NDP Caucus News

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O'Leary Challenges Government on Its Record of Transparency

Today in the House of Assembly, NDP MHA Sheilagh O'Leary (St. John's East-Quidi Vidi) challenged government on its record of transparency, highlighting the concerning trend of dodging accountability and muddying communication to the public.

During Question Period yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change refused to speak to media after making accusations of reporters "twisting a narrative" in regard to projected 2030 greenhouse gas emissions. O'Leary said this is just one example from this session alone that causes concern for how this government is operating.

"So far in this House of Assembly session alone, we've seen a lack of transparency around Churchill Falls team members terminating their contracts or leaving positions, government backtracking on its commitment to bring the final agreements before the House for debate before signing, and multiple Ministers taking jabs at the integrity of the media, with one even refusing to speak to reporters after directly accusing them in this House," said O'Leary

"Transparency and accountability are essential to building public trust. I ask the Premier, how does he expect the public to trust his government when this is how it operates?"

O'Leary continued, saying, "We've also seen multiple statements from the Premier himself about how his government is engaging with the Innu Nation on the Churchill Falls deal. Yet, until yesterday, when the Innu Nation had to interrupt an event just to be heard, the Premier had not even met with them."

"I ask the Premier, why did you allow the public to be given the impression that meaningful engagement was taking place when you knew you hadn't even met with the Innu Nation?"

O'Leary then put the governments commitment to transparency to the test, asking them about key policies in the NL NDP's Transparency Platform.

"We just saw an amazing midterm tsunami in the US, showing that people are tired of corruption and Big Money influencing their politics. Seeing as this government is making many legislative changes to put our province in line with the rest of the country, I ask the Premier, will his government bring forward legislation to ban corporate and union donations, as most other provinces have done?"
"9 MHAs in this House are landlords. But the public can only find out that information by booking an appointment with the Office of the Legislative Standards – whose only office

is in St. John's. If you live in a rural community or in Labrador, there is no way to find out what possible conflict of interests your MHA has," she stated.

"To keep us in line with the rest of Canada, I ask the Premier, will this government also bring forward legislation to make MHA disclosures and conflicts of interests available publicly online?"

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