

Liberals accuse Hudak of adopting 'extremist' policies as PCs demand Wynne 'come clean' on MaRS deal

By Jennifer Hough

June 1, 2014

The sparring between Ontario's three main political camps continued on Sunday, with the Liberals accusing Tim Hudak of adopting the policies of "right-wing extremists" and the Progressive Conservatives demanding Kathleen Wynne "come clean" on the MaRS controversy.

While the party leaders were mainly silent in advance of Tuesday's televised debate, it fell to lower-ranking members of the parties to keep the pressure on their opponents.

The Progressive Conservative party urged Liberal leader Kathleen Wynne to release all the documents relating to the apparent bailout of the MaRS innovation and research complex in Toronto.

Standing in front of the controversial building on Sunday, PC candidate Vic Fedeli called on Ms. Wynne to "come clean" about the deal and its final price.

"Kathleen Wynne has just used your tax dollars to purchase the Trump Tower of Canadian bureaucracy," Mr. Fedeli said.

Last week the Tories released documents revealing that the province gave \$71-million to buy land to expand the real estate complex, and a \$234-million loan for a new tower.

Ms. Wynne, however, is calling the loan "a real estate deal" that would allow the government consolidate its offices in Toronto and help MaRS "move to phase two" of its development.

Elsewhere on Sunday, Liberal economic development minister Eric Hoskins accused PC leader Tim Hudak of adopting policy ideas from "right wing extremist radical elements" in the United States.

Mr. Hoskins pointed to a leaked itinerary from Mr. Hudak's April 2012 trip to Washington. It showed that he met with groups such as the Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute, Brookings Institute, American Enterprise Institute and anti-tax political activist Grover Norquist.

The PCs quickly hit back, accusing Mr. Hoskins of “wasting the media’s time on a Sunday morning” by rehashing an old news story and posting a link to a newspaper article from last year that reported on Mr. Hudak’s U.S. trip.

“Despite the fact that this story has already been reported over a year ago, Eric Hoskins tried to make it seem as if this was news,” the PCs said in a statement.

“The Liberals also seemed to forget the fact that Dalton McGuinty was trained by David Axelrod and Kathleen Wynne met with Al Gore,” the statement added.

There was strong reaction to news that charges have been laid against air ambulance Ornge, a year after a helicopter crash killed four men, two pilots and two paramedics.

Outgoing PC MPP Frank Klees said the Ontario Liberal government had been warned repeatedly of concerns that Ornge was putting its patients and staff at risk.

“These charges confirm what many of us believed was the case. Namely, that the tragic crash of May 31st, 2013 could have been prevented if Ornge and the Ministry of Health had exercised their oversight responsibilities,” he said.

“As the record will show, numerous attempts were made to warn the Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers of the risks at Ornge. They were ignored.”

In total 17 charges were laid by the federal government last week, including that the agency let pilots fly “without adequate training.”

With over a week of campaigning left, both the Liberals and the NDP released new ads ahead of Tuesday’s televised debate. The Liberal slot attacks the figures behind Mr. Hudak’s “million jobs plan,” and questions his leadership by not admitting to “the mistake.”

The NDP’s ad features Ontarians claiming to voting NDP for the first time because they are tired of “corruption.”

Election day is June 12.