

Hansard: Brown to Premier (Sandals) -- Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>>Patrick Brown: Speaker, again to the Premier. I can't believe she can sit here and accept an attitude by the Minister of energy that is so condescending to an officer of the legislature. It's shameful, Mr. Speaker. This is an independent officer of the legislature and frankly the auditor general know as lot more about the accounting rules than the Minister of energy. Frankly knows a lot more about energy than the Minister of energy. The reality is this is all about politics. This is all about partisan self-interest. Mr. Speaker -- Mr. Speaker, this is about politics over people. \$4 billion wasted and they're trying to spin their way out of it. Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. Given the fact you've got a Minister who has been caught deliberately hiding the facts the government's making up their own rules. You've wasted -Withdraw. What am I withdrawing? Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier, you've got instance where the government according to the auditor general is making up their own accounting rules. \$4 billion is being lost. Will the Premier do the right thing and fire her Minister

>>Premier Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, as the leader of the opposition knows, we adhere to Canadian public service accounting standards, work closely with experts from KPMG, from deloitte, from Ernst and young, Mr. Speaker. And the reality --Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as government we have to solve problems in this province. We have to find practical solutions to problems. The first problem that we had to solve, Mr. Speaker, was a degraded electricity system, a system that was not reliable, Mr. Speaker, and was not clean. The second problem that we had to solve, Mr. Speaker, was that the cost of investing in that system to make it clean and reliable had a cost that was burdening residents and ratepayers across this province. That's the problem that we had to solve, Mr. Speaker. People needed rate relieve and -- rate relief and we've delivered that, Mr. Speaker.

>>Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. This government created this mess. They're about solving problems? They created the problem. This is their legacy. They're the ones that put Ontario in this hydro mels. And I know they're trying to put a spin that this is not as bad as it appears, the \$4 billion is not as bad as it appears. But it is. Mr. Speaker, just listen to what the auditor general had to say. She said the scheme would be unacceptable in the private sector and we maintain that it is also unacceptable in the public sector. She continued if the consolidated financial statements are so unreliable that an adverse opinion is warranted terms like balanced budget, deficit asset and net debt will be meaningless under this government. The reality is they fudged the numbers.

The numbers are an absolute --Withdraw. The numbers do not add up. The numbers are an absolute scam. So, Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier defend her Minister of finance? She's here --Minister of energy. How can you stand in the House and defend the Minister of finance when the numbers are not believed by anyone?

>>Minister Sandals: Yes. Thank you very much. Speaker, our government, our Cabinet made a very simple decision. When we listen to the people, when we listen to the people of Ontario who asked to have their hydro bills lowered, we decided that social programs should go on the tax base and that electricity should go on the rate base. Now the leader opposite is saying that somehow we made up the accounting rules --Rate regulated accounting is the norm in the electricity sector. The Ontario O.T. G. Using rate regulated accounting. It has been approved by this and other auditors and continues to be. Hydro One uses rate regulated accounting. It has- Hydro One's rate regulated accounting has been approved by this and all the other auditors general.

>> Patrick Brown: Page 8 of the report reads I quote, the government's ongoing spending on private sector external advisors had exceeded \$2 million when we completed this special report. The president of the treasury board pulls the purse strings, and yet she allowed the government to spend millions on lawyers and consultants it try to hide the true state of the books. Mr. Speaker, that's not right. It's unacceptable. It's shameful and it's disturbing. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if the president of the treasury board still has her confidence when clearly it's not the opposition saying you made up the rules. It's the auditor general. How can the Premier still have confidence in her treasury board? It's shameful, Mr. Speaker .

>>Minister Sandals: So let's continue to talk about the rules. The Ontario power authority, when it existed, used --Ontario power authority when it existed used rate regulated accounting which was approved by this and others auditors general. When O.P.A. Was consolidated into ieso, iso decided it should use rate regulated accounting for that part of the business which came from O.P.A.. It received a clean audit from their auditors. Now, let me tell you about other -- other organizations like the ieso in north America. The equivalent organization, Alberta, new York, Michigan, Texas, midwest, eastern seaboard and new England have equivalent to ieso. They all use --

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