

Hansard: Brown to Thibeault -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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Date: Wed, 25 Oct 2017 11:05:58 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of energy. Yesterday the government had an opportunity to apologize for their latest attacks on -- Mr. Speaker, clearly the government doesn't like to talk about the auditor general's report. Now instead of doing the right thing and supporting our motion yesterday, they voted it down. I want to give the Liberals another chance. The Minister of energy, will the government apologize to the auditor general for what was a blatant attempt to discredit her office? It wasn't right. You know it wasn't right and they should apologize.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We survived today -- thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy birthday. Thank you for the birthday wishes. Mr. Speaker, I remember mark second very well. That was -- March 2nd. Which has lowered electricity bills an average of 25% for all residential customers and half a million small businesses and farms. That was 237 days ago, Mr. Speaker. That was 237 days ago, Mr. Speaker. Shortly after that, the leader of the official opposition promised to release his own energy plan sometime in the coming weeks. But here we are, Mr. Speaker, over a half a year later -- Almost halfway through the fall session. In those 237 days a lot has happened, Mr. Speaker, but nothing has happened on that side. That's the party that should be apologizing for --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister. The question was about the way this

government has discredited the auditor general. The auditor general said the way they're doing this hydro scheme will cost Ontarians \$4 billion more than necessary. And I get that it's the Liberal talking points today to applaud the Minister of energy. But what we're talking about is \$4 billion that Ontario families are going to have to pay because of this government. And rather than acknowledge the auditor general's report and say we're going to try to fix this, they discredit the auditor general. Mr. Speaker, ten times out of ten, if I choose who to believe, the auditor general or this Liberal government, I'm going to choose the auditor general. So I will ask the question again. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of energy apologize to the auditor general for the way -- His office, his ministry has discredited her office?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with the auditor general. As the president of the treasury board says, 99.9% of the time, we always agree with the auditor general and implement her recommendations. In this instance, Mr. Speaker, we agree this is an accounting dispute. We have KPMG. We have Ian Wise. We have Deloitte. All of these peers of the auditor general agree what we have brought forward, Mr. Speaker, is a plan that is going to actually reduce rates by 25% and meet the Canadian public sector accounting standards, Mr. Speaker. But I know the point is, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservatives are refusing or even unable to come up with any ideas or a plan of their own, Mr. Speaker. We've helped families by lowering their rates by 25%. We've helped families by raising the minimum wage to \$15. We protect tenants from unfair rent increases. What do they have on that side, Mr. Speaker? Zero.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. I'm glad that the Minister is now saying he agrees with the auditor general because the auditor general has said their energy policy is the House of cards, that after the election energy rates are going to skyrocket. The auditor general has said they make up their own rules. The auditor general has said they're going to blow \$4 billion unnecessarily. So if you all of a sudden agree with the auditor general, how are you going to fix that problem and not simply discredit her? Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was written in an article the Minister of energy went so far -- the ministry went so far as personally contact journalists the day before her report was released say the auditor general's interpretation is flawed. Calling the day before the report to the auditor general? That's not working with the auditor general. That's attacking the auditor general. So once again, will the government do the right thing. And apologize to the auditor general?

>> Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with the auditor general on an ongoing basis. We will continue as a government to be open and transparent with the auditor general and with all independent officers of the House, Mr. Speaker. It is important for us to continue to have that working dialogue as the president of the treasury board has said over and over again, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do so. This is an accounting dispute, Mr. Speaker. We believe -- and so do her peers and so do all of the bureaucracy accountants -- all believe that the way that we have done this, by keeping the assets of the electricity system in that sector, Mr. Speaker, meets with the Canadian public sector accounting standards. We'll continue to work forward, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to advocate for the people of this province unlike the opposition. That does nothing on offer and never will, Mr. Speaker.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.