MEDIA EVENT: SCRUMS FOLLOWING THE THRONE SPEECH

September 12, 2016

Location:
Outside Cabinet Meeting Room, Legislature

Speakers:
Ministers Thibeault; Sousa; Hoskins; Naidoo-Harris; Lalonde; NDP MPP Gelinas; French Language Services Commissioner Francois Boileau; OPSEU President Smokey Thomas; CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn

Media Attendance:
Print – 11 TV – 9 Radio – 4

Media Outlets:
Leslie – CP; Jones – CP; Benzie – Star; Ferguson – Star; Cohn – Star; Morrow – Globe; Blizzard – Sun; Csanady – Post; Zochodne – QP Briefing; Smith Cross – QP Briefing; Nanji - QP Briefing; Crawley - CBC Radio/TV; Brule - Radio Canada/CJBC; Lamoureux - Radio Canada TV; Morris – Newstalk 1010; Carter - Global; CTV Ontario; Rath - CHCH Television; Tumelty - City TV; Mulligan – City; Wu – Fairchild TV; TFO; Lagogianes – CP24, other unidentified reporters

Media Questions:

Questions for Minister Thibeault:	
Q. Benzie: (inaudible) it's a billion dollars just for the rebate. How are you going to?	So you're asking me specifically about the provincial rebate. So that is something that we're very proud of because this is a meaningful savings for families and we're very happy to be doing this and we're in a fiscal position now where we've been doing all of the heavy lifting over the last few years to make sure that we're going to balance, so yeah, we're looking at about a billion dollars that we're going to be giving back in savings, on tax savings.
Q. Benzie: That includes the rural subsidy? The up to $540 that's…	So the rural subsidy is actually the ratepayer piece. And that's actually funded through the rate piece. And so that's the (inaudible) portion that you're asking me about. And then of course I think it's important for us to recognise that we're doing something for our remote, rural and northern customers and consumers as well. They're going to be saving about 20% on all of their bills and that's significant for them.
Q. Carter: (inaudible) rolled into $1-billion?	So the $1-billion is to specific, so that's the tax-piece and that's specifically related to all of the heavy lifting we've done over the last years to make sure that we can balance our books, and so now we're seeing that other piece is coming from the rate piece.
Q. Carter: (inaudible) It was widely criticised for being too expensive and not promoting conservation. Why essentially re-introduce it?	So we're not re-introducing that piece. We're introducing this rebate, but we're actually continuing to (inaudible) and we've also got the OESP program and five other programs that are actually in there for people (inaudible)

Q. Carter: (inaudible) Why introduce the same thing that you just took away in January?	So I'm going to continue to explain that, that we've got these six other programs that are in place, that are actually benefitting all of our people that are having a difficult time to meet their bills right now. And for us I think it's important because over the last ten years, we've done great things with our electricity system. We've made it safe, we've made it reliable, and we've made it clean. And I think right now we need to take it to the next level and make it as affordable as can be for as many Ontarians as we can.
Q. Morrow: (inaudible) help subsidise this rural discount, (inaudible) up for that reason and then they go down because (inaudible) is this just a shell game?	It's not at all. When we're talking about a 20% savings on their bill that's a significant saving. We're looking at about $540 a year for these people and we're talking very minimal for (inaudible)
Q. Morrow: How much will it cost the rest of us to subsidise that?	I believe it's, we're looking at about something under a dollar to be exact, but it varies, it varies (inaudible)
Q. Morrow: (inaudible)	About a $110-million is that total cost but it's already been there. This has been embedded in the system since 2002. So every rural and residential customer in like northern Ontario or in rural parts of the province have been receiving this subsidy of about $34 since 2002 and it's never increased due to inflation. It's never seen an increase so it's actually just stayed at that rate. What we're doing now is we're doubling that rebate to ensure that we've got some fairness for our rural and northern customers.
Q. Leslie: Why would taxpayers be asked to subsidise ratepayers? The province has gone down this road several times and every new government that comes in says, taxpayers should not be subsidizing ratepayers, that's exactly what this is doing to the tune of a billion dollars a year.	Right now we recognise that many of our families and some businesses are having a difficult time with electricity bills and we thought it was paramount to ensure that we find ways to help them. And today this is a meaningful savings for many families. They're going to actually see more money in their pocket which we see as key and we want to ensure that by putting forward this type of rebate that they can see those savings at the end of every month.
Q. Mulligan: But they're not going to save anything, it comes out the exact same day as cap and trade is introduced. So what are they really going to be saving? If cap and trade goes on the bill, isn't that going to cancel out this rebate?	So cap and trade from what we put in the previous budget shows that we will not be actually increasing rates at all. That we're going to see some modest downward pressure on rates. So you won't see any increase in rates because of cap and trade.
Q. Benzie: But to (inaudible) point, you will pay more for natural gas and gasoline to the tune of $13 a month, so that's going to offset, isn't that going to be, yeah it'd be a wash. Your hydro bills would be a little cheaper but your gas bills will be higher.	So when you're saying $13 can you break that down? I know there's a $5.

Q. Benzie: 4.3cents a litre on gasoline and $5 a month on natural gas.	So when we're talking about electricity prices specifically and that's what I'm here to talk about, we're seeing those specific reductions happening right now, as of the 1st.
Q. Carter: But how do you compartmentalise this? It's still the same wallet; it's still the same taxpayer. If your hydro bill goes down, but your gas bill, your heating bill goes up, you still don't have any money.	So what we're talking about all along is we're making sure that we're going to continue to find ways to have downward pressure on our rates. So the cap and trade piece we've set along isn't going to have any increases but what we're doing today is making sure that we're investing in families, investing in Ontario businesses by giving those in northern communities at least a 20% reduction on their bills and for all families an 8% reduction.
Q. Unidentified: Is it enough (inaudible)?	So what I'm putting, hopefully, when we introduce the legislation is that we're going to look at this in 2018 and see if there's anything we can continue to do in terms of that 20% reduction. Because we didn't look at it for the last little while in terms of how can get that rebate down, so what we're going to do now is try and find ways to constantly monitor it.
Q. Global: But you say (inaudible) cost a billion dollars, you keep saying we've done the heavy lifting to find it but from where specifically?	So I know Public Accounts will be showing all of that in the very near future and I believe Minister Sousa will be speaking to all of that.
Q. Global: You must have some idea.	So Minister Sousa will be speaking to that and I know that the heavy lifting and the making sure that we've met our financial obligations in terms of balancing our budgets is something that Minister Sousa will be talking about and Public Accounts will be coming out shortly with that information.
Q. Morrow: (inaudible) a hundred-some million (inaudible) a 20% subsidy for northern residents is that $100-million after the increase that you guys were implementing or is that what we're paying, what it's costing now.	So, what it's costing now is about $175-million for that $34 rebate and so what we're doing is looking at over the next little while at increasing (inaudible)
Q. Morrow: that'll double (inaudible)	So the numbers
Q. (inaudible)	So we're actually going to see that reduction starts in January and it'll ensure that we're getting that 20% reduction.
Q. Unidentified: And the (inaudible) is coming from the ratepayer?	It's not $350-million, I'll get you that exact number once I talk with my staff, I'll make sure we get that number for you.
Q. Morrow: And (inaudible) ratepayers all over the province.	So we'll get that number for you.

Questions for Minister Sousa:	
Q: Ferguson: HST on Hydro, (inaudible)	So we built quite a bit of prudence into the plan. We recognize that the work we've done over the last number of years, being very disciplined and determined, we've been able to afford the things that are going to matter. We can now distribute greater support for Ontario families; five million more families are going to benefit from these initiatives, initiatives that would not otherwise have been possible had we not taken a disciplined approach with our fiscal plan. We are coming to balance because of the efforts that we have taken and we are able to accommodate the needs of everyday Ontarians who are looking for some more support.
Q: Ferguson: (Inaudible)	Absolutely. As I have said, we built prudence into our system. We've already made the necessary – this is not something that just happened a week ago. We have been planning this for a number of months and we have taken the necessary steps to accommodate this, and so I take great – I am very proud of the work that our Caucus and our Premier has taken to foster some of these initiatives because of the fact that we have taken the steps to come to take a very disciplined approach in our fiscal plan. We are coming to balance. We are enabling these programs to (inaudible)
Q: Ferguson: You are saying you had a billion suddenly lying around? I find that hard to believe.	Well, we have, as a plan that's working. The fact of the matter is we have stimulated economic growth, we have taken measures of control around our spending, we have been able to come to balance in the coming year because of those steps. The growing economy has now given us further ability to share some of the dividends that's come from, frankly, investing heavily in our system to lessen the degree of smog in our community. This has been the hottest summer on record and there were no smog days, and that isn't by accident, it's because we got out of dirty coal. We invested heavily in decarbonizing our system to enable the people of Ontario to greater benefit after greater benefit. At the same time, because of the discipline, because of the measures we have taken fiscally we are able to afford these, which is something that otherwise wouldn't have happened had we not taken those steps.
Q: Global: You just said cutting costs elsewhere. So give us some specifics, where is the money coming from?	We are increasing supports for health care. We are increasing supports for education.
Q: Global: How? Where is it coming from?	We absolutely are increasing it. I identified in our fiscal plan. And coming shortly is going to be our public accounts illustrating the reporting of our accounting over the last year, plus, the fall economic statement that is going to illustrate specifically where we are going to –

Q: Global: So give us a couple of major line items then.	Our line items are very clear. We've highlighted in our budget where we would be, we are achieving that. We highlighted in our budget last year the prudence that was built into the plan, which we are having, enabling us to come to balance, at the same time, providing for these programs.
Q: Global: So are there cuts anywhere? There has got to be cuts somewhere?	I've identified them. We have been doing that all along. This is something that I have planned to do; something that has been put in our fiscal plan. We have achieved it and we've actually overachieved because of the growth in the economy as well as the measures that we have taken to control our spending, as well as attacking the underground economy. More importantly, the people of Ontario are looking for some relief and some support, and we are enabling that to happen as well.
Q: (Inaudible)	We are going to identify those. I mean, there is some creative process going to be required over the next five years in regards to it. We are going to lay that out shortly. There is also an operating cost and then there's capital improvements that are going to be made for those child care spaces. But today, today we are talking about almost a billion dollars to support the residential 8 per cent rebate program (inaudible)
Q: Just trying to figure how much (inaudible) from the cost, it was the (inaudible) 8 per cent –	So the cost for daycare over the next five years, once we implement it, will be anywhere between $600 million to $750 million.
Q: Ferguson: And how many spaces are going to come in 2017? Is it going to be –	I'll allow the Minister to come forward with those things. Tomorrow, we will have a lot more deliberation on these matters, as well as the day after.
Q: Ferguson: But what have you budgeted for? You have obviously got budget figures if you're going to do this.	We actually do. We have a budget figure that says we are coming to balance next year, we are eliminating the deficit and we are achieving what we required.
Q: Ferguson: (Inaudible) 20,000 spaces in the first year or is it going to be 20,000 a year for five years, or are you going to (inaudible)?	We are going to have more children get a good start in life because of the efforts that we have taken. Over 100,000 new spaces available to them. What we want are people to have a good start in life, our young people. What price do you put on our children? Well, we want to make certain (inaudible)
Q: Ferguson: So are you saying you don't know yet? (Inaudible)	I just told you what they are. (Inaudible)
Q: Unidentified: Is there a lesson here that if you want to take energy costs seriously, vote for somebody other than the Liberals in a by-election?	Listen. This is not something that just happened. A lot of people – our Caucus has been taking about this for months now and this is not something that can be achieved – the complexity of this has required months of preparation. So to suggest otherwise is just spin on the part of the opposition. What we are doing is something

	that we have been thoughtful of, it has been very prudent and it has been very measured. And we wouldn't do it without putting people at risk. In other words, we need to come to balance as well, we need to afford to do these things, and that has required time, required time in investing in our grid to enable some of this to take place, investing in removing coal fired plants and emissions from the system to make our society healthier. But at the same time, controlling our spending so that we can afford it, and that's happened.
Q: Unidentified: (Inaudible) as recently as the 2014 election and now, suddenly, two years later it's a key part of your government's agenda.	The Premier has been showing great leadership on this for some time. This is not just something that just happened. This is something that has required some time, some preparation and, in the coming days, we will illustrate exactly how the legislature will (inaudible)
Q: Carter: Minister, in 2012, Don Drummond warned your government that the clean benefit was too expensive and it did not promote conservation, and essentially, you just replaced it after taking it away for a year.	Don Drummond came out with many recommendations, the majority of which have been implemented, in fact, beyond his expectations. And when it comes to Clean Energy Benefit and our electricity grid, he would substantiate the fact that we are one of the cleanest jurisdictions in North America, we have saved $5-6 billion recently in renegotiations, and he has indicated and recognized that this has happened because of the measures that we've taken to control our spending
Q: Carter: He warned your government not to reintroduce it or extend it because you wouldn't be able to make balance and now that is essentially exactly what you've done.	We are coming to balance. In fact, we are coming to balance well beyond his expectations as well.
Q: Carter: So you had an extra billion dollars just lying around?	We are talking the steps necessary to come to balance while providing support for families, that is critical in our society and we want to be certain that everybody benefits and no one is left behind.
Q: Mulligan: When you say that this was months in the making are you saying that the low polls and the loss in the by-election had nothing to do with this 8 per cent rebate?	The Premier has been discussing this for some time. We recognize the need to have our fiscal house in order in order to afford them and that has taken some time. So, yes, the Premier has been at this for -- and our Caucus has been deliberating over this for a long time. Long before the others have suggested anything in this respect. It is something that is necessary for the good of society. At the same time, we need to come to balance. We are doing both.
Q: Unidentified: Do you think that maybe the Liberals might be performing a little bit better in the polls after some of the announcements that were made?	What's driving this is the ability to deliver something for communities and something for our families, and the driving force behind this is the needs of the people of Ontario, not the needs of any political party.
Q: Csanady: So when did these discussions	I have had discussions with the Premier months ago on

start if they have been going on for some time?	this.
Questions for Minister Hoskins:	
Q: Unidentified: (inaudible)	Well, certainly the ministry has said that if we were to disclose those estimates it could artificially drive up the costs of repairs that we undertake to do. And again, I think it's important that this doesn't represent the cost of repairs impacting quality health services delivered. This represents a calculation based on an estimate to restore a hospital to brand new status.
Q:Smith Cross: (inaudible) schools versus hospitals	You'll have to talk to Education about that, I'm following best advice from my ministry. And we've increased, as I've mentioned, tripled the investment to $175M a year specifically to those maintenance and repairs that will be reflected in the (inaudible)
Q: Smith Cross: How do you intend to bring down specialist wait times?	Well, you know, we are looking at a variety of mechanisms to, not just wait time to a specialist, we're working, of course, with our healthcare providers, we've met with some success, for example, when we looked at referral for low back pain where we have created a process as well as a centralized system for referral where an individual has been assessed as in need of seeing a specialist for the back pain. There is a centralized process that they go through. I think, I suspect it will be different for different specialties and we're working with specialties to get a better understanding of what some of those impediments are and how we can work together with them to streamline it.
Q: Lamoureux: (inaudible)…we're going to be firm on the many questions – is that a new strategy?	Well, you know I think our proposed agreement that was endorsed by the board of directors of the OMA, by the President herself, contained increased investments of over $1B, with a 10-per-cent increase over a four-year period. For the first time in the province's history the doctors, through the OMA, would have a seat at the table in decision-making. And it addressed certain concerns they had with regards to Bill 210, the Patient's First Act. So we believe that was a fair offer that was made to them. There are others, Patrick Brown, particularly, who would prefer to increase payment to high-paid specialists. I've made it clear for many, many months that we intend to support our doctors, particularly our family doctors and those who are at the lower end of the spectrum, through schedule benefit changes, through addressing the issue of relativity, where physicians treated fairly. They will continue to be among the best paid in Canada as they are today. It's regrettable we weren't able to do that in the context of an agreement but we have a responsibility as government to continue to manage the healthcare system, to continue to make important investments in home and community care, and other, in our nurses and our hospitals, so we will take that responsibility and move

	forward.
Q: Smith Cross: Does that mean unilateral action?	Well, you know, I think there are, we're certainly committed to funding the increased doctors that are practice in Ontario each year, 800 or 900 new doctors, net new doctors, practice, we've committed to supporting new physicians practising. We're committed to, as well, making changes with regards to ensuring Ontarians have accessibility and availability to their primary care provider.
Q: Smith Cross: That doesn't sound like you are ruling out unilateral action?	I had certainly hoped, and this government had hoped, that we, given that the OMA are partner in negotiations, had approved and endorsed the proposal that we negotiated with them over a series of months – we would have hoped the membership would have accepted that. However, and we understand the OMA have a number of issues that they are working their way through. This government needs to continue to provide quality healthcare.
Questions for Minister Naidoo-Harris:	
Q: Benzie: How much is it going to cost to have an additional 100,000 child care spaces over the next five years?	Well I'm going to start by saying this is a historic investment, right, in child care. It's also an investment in our future when it comes to our children and families. What I think is happening right here is that the Premier and our government is showing there is a vision. Our vision is to ensure that we create a solid foundation when it comes to delivering child care to the province and putting our kids on the right start in terms of the future. When it comes to costs, well, we recognize that there will be operating costs and capital costs. Those operating costs will be somewhere between $600-750 million, that's been set aside—
Q: Benzie: Over the five years?	Over the five years. And when it comes to—in terms of capital cost, we're setting aside about $1-3 billion for that, for the rolling out of the 100,000 spaces, child care spaces.
Q: Benzie: $1-3 billion? That's a pretty wide range.	It is. Because we recognize that we need to talk with our community partners and really consult with the sector to make sure that we're getting it right. They have told us that they want to have a say in the vision, and we're going to make sure that we're doing the right thing and that we're working with our partners in terms of delivering the service that they are asking for.
Q: Benzie: Just so we're clear, Minister, it's up to $750 million for operating and up to $3 billion for capital. Is that right?	Yes.
Q: Leslie: Sorry, Minister, I missed those figures. Can I just get the cost of the 100,000 daycare spaces?	So, 100,000 daycare spaces, delivering what I think is a historic plan and a historic investment when it comes to Ontario families, making sure that working people in our

	province get the support they need when it comes to making sure their children are taken care of during the day. In addition to that, making sure that we're getting our kids off to the best start we possibly can, because we know the children do well when they are in a situation that is a safe and healthy environment. So we're investing in our child care, and we're doing it by setting aside between $600-$750 million in terms of operating costs, and setting aside between $1 billion to $3 billion in capital funds to make sure we deliver our promise when it comes to child care. And this is historic. It's something the Premier really wanted us to do, and we're going to make sure we deliver that.
Q: Smith Cross: Do you (inaudible) money from the federal government as part of the child care (inaudible)?	We're certainly going to be working with our federal partners, and in fact, working with all our partners when it comes to government. But ultimately in the end, of course there is a pan-Canadian framework and those discussions will be ongoing. This is just the Premier's commitment to the province and the people of Ontario, and it's our commitment.
Q: Morrow: Those operating costs are for the full five years? Or is that every year.	That's for the full five years.
Q: Carter: I'm sorry, Minister, we came in late. Your estimation of the cost for this?	So, right now the cost estimates to delivering what I think is a historic investment in terms of child care and giving our children the best start we possibly can, making sure those parents out there have the support that they need, the operating costs between $600-$750 million, and when it comes to capital costs, between $1-$3 billion. I mean, look, parents have said to us over the years that they want choice, they want affordability, and they really want access. And they told us that they need more of this when it comes to ensuring that their children get the child care that they need. The Premier and our team has listened and we are now working on a plan to deliver that to the people of Ontario.
Q: Carter: Whether or not it's a good idea is one thing, whether or not we can afford it is something completely different.	I think when it comes to our children and the future of Ontario, and really, making sure our children are in a safe environment, of course we can afford it. This is an investment in the future of this province and the future of our children. Ultimately, in the end, that money will trickle down in many different ways. Because first of all, it's going to ensure we put our children on a path to success. Secondly, we know that there is a gender wage gap problem. This will be a step towards addressing that. In addition to that, it will be empowering women, and allowing them, if they choose to go and work, they will be able to make that choice and do it. And third—fourthly, it will also ensure that when it comes to poverty, it will help us with poverty reduction. So this is a win-win on all different levels, it's an investment in our province, and an investment in the people of Ontario, and it is an

	investment that will keep giving back. We know that when it comes to child care the investment that we make comes back seven-fold in the years down the road. That's what we're doing.
Q: Csanady: (inaudible) spaces do you want these to be? Which type of child care spaces?	Oh, I mean, at this point 100,000 child care spaces in all different levels. They will be licensed child care spaces. And we'll be delivering them working with our partners, whether it's community partners, schools, and also home licensed care situations to work out what the details of that would be.
Q: Smith Cross: Do you expect the increased availability of the spaces to drive down the cost (inaudible)?	Well I think it's about affordability, and making child care accessible for parents and for children, and that's what we're trying to do.
Q: Ferguson: Sorry, I came in late. Did you mention how many spaces there's going to be in the first of the five years? Have you guys worked out the numbers yet?	We haven't worked out those numbers completely yet. 100,000 spaces, we will start delivering on those spaces starting in 2017. How that works out in terms of each year and the next needs to be sorted out. We want to talk with our community partners and make sure that we get it right.
Q: Smith Cross: 100,000 spaces, is that subsidized care to make it cheaper? Or just physically helping the infrastructure?	So we've set aside some money, the $600-$750 million, which is operating costs, there will be some room in there to work with our partners and get their advice about what this could mean in terms of fee subsidies. Those details need to be worked out.
Q: Tumelty: And—sorry, I did come in late again, the finances, explain the finances here.	So, the Premier is and our government is making a historic investment in child care, we want to ensure that our children are going to be set on the right path and that we're giving the best start we can possibly give them in life. In addition to that we are trying to ensure we are giving parents the affordability, accessibility and choice that they have been asking for. And so the Premier is promising in her vision 100,000 new child care spaces to be rolled out over the next five years. That will cost between $600-$750 million in terms of operating costs, and between $1-$3 billion in terms of capital costs. The capital costs will involve a number of things, but you know, finding the spaces, sometimes retrofitting, sometimes building new spaces. But, let's not forget, that this money and this investment will also mean jobs. 20,000 new jobs when it comes to child care workers in the province. That's our estimate. In addition to that, the infrastructure money, the capital investment that we are making is going to mean jobs when it comes to building that infrastructure. So even more jobs. This is fantastic news. It is the right thing to do. It's the thing that we should be doing for our families and for our children, and I am just proud to be working on this initiative, and I promise you, that in the next few years we are going to be doing some very exciting work when it comes to our children in this province. Thank you.

Questions for Minister Lalonde:	
Q: Lamoureux: (Joined in progress in French) Francophones are asking for their own French-language university. And it looks like it is not a priority for the next two years.	In French: I would tell them to stay tuned with me. Good news is coming.
Q: Lamoureux in French: Can you give us an example of what is coming? Something concrete for Francophones who are looking at this Throne Speech and say all our efforts, our demands have not been heard.	In French: I want to reassure all Franco Ontarians their demands have clearly been heard by the Kathleen Wynne government and we are working very hard on upcoming announcements to reassure everyone in the francophonie and francophilie in Ontario.
Q: Lamoureux in French: So will it be a French-language university?	In French: Listen, what I would like to say is stay tuned.
Q: Lamoureux in French: But that is what Francophones have been told for years. Stay tune, hand in, it is coming, it is coming. But there is still nothing.	In French: This is an important issue for Minister Matthews and I. We have had to important discussions during the summer. And I want to once again to reassure member of the francophonie in Ontario not to worry. This is an issue which is very important for the Wynne government and we should have some good news soon.
Q: Brule in French: As soon as Francophones heard about prorogation, they were asking us what happens to the bill to create a French-language university? That is what they are concerned about and that question came from everywhere.	In French: You are asking about a private members' bill from a member of the legislature. Listen, I don't know if people understand how the process works for private members' bills. There are understandings between the government house leaders, between the parties every year. Every party brings its priorities with private members' bills. What I can you is we in government take their very seriously, the Francophone university, the decision to bring something here in Ontario, I would ask them to be a little more patient and be confident. Stay tune for sure.
Questions for NDP MPP Gelinas:	
	(Joined in progress in French) How many more missed opportunities before something is done? They told us what is coming in the legislative agenda. Have you heard anything about the law governing French language services in there? No. As soon as they talked about prorogation, French-language social media only spoke about the law that would create a French-language university. Would it have been difficult to speak about a French-language university? A large portion of the Speech from the Throne dealt with post-secondary education, with words like "all students who qualify should be able to access post-secondary studies". I was waiting for the word French to come at the end of that sentence and it never came. It is disappointing, disappointing because these are lost opportunities. And at some point, the message is clear that we are not there and we will have to roll up our sleeves and work very

	hard to make this happen. It's an issue that we are following. They promised a committee this summer. But I found few people who had been spoken to and they said maybe and they had not been given a mandate, no first meeting, no president and it is supposed to be delivered this fall. It is disappointing. Aside from lovely smiles and a promise something is coming; I like nice smiles and promises that something is coming. But when you have the opportunity to take action and say French-language education, they did not even take that small step to give us hope.
Q: Lamoureux in French: But in the discussions among house leaders, is there is hope your private members' life will be revived?	In French: There is no chance. All private members' bills are dead, dead, dead. It stops there.
Q: Lamoureux in French: They said there would be discussions to support certain private members' bills. Is yours one of them?	In French: You are dreaming. You are dreaming. That will not happen. They say that to change the channel. There won't be any private members' bills to discuss. I am getting ready to re-introduce my private members' bill next Wednesday. People want it. The bill is robust. We are reviewing it to determine if I should review and change anything in the law. If not we start again but we are starting from the ground up. It is a lot of work and competing with large number of bills. We are sitting as you know about 30 hours a week. Every time a bill is brought in, we have to discuss it for six hours before we can do anything. This is a huge step backwards and they did not even given a single ray of hope in talking about post-secondary education in French.
Q: Brule in French: You are talking about Wednesday, the 21st? Is it certain?	In French: No it is not a sure thing because I have to wait for it to be written. I don't need to tell you it is the lawyers here at Queen's Park who must write it. I think they have made progress but I don't have it in my hands yet.
Q: Lamoureux in French: Where was your bill?	In French: It received second reading with unanimous support from the three parties and now this.
Q: TFO in French: Do you remain hopeful?	Yes, I am hopeful. If you look at every file, you have to make updates on the law on French language services where Commissioner Francois Boileau was very clear on that. But if you look at all the laws that matter to Franco Ontarians, the French-language services is number one. Doesn't matter if they are young, parents, grandparents, the next step for Francophones is a French language university. We have a Throne Speech and there don't even mention post-secondary education in French. We are not even talking about university. They did not even mention French-language post-secondary education. It was like a knife to the heart. The sentence was structure in a way that they could have said French-language university and they never said it.

Questions for French Language Services Commissioner Francois Boileau:	
	(Joined in progress in French) It would have been very interesting to have something for Francophones, yes.
Q: Brule in French: Especially since you are pushing for Bill 8.	In French: From the government point of view I understand they can say we have received a report at the end of May, it does not give it a lot of time during the summer to turn things around. I have been very transparent with the government in speaking with them since January to avoid that we fall behind and be late. Time is very limited for the next few months and the following year. I would have like that we be a bit further ahead with this file. That is why I had spoken to them in January and February. We had working meetings to talk about revisions to the law so there would be no surprises in the annual report and the government could say we have taken baby steps. I imagine it does not work that way. It does not mean the government is not interested. But I think the ministers responsible for Francophone Affairs must now go see here colleagues and see if she can convince the government to move forward.
Q: Lamoureux: What does this tell you, the fact there is no mention of the reforming Bill 8 or a French-language university? But it does talk about Indigenous people, the bill reforming political donations, the government mentioned their priorities without releasing details. But Francophone affairs are not part of those priorities?	In French: Yes. As far as Bill 8, the issue which is most important for me, there is little time left. I hope the government will hold its meetings over the next few weeks to determine is there is an appetite for this. If we want to have a new law in place, it will have to be introduced by next fall at the latest. And we only have one year to consult. It will take all summer to write the law. (end of recording).
Questions for OPSEU President Thomas:	
Q:	[joined in progress] … Cuts to developmental services, people with disabilities, all the fiasco in our schools for the deaf and blind, there are still cuts to the public services going on as we speak, in education, and in every sector of this province. There are cuts to front line workers. So it's – to be honest with you, I fell asleep. Sara (sp.) had to give me a nudge to wake me up. And so, again it's just not much new in there. I really wanted to see this hydro stuff (inaudible) in there somewhere. You put it in your left pocket and take it out of your right pocket somehow; you can see that one coming, so. It's absolutely no surprise. But again, I just think she really should've really resigned. Dalton McGuinty did the right thing, he quit. And she has changed this province nowhere for the better—well, except on her stance on sexual harassment in the workplace. I do like that. But anyway, I just think she should step down, (inaudible) a mandate from the people of Ontario. Because all the stuff she's doing. It wasn't talked about in the election campaign. Anyway we'll just keep fighting their bad policies and watch as OPSEU (inaudible) are going to launch a big campaign and we're going to spend some

	serious money re-educating the people of Ontario what this government's doing right now.
Q: Lamoureux: But it's still a relief on electricity bills. Do you think that's going to help everyday families who are struggling?	Oh well it depends how much money it puts back in your pocket. If it's $10 a month or $20 a month -- my wife showed me our hydro bill last month and it made me fall off my chair. Once she pays the bills, it's $620. I'm lucky I can afford it, but a lot of families can't, so it depends on how much money they put in. But everything this government has ever done to give back to the taxpayers they pull back out of your pocket somewhere else. So the devil will be in the details right? And what she's doing with all this stuff, so. I'm not impressed at all. To me, they haven't changed what's really doing here; still a lot of austerity, still a lot about balancing the budget next year and that be (inaudible). But if they can say they've made all these investments in public services, for every dollar they re-invested in public service, they've taken about a hundred out, so it's all just a show game, it's all just smoke and mirrors, and I'm not impressed, I'm not impressed at all.
Q: Stevens: So what's the solution then (inaudible)?	Well, if they hadn't wasted all the money on cancelled gas plants, on green energy that doesn't go anywhere, it's all the money they've wasted. The whole notion of green energy is fine, but they could've actually – they could've planned it better, there could've been maybe bit out, could've been done a whole lot better. I actually just drove to Texas, the largest wind farm in the world in Texas. So I got to have a look at one that actually works. And so, it's not working here. So the solution would be – anyway, I thought she should've quit and called an election and actually got a real mandate from the people of Ontario. Whatever you're doing, they didn't really think about it. They didn't talk about all this stuff, everything they're doing back in the election campaign. In my mind, she's trying to reset the conversation, change the tone, try to make it like they're wonderful when they're not. But on the hydro file, it'll be relief for people if there's actually really relief, but if they give it back (inaudible) and take 8 per cent off your Hydro bill but tax it somewhere else or cut a service that you need somewhere or make you pay for a service you need somewhere else, it's not really – it's not a savings, it would just be a (inaudible)
Q: Ferguson: Well you're going to paying more on your carbon taxes, $15 a month on your carbon taxes and a $130 a year after Hydro, so.	Yeah exactly, so. Anyway, I'm just not impressed with the Throne Speech. There wasn't anything in there we didn't already know. But in the whole hydro thing, I think it will be interesting to delve into the details of how they're going to do it, because somewhere in there, with this government they give a little bit from one pocket but take it out of your other pocket. So I'm not impressed. It's just the same old austerity agenda, the same old we're going to cut public services – nothing in there really about rebuilding public services. They talked a little bit about

	health care, but the money they've taken out of health care, they're putting a little bit back. It's all smoke and mirrors and just about false economy. But my union, OPSEU, will be going after them in the fall. We're going to hold them accountable; we're going to launch a big campaign. I think you will be impressed by it. It's going to be substantial and we follow (inaudible). I still think she should've quit, called an election, got a real mandate from the people.
Q: Lagogianes: So, what was the takeaway for you in the speech? Ahead of it, you sent out a note saying maybe not a reboot but boot them out. Time for them to call for an election. Do you still stand by that?	Oh absolutely. Because there is nothing in there that is new. And I think when people really look at what they are doing on the hydro file, I don't think those savings will be enough to really save people money. So I still think everything she has done since she has been Premier runs contrary to anything good for people, required by people, they've cut. I still stand by that. She should have quit, done the honourable thing, called an election, went back out, got a real serious mandate from the people of Ontario, let the people choose the agenda. She is still all about austerity, still about balancing the next time around. That comes off the backs of working people, off the backs of students who can't find jobs. I mean, they talk about all this higher education, that's wonderful, but kids coming out of university, can't get jobs. They're still going back. My son just graduated college, not one kid in his class got a job. They've all gone back to retail at the mall. My son's just gone off to Ireland for another year of university - might as well. So they're not doing things to help the next generation, they're not doing things to help everyday working people. We're still losing jobs, she's still cutting public services, she's still making the gender wage gap worse, she's still creating more part-time jobs than full-time jobs. So they can brag about all they want about how wonderful Ontario is doing, but when you go out and talk to real, live, living breathing human beings, it's not doing that well.
Q: Lagogianes: And are you hearing anything better from the other two parties?	Remains to be seen, remains to be seen. I've met Patrick Brown several times in the past. I just take him at face value. I like him. I really do like Andrea Horwath, I like what she said on Labour Day about helping out working people, being able to join unions easier, doing stuff for working people, I like that platform. I hope the party sticks to it, I hope she sticks to it. And I'll be looking to see what the Tories say on the economy. If Patrick Brown really is an old Bill Davis kind of Tory, then I think he'll do well. I think he will do well.
Questions for CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn:	
Q:	….this big mistake they made in privatizing our Hydro system and they are trying to nibble around the edges. Look, I've never felt like was in the Queen's Park bubble than I was today. It's clear from this Throne Speech that

	the government doesn't understand what's really happening in our communities, doesn't understand how difficult it is for people to make ends meet, and doesn't understand the real problem with raising Hydro rates which is, fundamentally, the privatization of our hydro system.
Q: Unidentified: Then add the carbon tax, or whatever you want to call it, what's that going to do?	Well, the real problem that we also have with this government is that they've smeared Green Energy – Green Energy is not the problem. A sole-source contract with a multi-national corporation that guaranteed them rates for 20 years, that were higher than anybody else who produces energy, is the problem. So there's been many decisions made by this government time over time where they favour privatization, they favour corporations against the people of the province of Ontario and the businesses of the province
Q: Unidentified: Where is this going to take them next election?	Well look, this was supposed to be a re-boot. In my estimation, it's more like an epic fail. This doesn't demonstrate that this government understands what it's like to be a minimum wage worker in this province, working more than 40 hours a week and still locked into poverty, it doesn't demonstrate that this government understands how difficult it is to access homecare or healthcare or even childcare. This speech sounded so darn good, I wish the province was as wonderful as the speech made it sound.
N.B.: Comments captured are not verbatim quotes	

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