricity, Mr. Speaker, that just means they have no plan for Ontario.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. Partisan false propaganda. That's what this is, Mr. Speaker. The auditor general had this to say. She said the government's most recent advertising on its fair hydro plan would not have passed review. That's the auditor general. Further, the auditor general said they found that advertising to be misleading and self-congratulatory. It's not just opposition. Not just the media saying this hydro plan is a farce. It is the independent legislative oversight saying it's misleading and self-congratulatory in terms much these ads. Clearly the Liberals are using taxpayer money for their own partisan gains. That's not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, will the Liberals pull their hydro election ads and stop campaigning on taxpayers' dime? It's pretty simple request. Will you simply do the right thing and stop abusing taxpayers for their own partisan gain?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the P.C.S don't want the people of Ontario to know there's going to be a 25% reduction coming by summer, Mr. Speaker. I know that the P.C. S don't want people to talk especially with the utilities. We have about and I know they don't like telling people of Ontario what's actually happening, Mr. Speaker, because they have no plan when it comes to electricity. Mr. Speaker, they don't know -- they have -- you know, when it comes to their approach, Mr. Speaker, their approach doesn't lower bills for families. It doesn't lower bills for small businesses. It doesn't lower bills for long-term care homes. And it doesn't do anything to address Ontario's indigenous communities, Mr. Speaker. And why is that? Because, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan. When they don't have a plan for electricity, they have no plan on what to do in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We have brought forward a plan that's going to reduce bills by 25% that will help everyone in this province.

MPP Fedeli (PC) and MPP Hardeman (PC) to Minister Sousa regarding budget

>> MPP Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Later this morning we'll be voting on the government's budget measures bill. This includes giving the availability to municipalities to implement a new hotel tax. On this new tax, the Liberal MPP from Mississauga-Streetsville stated, and I quote, this is a bad idea and I do not support it. He went on to say, and again I'm quoting, to attempt to tax out-of-town residents is taxation without representation. Even the Premier's own members have serious objections to this bill. I ask the Premier, is that why debate was cut off? Did the Premier not want the member from Mississauga-Streetsville and others to share these objections with the legislature?

>> Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was correct on one point. We are passing a bill this afternoon to pass a first balanced budget since the depth of the recession, Mr. Speaker. A balanced budget that's going to meet the needs of the people of Ontario. A budget that's going to support all our children under the age of 25 with free medication, a budget that's going to provide supports for education and health care, with record investments. A budget that's going to provide for more roads and bridges and public transit, Mr. Speaker. And next, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide the city of Toronto and other municipalities with more powers at their request. Mr. Speaker, what's important here is that we're providing for the people of Ontario and that member opposite should be supporting that as well.

>> MPP Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, my question is back to the Premier. Premier, the member from Mississauga-Streetsville isn't the only one of your members that disagrees with your policies. The Liberal member from Beaches- East York said, quote, the rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP Government under Bob Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto, and other communities in Ontario because it didn't allow the private sector to contain the bill. He went on to say, quote, I would resist tremendously any amendment to this legislation that would bring -- Premier, did you cut off debate on bill 24 so that your members couldn't raise these objections in the legislature?

>> Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has just made reference -
- The member opposite just made reference to 16 measures, comprehensive measures to try to cool the market, to address demand and supply in our housing sector. To provide and support the people of Ontario and homeowners who are trying to get into the market. The member opposite is suggesting otherwise. Again they're voting against the people of Ontario. They're not supporting the very families that are trying to get into the marketplace as we've addressed in those measures going forward, Mr. Speaker. I asked the member opposite a first question, what will they cut as we proceed forward in these measures, Mr. Speaker ? Will they cut pharmacare for the children of our communities? Will they cut hospitals and education and schools -- That's what they're voting for. They're voting against the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker.