

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

From: "Pichette, Marc (MOF)" <marc.pichette@ontario.ca>
To: "Strathy, Anna (OFA)" <anna.strathy@ofina.on.ca>, "Bowie, Heather (MOF)" <heather.bowie@ontario.ca>, "Chinchon, Francisco (OFA)" <francisco.chinchon@ofina.on.ca>, "Chiodi, Victoria (MOF)" <victoria.chiodi@ontario.ca>, "Clarke-Darshanand, Jamille (MOF)" <jamille.clarke-darshanand@ontario.ca>, "Drummond, Alison (MOF)" <alison.drummond@ontario.ca>, "Elamin, Mohamed (MOF)" <mohamed.elamin@ontario.ca>, "Garcia-Wright, Agatha (MOF)" <agatha.garcia-wright@ontario.ca>, "Georgakakos, Angie (OFA)" <angie.georgakakos@ofina.on.ca>, "Giroux Namian, Orli (MOF)" <orli.girouxnamian@ontario.ca>, "Gobeil, Diana (MOF)" <diana.gobeil@ontario.ca>, "Harten, Jayne (MOF)" <jayne.harten@ontario.ca>, "Inglis, Liane (MOF)" <liane.inglis@ontario.ca>, "Ingram, Kelsey (MOF)" <kelsey.ingram@ontario.ca>, "Jeanes, Bridget (MOF)" <bridget.jeanes@ontario.ca>, "Kelly, Maureen E. (MOF)" <maureen.e.kelly@ontario.ca>, "Kerr, Emily (OFA)" <emily.kerr@ofina.on.ca>, "Kim, John (OFA)" <john.kim@ofina.on.ca>, "Kobrinisky, Liza (MOF)" <liza.kobrinisky@ontario.ca>, "Koukoulas, Sophia (MOF)" <sophia.koukoulas@ontario.ca>, "Kwan, Ronald (OFA)" <ronald.kwan@ofina.on.ca>, "LeBlanc, Jenna (MOF)" <jenna.leblanc@ontario.ca>, "Maloney, Martha (MOF)" <martha.maloney@ontario.ca>, "Martin, Jessica (MOF)" <jessica.martin@ontario.ca>, "Mayman, Gadi (OFA)" <gadi.mayman@ofina.on.ca>, "McLean, David (MOF)" <david.mclean@ontario.ca>, "Menon, Nisha (MOF)" <nisha.menon@ontario.ca>, "Milana, Natale (MOF)" <natale.milana@ontario.ca>, "Mohammad, Humaira (MOF)" <humaira.mohammad@ontario.ca>, "Moore, Brynne (MOF)" <brynne.moore@ontario.ca>, "Shewaramani, Deepika (MOF)" <deepika.shewaramani@ontario.ca>, "Spadoni, Peter (MOF)" <peter.spadoni@ontario.ca>, "Tekle, Jonathan (MOF)" <jonathan.tekle@ontario.ca>, "Thompson, Scott (MOF)" <scott.thompson@ontario.ca>, "Tiburcio, Daniel (MOF)" <daniel.tiburcio@ontario.ca>, "Zahid, Usman (OFA)" <usman.zahid@ofina.on.ca>, "Weir, Mike (MOF)" <mike.weir@ontario.ca>
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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **MPP Smith:** Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker. Good morning. My question this morning is for the Minister of energy. There are a number of contradictory statements made yesterday in the House. The Minister said, quote -- the IESO has assured my ministry that they have made every effort to be forthright and fully responsive to the auditor general's request for information. Ditor general said, quote -- they continually say they're co-operating but they stalled on giving us information. They wouldn't sign the management representation confirming that they gave us all the information, end quote. So someone here, Mr. Speaker, isn't telling the truth., Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of energy calling the auditor general a liar?

>> **Minister Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we work with the auditor general on many instances. We work with our system operator, Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis. And of course when this came to light, we spoke with the independent electricity system operator. Our system operator for the province, and they have assured my ministry, Mr. Speaker, that they have made every effort to be forthright and to be fully responsive to the auditor general's request for information. And they have told me time and time again that they have provided over 200 responses and received those responses and have provided those information requests. They make staff. They made specific work spaces for the auditor general staff to be in the --System operator's headquarters, and they even adapted from two weeks to seven weeks. So from the system operator's point of view, Mr. Speaker, they are meeting all of the requirements.

>>MPP Smith: Speaker, somebody's not telling the truth here and somebody's trying to hide something.

The auditor general said she was blocked from meetings. You know they can set up all the work spaces they want but if the A.G. Isn't getting what she's asking for and what the officers are asking for, and these are independent, nonpartisan officers of the legislature. You know -- the auditor general said she was blocked from meetings. The A.G. Asked the ieso, when is the board meeting? We'd like to come. They did it without telling us. But yesterday the Minister of energy said, when it comes to the board meetings and when it comes to the audit committee, the ieso accomdated every A.G. Request on this. So, Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister of energy attacking the credibility of an independent officer of the legislature, the auditor general?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We also have an independent arm's lengths body in our system operator, Mr. Speaker, and they have informed the ministry that they have done everything they can, Mr. Speaker, to accommodate the a.g.'s requests. The A.G. Has met with the board, Mr. Speaker. The A.G. Has met with the audit committee. And through their audit the auditor general's staff had direct access to the ieso staff to ask questions. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, they are making accommodations to ensure that they can answer every question and be as accommodating as possible through this entire process. The auditor general has asked for over 40 meetings, Mr. Speaker. Those 40 meetings took place between the A.G. Staff and the independent electricity system operator, Mr. Speaker. They're going to continue to co-operate with the auditor general just like our ministry does, Mr. Speaker .

>>MPP Smith: I'm sure the auditor general's really looking forward to that type of co-operation continuing when she's getting stonewalled at every request. All you have to do is read the transcript and then listen to the Minister 's remarks. He was on quite a roll yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Again yesterday the Minister of energy said -- Ontario families and small businesses are now paying less by average on their bills than any jurisdiction. He said that yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I tell you, that would be news to the folks struggling lth hydro bills all acres this province. When you figure in the massive all-in costs of electricity in Ontario. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to know this question from the Minister of energy. What fantasy world is he living in?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are living in a world where we're actually making it better for all Ontario families. Where we reduce bills by 25% but the opposition votes against it. We're living in a world where climate change is real, where the opposition deny it, Mr. Speaker. We're living in a world where we've shut down coal where this party wants to bring(it back, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to live in a world, Mr. Speaker, where we bring forward caring programs for the people of this province, unlike that side that wants to cut, cut, cut, Mr. Speaker. We will make sure that we look after everyone in this province --Shake their fist as manic and makes things -- and make things up, Mr. Speaker. Withdrawn neanderthal.

>> The Speaker: The Minister is looking to be warned if he does not withdraw properly. Withdraw.

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