

Transcript - Minister Sousa and Minister McMahon Media Scrums

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Hi all – this is Minister McMahon's part in the scrum post-QP.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks.

Lawvin

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Transcript

Reporter: Do you think voters want to see this? That the government is essentially ignoring the advice of the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General. Do you think voters want to see that from their government?

(Sousa speaks)

Minister McMahon:

Yeah I just uh I think it's important to underscore and put this precisely where it belongs.

This is an accounting dispute. We respect the auditor general, I met with her yesterday as well. And we had a good conversation about the need to continue our relationship in a really professional way, keep those doors open, we value her opinion.

I said that to her yesterday, I'm saying it again to you today.

And so we have a dispute here between what she believes is the way we should be doing our accounting. And in fact our expert opinion on both the pension issue an area where we have a dispute with the auditor general and on the IESO and the rate regulated accounting.

We had significant outside accounting firms telling us that our approach was acceptable, it was in keeping with general accounting principles and in fact there are jurisdictions across North America that use rate regulated accounting in looking at their assets and so again as the minister of finance says, we have a difference of opinion, and we respect those differences, but our opinion hasn't changed.

In essence the pre-election report today, which by the way our government instituted in 2004 after a previous conservative government left us with a 6 billion dollar hang over and we decided that voters needed to know the transparency and the truth and that's what we've done here.

So we respect the auditor general for what she's done and we thank her and we appreciate the advice, but our opinions haven't changed and we continue to differ on both the pension issue and the rate-regulated accounting issue.

Reporter: Why should voters trust you over the AG?

(Sousa Speaks)

Minister McMahon: I want to speak to the issue of our civil servants for a moment. Because what I took great exception to in the house and so did the minister of finance is the sense that our government who employs the best civil servants in the country has somehow decided to part with their advice and really not proceed on a professional basis.

What the minister of finance and I have the pleasure of doing is being served by a public service that is extraordinary, that is exceptional, they have to sign off on our budget, they have to sign off on our path back to balance, and when we looked at these 2 very complex issues, one regarding pensions, and one regarding rate regulated accounting, we not only had their assistance but we went outside for other opinions and all of those folks agreed with us.

And so again we come back to the fact that we have a difference of opinion. We have a difference of opinion between accounting firms and our auditor general and that difference of opinion remains and we respect that difference of opinion.

Reporter: Who's not acting professional?

Minister McMahon: I don't think we need to get into to that, what I said earlier... no, no, no, what I was objecting to were comments in the house by one of the opposition members who cast dispersions on our officials and we take exception to that.

(Sousa Speaks)

Minister McMahon: It's a continued disagreement.

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