

Hansard: Smith to Thibeault -- Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan

From: "Basha, Cindy (CAB)" <cindy.basha@ontario.ca>

To: "Codd-Downey, Beckie (GHLO)" <beckie.codd-downey@ontario.ca>, "Ernesaks, Andrea (OPO)" <andrea.ernesaks3@ontario.ca>, "Forgione, Andrew (OPO)" <andrew.forgione@ontario.ca>, "Glista, Alex (OPO)" <alex.glista@ontario.ca>, "Killorn, Bill (OPO)" <bill.killorn@ontario.ca>, "Lazarus, Jordan (OPO)" <jordan.lazarus@ontario.ca>, "McPhail, Blane (OPO)" <blane.mcphail@ontario.ca>, "Sumi, Craig (CAB)" <craig.sumi@ontario.ca>

Date: Thu, 19 Oct 2017 11:08:13 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

>>MPP Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier, Speaker. The Premier rode in on a white horse. She touted her open government. She loudly exclaimed that let's do things differently. And then her speech from the throne, quote, the plan to open up government -- With increased transparency and more accountability. And ever since then they -- Speaker, she made all these promises. Ever since then, she's respected the independent officers of the legislature. She's thrown open the books for the independent officers to look at. She's followed the rules and she's respected the law. Kidding. She hasn't done any of that. She's actually made up her own rules. She's made up her own rules. She's actually removed oversight from the officers of the legislature. Mr. Speaker, what happened to this Premier saying she was going to do things differently?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know when my Honourable friend rises and talks about all of the great things that our Premier continues to do, he was starting off on the right path, Mr. Speaker. But the only party that is seen as a party that's kidding with the people of Ontario is the party opposite, Mr. Speaker. That party will do one thing and then say another every single week, Mr. Speaker. They talk about bringing forward a plan on electricity and then say oh, wait. No, that will come next week. No, wait. That will come next month. Now it's going to happen in some magical weekend in November. But we know, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan. They have no idea on what to do to help the people of Ontario. Just for example, Mr. Speaker, not even when it comes to electricity. Let's talk about minimum wage. First in the first reading, Mr. Speaker, they vote in favour of helping all low-income people in this province. Then when it came to voting on the bill yesterday, Mr. Speaker, where were they? Nowhere Mr. Speaker.

>>MPP Smith: Mr. Speaker, it's really a shame that the Premier won't actually answer these questions about her lack of openness and transparency that she promised. We're talking about a brand-new \$4 billion scandal here on this so-called fair hydro plan. This is going to cost billions of dollars, taxpayers and electricity customers billions. It's starting to look like an episode of the Simpsons over there. Where are they going to find this \$4 billion? A case of duff's beer or Lisa's saxophone or grandpa Simpson's drawer? Who's running the show over there? Is it Homer Simpson or is it Ed Clark? We have the members of the eastern Ontario warden's caucus who are here. They're looking for much needed infrastructure dollars. How far would this \$4 billion go to answering the needs in our local communities? But it's not going there, Mr. Speaker. When will the Premier just

stand up and she cease made an enormous mistake on this scheme? Minister Thibeault:: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I know, Mr. Speaker, that the fair hydro plan is reducing everyone in this province their bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. That's something that we should all be proud of because we recognize that we spent money in infrastructure rebuilding this system. \$70 billion, Mr. Speaker. But when you want to talk about infrastructure bills, I know that the Minister of infrastructure, even the Minister of transportation can talk over and over again, Mr. Speaker, about all the infrastructure that we're building right across the province. But let me start talking a little bit about the infrastructure. \$13.5 billion in the gtha go regional express rail. It's going to quadruple the number of weekly trips to 6,000. 5.3 billion Eglinton crosstown L.R.T. \$1 billion in the ring of fire tripling the Ontario community infrastructure fund to \$300 million. \$1.4 billion in the Hurontario L.R.T.. 1 billion in Ottawa's L.R.T. 43 million in the Waterloo regional transit hub and I haven't even started on northern Ontario.

>>MPP Smith: Thanks, Speaker. It's amazing to me that the Premier doesn't want to answer these questions, because we're talking about a lack of openness and transparency that she promised here, and this scandal is costing us \$4 billion. And they haven't released all of the documents. They haven't released the emails. In all seriousness, the fact that they haven't released all of the emails given what happened during the gas plant scandal, Speaker, is absurd much it's an egregious breach of trust by this government. They stonewalled an F.O.I. Saying no records exist and now they play the waiting game trying to outlast the public's right to see the government's backroom dealings. Speaker, I'll provide the boxes. All they have to do is take those emails, put them in the boxes. As a matter of fact, I still have the boxes from the gas plant scandal. I'll send those boxes over and they can put the emails in those boxes. Just turn over the boxes and do the right thing

>>Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, so let's be clear on one thing, Mr. Speaker. All of the boxes that they have on that side are usually filled with something else, Mr. Speaker, and it's not something that we really want to smell. But the one thing I can talk about here, Mr. Speaker, is that we've made sure -- we've made sure that we've put 80 custodians, 40 access words, Mr. Speaker, and we have come up with 2 million documents. Those 2 million documents were went through by our law firm and they identified 145,000 emails. Those 145,000 emails, Mr. Speaker, are now being gone through by the ministry of energy, making sure that we can provide to the auditor general as many emails as possible. And that has been 13,212 by October 13th. And you know what, Mr. Speaker ? We're going to make sure that she has all of those documents by November 1st.

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