

***Transcript of Provincial Question Period
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Unedited Transcript

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

Table of Contents

MPP Brown to Minister Matthews (Lalonde)	
Re: French Language University	2
MPP Brown to Minister Thibeault	
Re: Electricity Deal Quebec	4
MPP Horwath to Minister Thibeault	
Re: Hydro Advertising	6
MPP Horwath to Minister Thibeault (Sandals)	
Re: Hydro Advertising	8
MPP Romano (Fedeli) to Minister Matthews (Thibeault)	
Re: Northern Ontario	10
MPP Forster to Minister Hoskins	
Re: Wettlaufer Inquiry.....	12
MPP Des Rosiers to Minister Lalonde	
Re: Franco-Ontarian Day.....	14
MPP MacLeod to Minister Naqvi	
Re: Gas Plant Trial.	15
MPP Gates to Minister Duguid	
Re: Auto Sector Jobs.....	17
MPP Hoggarth to Minister Ballard	
Re: Cap-and-Trade.....	19
MPP Coe to Minister Lalonde	
Re: French-Language Services	21
MPP Gelinas to Minister Hoskins	
Re: Violence Against Healthcare Workers.....	22
MPP Potts to Minister Mauro	
Re: Flood Relief.....	24
MPP N.Miller to Minister McGarry	
Re: Battle Falls Dam Construction	26

MPP Brown to Minister Matthews (Lalonde) Re: French Language University

>>Patrick Brown: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator:, Mr. Speaker, is for the vice Premier. The government has said nothing and the government has taken no measures all of a sudden. And when the government saw the prose, they started do something to support a francophone university in Ontario. There was no -- up to far no bill was tabled to that effect. The promise done is approved. So it is virtual.

>>Minister Deb Matthews: Voice of Translator:, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. [End of Translation] Excited about the forward movement on the issue of a French language university in Ontario, Speaker. For too long, for too long our francophone students have not had the opportunity to learn in environment that is by and for francophones, Speaker. That is going to change, and I am delighted that we are making very strong progress on that change, Speaker.

>>Patrick Brown: Voice of Translator:, Mr. Speaker, to the vice Premier. L'Oreal College must be sure that this francophone university will be large. It can be not a promise. A bill should be tabled and adopted before the fall. And the problem with this government, every time there is a new promise before an election, the government doesn't hold their promises. The Montreal College should be recognized and ready before the bill is tabled.

>>Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Voice of Translator: Thank you. I'm very proud of the question. This will allow me to talk about all the promises made by this party that were not held for years. I'm very proud about our commitment to make sure the francophone have services in Ontario. Measures, there will be a bill tabled -- For the francophone when the leader of the opposition talks about We can remember all the stuff they done to the francophone for years. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be within the government of a Premier who committed to the francophones in our parliament -- and our parliamentary caucus will make sure there will be francophone services in Ontario.

>>Patrick Brown: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator:, Mr. Speaker, to the vice Premier. The question, will there be a bill? Will there be funds before the elections? The government must do something today. The report by miss Adams was published a few weeks ago. It was the first step, but we need real commitment from the Liberals and from all corporations involved. Still worried toddlers will have representatives from students and from communities. Will this be done?

>>Minister Lalonde: Voice of Translator:, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased. All the work done that Dr. Guillaume Ada at the planning station level, and this report

provides us with tools, and we are committed -- I mean the government -- to table a bill to create the fund for the advisory committee to make sure there is progress to that regard, and also start in front to make sure that this committee can put in place this university. Maybe the opposition leader should review it to make sure how to create a university francophone. We must table a legal entity. This is what we do this for, for the francophone and all Franco Ontarians. Thank you.

MPP Brown to Minister Thibeault Re: Electricity Deal Quebec

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of energy. Last week the government charged ahead with more contracts for power we do not need. The famous fit by contracts were signed. The most unnecessary fifth sequel since Miami five, signed it Miami beach. An unnecessary movie just like these unnecessary contracts. Mr. Speaker, they are the same contracts the Liberals pushed forward on the day after their unfair hydro plans. 390 contracts signed, sealed and delivered. 150 megawatts of power Ontario doesn't need. Mr. Speaker, why does the government, why do the Liberals keep on signing contracts for power we do not need?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always happy to answer those questions. If we're talking about movies, Mr. Speaker, it's like "Groundhog day" on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We get it over and over again from a party that has no idea on the electricity system, Mr. Speaker. Maybe what the opposition leader needs to do, Mr. Speaker, is listen to his critics. On two, Mr. Speaker, talking to Steve Paikin, they talked about signing new contracts so the tweet saying she sound -- sign 9 next round of energy contracts tomorrow is inaccurate? Yeah ok. I'll say that's inaccurate. That's from the energy critic, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't even understand the process. When we're talking about fit five contracts, Mr. Speaker, these were from November 2016, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing new here. Just like groundhog day, Mr. Speaker, they have nothing to do but light their hair on fire and run from issue to issue, Mr. Speaker .

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Minister. The Premier's famous for her so-called conversations. These conversations tend to cost Ontario millions and millions, sometimes billions of dollars. Her latest conversation seems to have promised the opposition party in Québec a significant deal. According to the leader, the Premier committed to building hydro dams in Québec for even more power Ontario doesn't need. The Premier of course denies that, Speaker, deal. But, Mr. Speaker, maybe the Liberals want to come clean because we keep on having new contracts for hydro we don't need. Now there's this report in the newspapers in Québec about this new secret deal. Are the Liberals in negotiations for more power from Québec that we do not need? Will the government come clean?

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, the Premier, myself have been crystal clear, Mr. Speaker. There's no new contract with Québec. But, Mr. Speaker, the opposition keeps bringing it up with no facts, Mr. Speaker, and that's part of the whole problem when it comes to the opposition making things up, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is our government has clearly stated -- Our government has clearly stated our goals for Ontario's electricity system, which is clean, efficient and above all, Mr. Speaker, affordable energy. We will not

consider any deals that do not meet these goals, Mr. Speaker, whether it's many ports from Québec or generation here at home. So while he continues to read tweets from an opposition party in Québec or tweet from Donald Trump you know what, Mr. Speaker ? There is no coal coming in here, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make sure that our system is clean. Green, reliable and affordable, Mr. Speaker. Just like our plan says –

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy and talk about groundhog day. This is a government that will say anything regardless of reality. They will say anything regardless of the facts. The Premier of Québec called the c.a.q.'s announcement very worrisome. He said it was a major mistake. The Premier of Québec may have had different reasons to be concerned but I too find the deal worrisome. I know the Minister of energy saying the newspapers in Québec are wrong. The letter his staff accidentally released are wrong. Everyone else is wrong but this is on the front page of the papers for a reason. It's worrisome that Ontario would be in negotiations to buy power we do not need. We already give away billions of power. I am sick and tired, Mr. Speaker, of Ontario ratepayers having to give away power, paying for power -- Mr. Speaker, - Mr. Speaker, I am tired of over \$1 billion of clean green Ontario hydroelectric power being spilled and wasted. Mr. Speaker, my question is this. Rather than attacking others, will you simply say the Premier said last week that she was working towards a deal with Québec, working and talking about it. I want to know unequivocally. Are there any negotiations –

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's be crystal clear. The Premier has said there is no new deal. I have said it, Mr. Speaker. But again they continue to try and find ways to, you know, use some of their own information but, Mr. Speaker, they continue to tell the people of Ontario -- They do the same thing when it comes to our energy sector, when it comes to what they call spilling water, Mr. Speaker. This shows how little they know when it comes to the electricity system. One advantage of our clean reliable and flexible system that we have built, Mr. Speaker, is that we're able to procure energy on an as-needed basis. This means that we only use the electricity that is produced at the cheapest cost at that time. So it sounds to me, Mr. Speaker, that that party once again wants to start charging ratepayers more and more and more. We have brought forward a fair hydro plan at a reduced rate by 25% on average, Mr. Speaker. You know what they did? They voted against it.

MPP Horwath to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Advertising

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question's to the acting Premier. Recently my office received results of a freedom of information request about how much the Liberal government is spending to advertise their \$40 billion hydro borrowing scheme. The number, Speaker, is eye popping. The Premier has allocated \$5.5 million from the public purse to sell this boondoggle for bankers to the public. Documents revealed the reason for this campaign was to counter, quote, negative media coverage of rising electricity bills. Does the acting Premier care to explain why the government's spending \$5.5 million, 5.5 public million dollars, just to fight negative media coverage for the Liberal party, Speaker ?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always pleased to rise and talk about the fair hydro plan and what this is doing to actually help the people of Ontario. A 25% reduction in all House holds right across the province, Mr. Speaker. It's important that they know that information. But what's also important, Mr. Speaker, is that they know about the programs that are available. The Ontario electricity support program. This is a program that has increased, Mr. Speaker, increased the refund that many families that qualify will get for it. Mr. Speaker, we have prepared and have a budget to help 500,000 families for the oesp and we're nowhere near that number yet, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that every single person that qualifies for this can sign up for this program, Mr. Speaker. We cannot rely on the opposition parties to talk about these programs, so we need to ensure that the government has its responsibility to raise awareness. Of these programs and services that are actually helping Ontarians, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that we're helping first nations individuals. Low-income individuals and seniors.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, the Liberal government is spending \$5.5 million to the advertise their scheme to the public. The government adds about a plan that the F.A.O. Says will end up costing Ontario families more in the long run. They'll do anything to help people who are struggling now to pay their hydro bills. Yet the government's low-income electricity program, support program that the Minister was just talking about received an ad campaign worth less than half of the \$5 million, 5.5 that they set aside to promote their borrowing scheme. So can the acting Premier tell us, Speaker, why the Liberals are more concerned about spending public money to save their own political skin than they are about informing low-income families about how to get relief from soaring hydro bills?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're very pleased with the oesp program, Mr. Speaker, and the people that it's helping but we know that it can help more people, Mr. Speaker, and that's what the fair hide rode plan did, Mr. Speaker. It brought forward solutions to help low-income individuals, unlike their

plan, Mr. Speaker, that didn't even mention first nations and waited 'til the last page, Mr. Speaker. I know they forgot to talk about talking about their plan because, Mr. Speaker, it did nothing to help the people. But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, there are more programs that are actually going to help low-income individuals, those who live in northern or rural communities, Mr. Speaker. That's the triple R.P.. We've changed that, Mr. Speaker, from just being Hydro One r2 customers to include both Hydro One r1 and r2, plus six other local utilities, Mr. Speaker, making sure that their distribution charge is on average like everyone else in the province, Mr. Speaker. They're saving significant dollars. So we'll continue to talk about this plan that's helping every single House hold and 500,000 small businesses and farms in this province, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I have to say that the if the Liberal government is so committed to helping people choose between keeping the lights on and feeding their families, why didn't they just use that \$5.5 million advertising budget to actually help the people of Ontario deal with the cost of electricity?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If they're concerned about helping so many low-income individuals and helping every family across the province, why didn't they vote for the fair hide rode plan, Mr. Speaker ? That's a 25% reduction that everybody saw in this province on July 1st. But instead, Mr. Speaker, they chose to vote against that. They chose to vote against on-reserve first nations having deliver credit removed. They chose to vote against the oesp program that's helping seniors and low-income individuals, Mr. Speaker. They chose to vote against the R.R.R.P., helping rural and remote people, Mr. Speaker, that help -- that live in those parts of our province. Of course, Mr. Speaker, that's not unusual for that party because they always seem to vote no on everything, to actually help people in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're bringing forward programs like the fair hydro plan, like bill 148 that will continue to invest in the people in this province and make a difference in all of their lives, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Horwath to Minister Thibeault (Sandals) Re: Hydro Advertising

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: My next question's also to the acting Premier, Mr. Speaker. This ad campaign has been funded -- go figure -- right through the 2018 election year. And because of the sneaky changes this government made to the advertising act, the Liberals get to run their partisan political ads about this costly scheme right during the election next spring without any oversight with the auditor general, Mr. Speaker. Does the acting Premier honestly think that using public money on partisan ads for their \$40 billion borrowing scheme is going to win them and their government enough good favour with Ontarians to keep them in office come next June?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about the fair hydro plan. Right? 25% reduction for all families right across the province. 500,000 small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker. And then we talk about the programs. The oesp program offers significant support -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, the oesp offers significant support to low-income House holds across the province. Nearly 300,000 Ontarians have already applied since last year, Mr. Speaker, and we've been doing everything we can on this side of the House to get enrollment even higher. We've put the inserts directly in people's bills, created advertisements, Mr. Speaker, as we're talking about and even more. We're working with the ministry of community and social service to talk about Ontario works automatically qualifying, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, let's talk about using public dollars for partisan purposes. Speaker, let's talk about that. The auditor general himself said that the Liberal government's changes to the advertising laws give them a partisan advantage. And we know from the F.O.I. Documents on my desk right now that the reason for this ad campaign in the first place was, quote, negative media coverage for the Premier and her Liberal party. Has this Premier not yet learned her lesson about these sneaky kind of tactics as in Ontarians are fed up with this kind of behaviour by this Liberal government.

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, tworx only be the party opposite that sees giving families an additional \$1,000 off their electricity bill as sneaky, Mr. Speaker. It would only be the party opposite that's making sure that every family sees a reduction in their bills as sneaky, Mr. Speaker. You know what's sneaky? They actually voted against that, Mr. Speaker, and then don't publicly say that. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we make sure that we've brought forward a plan that is going to actually help every single House hold. Going to continue to find ways to help businesses, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to work to ensure that the message gets out so more and more people that qualify for the oesp program can get on it, Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition party.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker this advertising campaign is expensive. It was clearly thought up to help the Premier and her Liberal party bounce back in the polls. It is touting the so-called benefits of a program that the F.A.O. Says will be bad for Ontario families. And the Premier is running these ads without any oversight from the auditor general because her party decided to change the rules to favour the sitting government. This all amounts to the exact same thing, Speaker. Why is this Liberal government once again prioritizing their political future over the needs of Ontario families?

>> Minister Elizabeth Sandals: Yes, thank you very much. Speaker, I would like to remind everybody that Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada that actually has a government advertising act, which gives the auditor general oversight. The party opposite voted against the original legislation in 2004, and they voted against the update in 2015. And let me tell you what is in that updated legislation, which they opposed. What is in that updated legislation is an explicit legislation government advertising when there is a scheduled general election, which we will have in June of 2018. There is an explicit prohibition. Government advertising 60 days before the writ drops. We will not be writing fair hide -- running fair hydro ads during that --

**MPP Romano (Fedeli) to Minister Matthews (Thibeault) Re:
Northern Ontario**

>> MPP Ross Romano: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier. Last Thursday, the member from Northumberland-quinte west made a reference to the north as a no-man's-land. I do not represent a no-man's-land. I represent the people of Sault Ste. Marie and as proud northerners we take great offence to these comments. Mr. Speaker -- Mr. Speaker, the member acknowledged making these comments, and the video shows we can clearly see him making these comments to the member from Parry Sound. People in my community constantly tell me that this government does not care about the north. This confirms that for me. So, Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier please acknowledge the truth. And apologize for this attack on the north? Or will she reaffirm what we already know, that the people of northern Ontario don't matter --

>> Minister Deb Matthews: Speaker, there are many people in this legislature who work very hard for their constituents. I can tell you that the member from northumberland-quinte west has no parallel when it comes to listening to people in his riding and responding to people in his riding -- He has been -- Speaker, the member from northumberland-quinte west works tirelessly. He's worked in his riding. He listens to concerns of people. He comes to queen's park and he brings those concerns to -- We can all learn a lesson from the member from northumberland-quinte west, Speaker. We could all be better -- When we follow his lead, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be associated with this member. Thank you.

>> MPP Vic Fedeli: Deputy Premier. We've all seen the video. The member from northumberland-quinte west yelled a northern slur to the member of Parry Sound. I was not in the chamber at the time. It's the member's shifting explanations he's sending to my constituents that are in no-man's-land, Speaker. The members do confirm what this government thinks about in the north. They took away our passenger train. The north is hit harder with their skyrocketing hydro rates. 80% of our lumber mills shut down on their watch. We fell from the number one mining jurisdiction in north America to 16th and the ring of fire remains untouched for ten years. My constituents want an honest answer from this government. Speaker, either they apologize to the north or they are'd telling all their MPP S it's ok to answer the north with lies.

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Speaker, I'm very please today stand up and talk and represent a party that actually does things for northern Ontario, unlike that party, Mr. Speaker, that makes the box and says let's cut out the waste. College boreal. That party has no idea about northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Expansion of highway 69. I'm at Canadore College. Make the announcement. Where's the MPP ? Not there, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw, Mr. Speaker. Continue, Mr. Speaker, to -- Mr. Speaker, from nohst, hundreds of mill wrons of dollars being spent in all

of the ridings in northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker. That's done by this government, Mr. Speaker. The expansion of highway 69, Mr. Speaker, in Sault Ste. Marie. I was just there recently, Mr. Speaker, opening up and talking about nohst funding, going into outspoken brewery, Mr. Speaker. Helping their local hospital with more funding, Mr. Speaker. This is what this party does on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. S all they can do is make up false claims about MPP S, which is completely inaccurate, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Forster to Minister Hoskins Re: Wettlaufer Inquiry

>> MPP Cindy Forster: Acting Premier. Peggy Clark of London came to queen's park earlier this month to the support the NDP's call for a public inquiry into a broader investigation into long-term care. Megi's mother endured crisis after crisis. She was treated with the wrong medication for three months. She was moved three times in just six months. And her personal belongings with meant missing. Peggy knows that frontline nurses and P.S.W.S are doing the best they can, but there's just not enough of them to provide the care that our parents and grandparents deserve. Will the acting Premier listen to women like Peggy and expand the public inquiry to find and fix the systemic problems in long-term care?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the question. I was very moved when I read about this -- this woman's experience with a loved one in a long-term care home. But, Mr. Speaker, with regards to the public inquiry, which is under way, let me tell the legislature what carp is saying publicly about the scope of the inquiry. We are pleased that the inquiry will look into both the circumstances and the systemic issues around the Wettlaufer case, said Wanda Morris, V.P. Of advocacy of carp. This opens the door to issues like funding and staffing which may indeed be the root cause of why Wettlaufer was able to continue to kill and assault residents for so long. We intentionally wrote terms of reference. That were sufficiently broad to enable the justice to travel down the pathway she sees fit to answer these systemic issues.

>> MPP Forster: Speaker, far too long the Conservatives and the Liberal government have swept problems in long-term care right under the rug, and it's time to change that. Families and caregivers like Peggy Clark are calling for a broad public inquiry into long-term care, leaving advocates like the advocacy centre for the elderly are demanding a broad public inquiry into quote the huge problems in long-term care. And members of this legislature have voted to support a broadened public inquiry that gets to the bottom of the real problems in seniors care. Will the government do the right thing and expand the public inquiry or will it find another reason to sweep the problems right under the rug?

>> Minister Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the registered nurses' association of Ontario, the headline of their press release read R.N.A.O. Welcomes broad based public inquiry into nursing home deaths at the hand of Elizabeth Wettlaufer. Here's the quote, Mr. Speaker. A broad based public inquiry should address concerns about the health and well-being of Ontarians living in nursing homes, says the registered nurses' association of Ontario. R.N.A.O. Is pleased the province answered its call for an independent public inquiry to get to the bottom of the events surrounding Wettlaufer's horrific actions, and in particular address the systemic factors to prevent at similar tragedy from occurring. We are pleased, said R.N.A.O., that the government listened to our

request set up a public inquiry with a broad mandate. We now urge Justice Gillese to exercise her full authority to make recommendations that will address the failings of our current system, including legislation and regulations, funding model, staffing and others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Des Rosiers to Minister Lalonde Re: Franco-Ontarian Day

>> MPP Nathalie Des Rosiers: Voice of Translator: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To our excellent Minister of francophone affairs today, September 25th, all francophones in Ontario are celebrating franco-ontarian day. We have started this day with the raising of the flag here in queen's park with a very large francophone community that are represented here as well with the students that are representing francophone council here. I would like to welcome them. I was wondering if the Minister could tell us about the commitments that we have made here in the government towards the community.

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Voice of Translator: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my Colleague, the member for Ottawa- Vanier, for her commitment to the francophone community. I would like to start by saying hello to every francophone in the province celebrating September 21st -- the 25th as well as all of them who are here today. I would also like to welcome the francophonie assembly of Ontario for their work and also for this amazing flag raising this morning. Mr. Speaker, there was a very important moment last Thursday and I would like to rate that the Premier has honoured the whole province and franco-ontarians by being the very first provincial leader to make a speech at the national assembly in Québec. She remembered her commitment to franco-ontarians, talking about the francophone university and, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud today. Thank you.

>> MPP Des Rosiers: Voice of Translator: I would like to thank the Minister for her answer. It's with great pleasure that we see our government's commitment. I would like to have more details regarding the francophone university. Could the Minister please tell us more on this topic? Thank you.

>> Minister Lalonde: Voice of Translator: With great pleasure, Mr. Speaker. I would like to highlight that the member is also a great ally for francophones. I would like to thank her for her work. Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, our francophone community has been waiting for the creation of a francophone university that is managed by francophones. We've been waiting for this a long time of we've decided to table a bil to create a francophone university in Ontario and we can be proud of it. That university will be the first one of its kind in the province and will offer more possibilities to students who want to study in French. Believe me this university will open a world of opportunities for francophones and francophiles in southwestern Ontario, before the whole province really. It's a great step and significant step for our young people, and I would like to thank my Colleague, Deb Matthews, for her leadership on this file. Thank you very much.

MPP MacLeod to Minister Naqvi Re: Gas Plant Trial

>> MPP Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of energy. Last week the crown began to lay out its case in the infamous gas plant trial. Before the government starts to tell us that this matter is before the courts and they begin to dodge, dip, dive and play a game of -- yeah duck and play a game of dodgeball, I want to share the words from the crown, Speaker, laying out their casement they said, quote, despite the Liberal chief of staff being quote painstakingly advised for his obligations to maintain records, the defendants quote acting together destroyed records that they had a legal duty to preserve. So, Mr. Speaker, despite those comments, I'm not going to ask about any specifics in the case but I do want the Minister to apprise this assembly why it is that the Liberal government has a policy to hide the truth. Withdrawn.

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: So thank you very much, Speaker. I will attempt to answer a withdrawn question, and the answer, Speaker, doesn't change because the member acknowledged that in her own question that it would be inappropriate to discuss any matters that are before the courts, and I appreciate the member that she has the knowledge of the rules and she very much appreciates the fact that these matters are before the court and it would be highly inappropriate for any members in this House to engage in any conversations that are subject to a court proceedings. So, Speaker, that's the best answer I can give at this moment to a withdrawn question. Thank you.

>> MPP MacLeod: Speaker, back to the Minister of energy. I asked a very specific question on a government policy on record keeping that the government doesn't want to answer. But it was Charles Dunning I think who said it best as he played Texas governor. Ooh, I like to dance a little sidestep. Now you see me. Now you don't. I'm on my way. Speaker, this Liberal government doesn't like that their shady dealings are aired out in public and I'm not surprised. Hydro deal, the leading document -- deleting documents, wiping computers, paying Liberal insidingsrs, shutting down hydro commitments, obfuscate and block -- Withdrawn that line, Speaker. How account Liberal and people of Ontario trust this Liberal government to do anything? I certainly don't. I would leave it to the government to explain to us. Why those records weren't kept last year.

>> Minister Naqvi: The member can try any which way to use any kind of over-the-top rhetorical language she wants to use. She in her own question admitted she's asking questions that is related to a trial that is taking place and she knows the rule better than anyone. She's been in this House long enough to know that when it comes to a matter that is before the courts, it is inappropriate for anybody who engage in this conversation. That's the rule that applies to this instance foe patter how you frame the question or any other matter, and therefore, Speaker, I advise everyone not to engage in line of questioning that can have any effect on

a case that is ongoing, Speaker. We should respect due process. We should respect the independent judiciary. And the work that is going on this that particular case. Thank you.

MPP Gates to Minister Duguid Re: Auto Sector Jobs

>> MPP Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Deputy Premier. Over 3,000 cami auto workers have been on strike in Ingersoll for two weeks. These workers are striking because they need G.M. To commit to keep building the equinox right here in Ontario. Our industry is closely connected here in Ontario. The shutdown at cami has resulted in 255 layoffs at G.M. In St. Catharines and 180 layoffs at Spencer A.R.L. In Niagara Falls. If the equinox production is moved out of Ontario, not only will cami workers lose their jobs. So will thousands of other workers in niagara. We know that the Conservatives said let the auto industry die. They don't support the auto workers. For the second time since the strike began, I will ask -- the workers are fighting to keep their jobs here in Ontario. Why isn't this government fighting along with them? Thank you, Speaker .

>> Minister Brad Duguid: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly we are and have been for the last ten or twelve years, where we've provided more support for the auto sector than any government in recent history. But our thoughts today -- and I'll talk about that in a minute -- our thoughts today continue to be with our auto workers and our auto sector in this province and I appreciate the question from the member opposite much it's very important for me to say this. We will continue to urge both parties, general motors and the workers, to reach a conclusion to this negotiation as soon as possible because we know there are ripple effects now across our auto sector, including places like St. Catharines. We need to get these parties to a conclusion in this Collective bargaining process as soon as possible and move forward in a positive way.

>> MPP Gates: Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. Not one auto plant has been built in Ontario in 15 years and nine have been built in Mexico. Despite G.M. Making record profits, these workers have been told they need to accept cuts to their benefits, their pensions and a two-tier wage system. Think about this. Despite having the highest skilled work force, which has the highest quality record in the world, we keep seeing our jobs shift to Mexico. The workers are fighting back. They're trying to say keep these jobs in Ontario and not just for themselves by the way, for all of us. For our kids, our grandkids. They're trying to protect thousands of jobs all over niagara, all over Ontario. The Liberal government has to have an auto strategy. You realize that if those cami jobs get shipped away, so do thousands of other workers in a number of sectors in Ontario. We know what these workers are doing to try -- And keep jobs in Ontario. Why won't this government produce a strategy that supports auto workers and Ontarians? Thank you.

>> Minister Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I hate to be glib about this, but the member -- where's the member been over the last 12 years when he's been sitting across

the aisle and watching a government that's been the most supportive government of the auto sector in recent memory. The investments that we've made in partnership with that sector, Mr. Speaker, and the member ought to acknowledge the safest sector. We wouldn't be talking about the auto sector today were it not for the investments this government has made. And that's not just -- invest many. We've invested \$2.6 billion, Mr. Speaker. \$6 billion since the fall of -- that's helping to support 40,000 direct auto jobs -- Simply put, Mr. Speaker, since 2004. This government has invested \$1.4 billion leveraging 15.8 billion in creating and retaining more than 72,800 jobs. Mr. Speaker, that's just the jobs created or retained --

MPP Hoggarth to Minister Ballard Re: Cap-and-Trade

>> MPP Ann Hoggarth: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of environment and climate change. I would like to congratulate the Premier and the Minister on the historic signing of the linking agreement with Québec and California last Friday. As we all know, climate change is one of the biggest global challenges we face today. This government knows that Ontario needs a realistic and affordable approach to fighting climate change. That's why we have implemented a cap on pollution in order to create real emission reductions in Ontario. To date we have had three options, each of which has sold out, the most recent of which generated just under \$526 million. On Friday, September 22nd, Ontario signed an agreement to link our carbon market with Québec and California starting January 1st, 2018. Speaker, account Minister please explain to the House why linking Ontario's carbon market with Québec and California. Is the most affordable and effective emissions reduction plan for Ontario?

>> Minister Chris Ballard: Well, thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the hardworking member from Barrie for that question. Speaker, our government knows Ontarians are concerned about the devastating effects of climate change and that's why we've taken initiatives to put a cap on greenhouse gas pollution through our carbon market. Experts, expert third party economists and analysts have shown our plan, which includes linking our carbon market with California, the state of California and Québec is best for Ontarians because it allows us to achieve real emission reductions at the lowest possible cost to both business and consumers. Speaker, we know that linking these two economies California and Québec is the best plan for Ontario. Third party experts know it. Business knows it. The only people who seem not to know it are the members opposite. Experts have said this plan -- third party experts have also said that the P.C.'s plan will cost four times more than ours without providing any real emissions.

>> MPP Hoggarth: Mr. Speaker, on Friday at the signing of the linking agreement California governor Jerry Brown stated -- climate change if left unchecked will profoundly disrupt the economies of the world and cause untold human suffering. Mr. Speaker, we know that this global problem requires global solutions. That's why Ontario's expanding its market-based approach to join with other jurisdictions through the western climate initiative. While we were working with our partners across north America to expand the markets, the proceeds for the options will continue to be invested into projects that will help families in Ontario protect the planet and save money. These projects include greener transit initiatives, improve cycling infrastructure, and the recently announced smart thermostat program. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister please inform the House of the ways in which the proceeds from cap and trade are being reinvest into our economy in order to lead Ontario to a greener future?

>> Minister Ballard: Thank you to the member for that important question, Speaker. Speaker, we know that tackling climate change is an important task. Not only that, we know that we can not take this challenge lightly. We must achieve real results. In Québec city this past Friday, both our Premier and the California governor Brown said that, together, our three jurisdictions -- that's California, Ontario and Québec -- are setting an example for other regions in the world to take action and lower emissions in a cost-friendly way. Together we're leading north America in emission reduction efforts and de carbonizing our economies through effective and efficient means. Our plan, Speaker, reinvests every dollar, allowing us to invest up to \$1.9 billion each year in green projects. Such an investment in clean technology and home retrofits. These projects allow the people of Ontario to participate in green initiatives that help save planet.

MPP Coe to Minister Lalonde Re: French-Language Services

>> MPP Lorne Coe: Voice of Translator: My question is for the Minister of francophone affairs. The law in French language services is now over 30 years old. The French language services commissioner, Mr. Twans wa boulud, mentioned in his report -- Mr. Francois boulud, mentioned in his report, last year as well as this year, that complete reform of the law was necessary. He recommended that the law reflects the reality of today. Mr. Speaker, why is the government not updating this law?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: I would like to thank the member for his question. In effect the law is 30 years old, and since then we've been able to make significant steps forward in our beautiful province. This law must be modernized and I said this when I made a concrete commitment at the university of Ottawa. On the same token, I know that the commissioner is not expecting us to open the law if we're not going to do something significant. So I would like to thank the assembly of the francophonie, who is trying to identify the important parts of this reform. Mr. Speaker, as Minister of francophone affairs, access to French language services is very important for everyone. And this is important in all sectors of the economy so we will continue to work in respect to this.

>> MPP Coe: Voice of Translator: Again to the Minister of francophone affairs. On page 95 of the annual report of the French language services commissioner, the commissioner recommended that the ministry of francophone affairs should seize this occasion and consult the population with respect to the reform of the French language services law. When will this complete reform of the law occur?

>> Minister Lalonde: Voice of Translator: Again I would like to thank the member for his question because access to French language services is very important in many sectors. And when I tour the province, what I hear is that people want services. We've also spoken about designation. My mandate letter has spoke of the designation process and how it's been approved, and we are committed to doing it this autumn in order to facilitate designation and I'm certain, Mr. Speaker, access to French language services is very important and we mustn't forget that there are 26 designated regions and that could include 80% of our francophones. There are over 612,000 francophones in Ontario who they are celebrating September 25th. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Gelinas to Minister Hoskins Re: Violence Against Healthcare Workers

>> MPP France Gelinas: Voice of Translator: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the Minister of health. Negotiations between 2,000 hospital workers and the hospital association of Ontario have derailed as a result of workplace violence for years, frontline health care workers, most of whom are women, have asked the government to resolve problems WP to violence. However this government just like the Conservatives before them, is continuing to limit hospital budgets, firing frontline staff and causing an overcrowding problem within our hospitals. The government -- what will the government do in order to stop exaggerating the problem and how will it start to protect frontline health care workers? [End of Translation]

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We absolutely can't tolerate tragic incidents of violence in any of our hospital or health care facilities. For that matter any government facility across this province. Mr. Speaker, we aim and our goal is not only to have a culture and environment of zero tolerance but to actually have as that ambitious goal zero violence against our health care workers including those who are predominantly affected, our nurses who are those hard working individuals that provide that important care. So, Mr. Speaker, that's why -- I think if I recall correctly it was around two years ago that, along with frontline workers themselves and the associations and unions that represent them so aptly and experts in the field of stamping out workplace violence, we created a table entitled workplace violence prevention and health care leadership table. To do just that, to actually realize that goal that I've stated earlier but to work with those individuals and those frontline workers than those that represent them to make sure. We have the impacts we're looking for, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Gelinas: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: If you're working in an Ontario hospital, you should be able to return safe at the end of the day. But today health care workers live in fear. Havel of health care staff are assaulted every year. Hospital workers have been beaten so badly that they never return to work. It is ee tragic. It's unacceptable but it's a -- avoidable. We can prevent this violence. The government will encourage negotiations between the Ontario hospital association and will it provide the necessary financing in order to shelter these workers from work profiles -- workplace violence.

>> Minister Hoskins: Of course we all understand labour negotiations are under way. But, Mr. Speaker, so that workplace health care -- workplace violence prevention health care leadership that I mentioned earlier it not only brought together those key stakeholders but it's produced its first report and that first report necessarily has focused on our frontline nurses because as I mentioned they are disproportionately affected compared to others in the workplace. But it's

absolutely clear to this government that not only do we have an obligation to end workplace violence but we do have the tools and we will make the investments to realize that, Mr. Speaker. So their first plan has emerged through a report. We're acting, consulting and acting on those recommendations. We're working with the ministry of labour, public services, hell and safety association but many other key stakeholders but our work has not been as that table continues to broaden their work to other. Within the health care sector the but we are already making progress and beginning emphatically and seriously to implement the recommendations that were outlined in the first report from this table, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Potts to Minister Mauro Re: Flood Relief

>> MPP Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of municipal affairs. Now picking up on that excellent question from our member from Barrie, our government does have a great strong record of addressing climate change issues. Earlier this summer the Minister announced Ontario is investing up to 100 million from the proceeds of its carbon market into the global greenhouse gas challenge fund in 2017/18. A program that will help support community-led action on climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Now we are already experiencing the effects of climate change in Ontario with increased extreme weather events. This has been an extraordinary year of flooding in Ontario as we all know. In May Renfrew county and Pembroke experienced significant flooding. In Beaches- East York as a result of record high levels. Heavy rain flooded homes in the Ottawa river. In June homes in western Ontario were flooded. Then we saw in August bailments in Windsor and Essex county were overwhelmed. Some of them being flooded for a second time. So Speaker, my question to the Minister is can he explain what our government is doing to assist people all across Ontario to address these extreme weather events?

>> Minister Bill Mauro: Thank you to the member for the question. We are indeed seeing an increased number of natural disasters, resulting in more slowing to help people through our programs. Between 2005 and '10 there were 17 disasters required 8 million until provincial assistance. Between 2010 and 2015 there were 43 declared disasters requiring over 36 million in provincial assistance. Given that there have been several flooding events in Ontario in 2017, we have activated the disaster recovery assistance for Ontarians program in 35 municipalities this year. The trend is obviously continuing. The new disaster recovery assistance program offers financial and disaster assistance for people to repair their homes after a natural disaster in cases where private insurance isn't widely available. In a flooding event our provincial program kicks in if there is damage caused by Overland flooding. It can help make your home safe, livable. After a natural disaster and this program will help hundreds of families for a disaster recovery program has been activated this year.

>> MPP Potts: Thank you, Speaker. I really want to thank the Minister for that answer and for his ongoing work across Ontario helping municipalities, large, immediate and small address these important issues. Now I know that here many of our MPPs have seen flooding in our communities. Again in Beaches- East York we had Overland flooding and many sewer backups. Burlington of course. The local hospital. Recently the Minister was in Windsor for the second time in a year to activate the disaster recovery assistance program for Ontarians. We've heard concerns about coverage under this program following flooding in Windsor and Essex. The member for Windsor- Tecumseh said in the House on Thursday and other occasions that private insurance isn't readily available.

Speaker, I've heard the Minister say that our disaster recovery program provides assistance for damage covered by year land flooding and that insurance for sewage backup coverage is readily available privately. And technology exists to protect against backups. People repairing their homes want to know, Minister, will you please clarify –

>> Minister Mauro: As I've said in the house before, speaker, according to information provided to me, private insurance for sewer backup is readily available. On Thursday the member for windsor-tecumseh said in the house that I was wrong. According to the member the insurance bureau of Canada had also told me I was wrong. This is interesting speaker because I have a news release from the I.B.C. Which says coverage for sewer backup is widely available. I believe the member for windsor-tecumseh also received the same information. There's 124 million of insured damage in the Windsor region from late August flooding but there's a difference between sewer backup and Overland flooding. Private coverage for Overland flooding isn't available in every case. This is exactly why our program exists and why it was activated in the member as riding. The member for windsor-tecumseh took his cue I believe from a media article and he drew the wrong conclusion. Ministry staff will again be in Windsor this week to provide the people with further information about our disaster recovery --

MPP N.Miller to Minister McGarry Re: Battle Falls Dam Construction

>> MPP Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of natural resources and forestry. Minister, as I hope you are aware construction has started on the battle falls dam. Still a controversial project. One of the biggest concerns about this power plant is the safety of users of battle bay and moon river. I understand the proponent has submitted a draft safety plan to your ministry but that has not been made public. The proponent held a public meeting last Thursday evening. There was a significant crowd at that meeting some of whom were there to ask how the turbines could be operated safely in this location but still swift river did not release their safety plan. Minister, can you please confirm whether your ministry has received the draft safety plan from swift river energy and, if so, can you commit to release that plan to the community for consultation?

>> Minister Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much, Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. Certainly the battle falls construction on the dam is just beginning. But this has been a process, Speaker, that's gone back for many, many years. And I know that there's been a lot of community involvement in it. I want to thank all of the staff that have provided comment from my ministry on it. But the Ontario government is committed to expanding clean and renewable sources of energy, such as water and wind power. As part of the environmental assessment for this program, the swift river energy was required to consult with the public and continues to do so. I can tell you that upon completion of all phases of these construction that the company will acquire water power lease under the public lands act. But public safety measures including fencing, warning areas, all the signs in that area. Including all the safety features that will be required for that is on the proponent. They will submit the plan. We will review it and it will be made public in due course. Thank you.