

Hansard: Brown to Premier -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. When the F.A.O. Was introduced, the financial accountability office, the Liberal Minister said I wish there was someone at the beginning, a neutral third party who could have gone to get the input and proceed with any of the problems that arose. They celebrated the creation of this office. Now they have a situation where they're ignoring the F.A.O. They've been in a year-long battle with the Ombudsman. Every chance they get, they attack the auditor-general. There doesn't seem to be a nonpartisan officer in the legislature they don't disagree with. Is there a single officer they're not willing to disparage and are willing to support?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the reality is we work with all of the officers of the legislature, Mr. Speaker. Our officials work with them. Our Minister s work with them, Mr. Speaker, and we do our utmost to answer their questions and to provide the information that they need, Mr. Speaker, and from every single report that comes to us from the legislature, we can make improvements, Mr. Speaker. It is a very important process. We value the input. We value that critical eye, and we will continue to work with all of the officers of the legislature as we have done throughout our term.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier, they say they enjoy working with the legislative officers. Yet on every single occasion, they disparage them. They thank them for the report, but the reports are saying this is a House of cards. Their numbers do not add up. You even have one report said that they make up their own accounting rules. Mr. Speaker, that's not working with them. That's ignoring them. That's attacking them. There was one article that I read yesterday that said Ontario's war on the truth, the government only liked to deal in truths or facts if it suits their political survival. Now I know in debate who I'm going to believe? Do I believe the fact of the auditor-general or the fact of this Premier and government. The track record is, again and again our legislative officers are correct, and this government's numbers are wrong. My question is when will this government stop her war on our independent legislative officers?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm always happy to debate the truth. I'm particularly happy to debate the truth with the leader of the opposition, any time, Mr. Speaker. The truth is we had a situation in terms of electricity prices in this province that needed to be addressed. And Mr. Speaker, there was question after question after question in this House from a party that had no plan to address electricity prices in the province about what our plan was. We brought a plan forward, Mr. Speaker and people across this province are seeing on average a 25% reduction on their electricity

bills. We were very clear that over the period of -- Over the period of the next generation, Mr. Speaker, we would smooth the costs and would be a premium attached to that as there is with mortgage, Mr. Speaker. We were also clear -- Also clear we believe it was fair, Mr. Speaker when a huge investment in upgrading the electricity system was made that it would be fair for -- Not just this generation but the next generation who will pay part of that cost.

>> Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier, the Premier stands in this House and insists her government is not attacking our independent legislative officers. The Minister of energy went so far to personally contact journalists the day before her report was released to say the auditor's interpretation of flawed, even before they seen the report. Minister, senior Minister s are calling journalists to say and attack the -- Mr. Speaker, calling journalists the nigh before to attack the auditor-general does not sound like a government working with our legislative officers. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is for a government that says they were about openness and transparency and working with our legislative officers, I want to know if the Premier condones her Minister s calling journalists the night before to attack the auditor-general. Do you condone that?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker as I said in my first answer, it's extremely important that we work and respect the officers of the legislature and we do. I would sit down with the officers of the legislature and have conversations about what was going on in the ministry before reports were written. They work with the officers of the legislature to make sure they have all the information they need. It's a very important function and today the Environmental Commissioner's annual report is going to be out. There will be criticisms of the things that we have done as a government, Mr. Speaker. There will be acknowledgement of progress that's been made, and most importantly, there will be a direction forward in terms of how it improve. And we'll continue to work with the Environmental Commissioner as we do with all of the officers of the legislature. The very important function, Mr. Speaker and we'll continue to work with them as we have in the past.

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