

Hansard: Yakabuski to Premier (Thibeault) -- Energy Contracts & Affordability & OEFC

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Date: Mon, 31 Oct 2016 11:09:15 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

>> **MPP Yakabuski:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the **Premier**. Liberal energy policies have been an absolute disaster. Last week we learned that northland pair was awarded nearly \$95 million from the Ontario electricity financial corporation. I thought that might finally be the end of Liberal energy scandals. But according to public accounts, that was just a portion of a much larger \$179 million lawsuit the Another \$84 million gone, just like that, because of Liberal government incompetence. Speaker, account **Premier** tell us when this newest scandal will show up on our electricity bills and how much it will cost Ontario families?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that the House will want to know that the member opposite is talking about contracts that were signed in 1998 by the P.C. Government, Mr. Speaker. And in 2012, in 2012 our government amended a regulation to lower electricity costs for large industrial consumers, Mr. Speaker. So we were working to lower costs that the former government had negotiated, Mr. Speaker, and certain of the non-utility generators disagreed, Mr. Speaker. They took legal action. I know that the Minister of energy will want to talk to the specifics but I think we just need to understand that what we were trying to do, Mr. Speaker, was to reduce the costs on large industrial users, Mr. Speaker. We were dealing with contracts that had been signed by the previous government in 1998.

>> **MPP Yakabuski:** The Liberals can spin it any way they want. Ratepayers are being stuck with the bills of your incompetence. Quick recap, Thursday October 18 the Liberals lost a \$28 million lawsuit to wind stream energy -- The project that hasn't been built. Next on October 18th, the Liberals spent

\$12 million on consultants and advertising instead of rate relief for low income Ontarians. Then on October 25th the I.S.O. Revealed an \$81 million Liberal accounting error and asked that on behalf of that money back through electricity bills. And further we find that the Liberals lost a \$179 million court case to several energy producers. In just two weeks the Liberals lost \$300 million with nothing to show for it. Speaker, can the **Premier** explain who will be paying. For this latest Liberal energy scandal?

>> **Min. Thibeault**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and put the facts out on the table for the Honourable member. Mr. Speaker. As mentioned by the **Premier**, these were electricity contracts that were signed in the 1990s, Mr. Speaker, and specifically 1998 by that party when they were in government. Mr. Speaker. So in 2012, our government amended regulation to lower electricity costs for large trill consumers. Certain nonutility generators disagreed and took legal action. Mr. Speaker. Now we sought leave to appeal before the supreme court of Canada and we're challenging this decision, Mr. Speaker. As the legal process is ongoing, I cannot comment further on the specifics of that case, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to actually having a plan, which they don't, Mr. Speaker, we announced even this morning, Mr. Speaker, more audits and retrofits. Help save money. That's what we do on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We try and do our best to make sure we save families money. Thank you very much.

>> **MPP Yakabuski**: I wonder what the people of Ontario think of that statement that this government is saving them money. In just two weeks under this government, Ontario families and seniors are on the hook for another \$300 million. In scandal, waste and mismanagement. I repeat, in two weeks, the Liberals spent \$300 million, and Ontario ratepayers have absolutely nothing to show for it except for higher energy bills. Speaker, I'm not looking at five, ten or fifteen years in the past. I'm just talking about the last two weeks. How much higher can Ontario electricity bills go? Again I say to the **Premier**, because of this \$300 million wasted in only the last two weeks, how much higher will Ontario ratepayers' hydro bills go?

>> **Min. Thibeault**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very please today stand up and say in the last two weeks we passed legislation in this House that's actually going to save families 8% on their hydro bills starting January 1st, Mr. Speaker. For those that are in rural or remote areas, Mr. Speaker, they will see their bills reduced by 20%. Of course for small businesses, Mr. Speaker, they'll see that 8% as well. We're actually doing a lot on this side of the House to ensure that we can actually help families save money, Mr. Speaker. Just this morning we are talking about helping families fight climate change and reduce their energy bills at the same time, Mr. Speaker. A rebate program that's going to help people, an additional 37,000 homeowners that can get this energy audit that will cost them \$500. They get that money back, Mr. Speaker, and they can save up to \$2,000 to help pay for these retrofits, Mr. Speaker. This is another program in terms of many that we have that will actually help families, Mr. Speaker. We're very proud on this side of the House with the programs we're putting forward that are helping Ontarians every day.

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