

Hansard: Fedeli to Thibeault -- Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan / Auditor General

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

>> **Vic Fedeli:** Thank you and good morning, Speaker. My question is for the **Premier**. The newest Liberal billion dollar scandal is a real doozy this time over at the independent electricity system operator, the auditor-general says the IESO's quote annual deficit would be understated by \$1.3 billion their accounting shell game. Worse, the auditor is being blocked from completing her investigation. The energy Minister says they have been quote forth right and fully responsive, but the auditor says, quote, they stalled on giving us information and quote wouldn't sign the forms confirming that they have given us all the information. The auditor then asked when it came down to the crux of it, why can't you sign a document that says you gave us all the information? Speaker, it's no wonder that people of Ontario don't trust this government. Just what information does the **Premier** not want us to have?

>> **Minister Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd pleased to rise and talk about the great work being done at the iso and the system operator, the iso had assured my ministry they've made every effort to be forth right and responsible for the request for information. For example, Mr. Speaker, they made work spaces for the A.G. Staff in the iso headquarters. Make soingure these accommodations to extend the duration of the auditor-general's staff on the premises from the initial two weeks to seven weeks. Mr. Speaker, and then during this time, they received and responded to over 200 information requests from the a.g.'s staff. They accommodated every meeting request, 40 meetings took place, Mr. Speaker, between the iso and A.G. And also accommodated their request to meet with the board and the audit committee. They'll continue to work with the iso just like our government does, Mr. Speaker.

>>Vic Fedeli: Thank you. Back to the **Premier**. Despite what the energy Minister says, the obstruction by iso has gone to extreme lengths, including holding secret meetings. They held a board meeting to approve their statement, but they didn't tell the auditor or her staff. So contrary to what the Minister says, the A.G. Says, quote, when is the board meeting we'd like to come. They did it without telling us. The energy Minister says these concerns aren't anything new. But because this government can't be trusted to properly report their numbers, the auditor has threatened anned verse opinion. That would be a first in Canada. We would say Minister, that is something new. Speaker, is the **Premier** going to come clean on this billion dollar scandal?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again when it comes to the board meets and audit committee, Mr. Speaker, the iso accommodated every A.G. Request on this, Mr. Speaker. They also made sure that their audit and the auditor-general staff had direct access to the iso staff, Mr. Speaker, to ask questions. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, they made sure that they had work spaces for the a.g.'s staff and accommodated from their requests from two weeks to 7 weeks, answered over 200 requests for information, made sure Na over 40 meetings took place between the iso and the A.G. Staff, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to have the iso work with the A.G. Just like they've been doing in the past, Mr. Speaker, because when it came to making sure that we brought forward real relief for families, the fair hydro plan did that, Mr. Speaker, and that party on the other side, as usual, voted against it, Mr. Speaker .

>>Vic Fedeli: Back to the **Premier**. The auditor says this is all due to the government's quote bogus accounting on the hydro plan. The ministry Minister says this accounting is common in other jurisdictions, but the auditor says most of his examples are in the US And none use Canadian standards. So this government paid \$600,000 to an outside auditor, nearly seven times their normal fee, just to defend this position. The auditor-general said quote, it's ridiculous. They said they spent \$230,000 just to answer the a.g.'s questions. Not only is it ridiculous, Speaker, it's wrong. Speaker, how can families ever trust anything this government tells us again?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jurisdictions right across north America use rate-regulated accounting. Alberta. new England. New York, Michigan and Texas and many entities here in Canada including Ontario power generation, Toronto hydro, fortis, Hydro One, they use this type of accounting. When it comes to trust, Mr. Speaker, they seem to trust the numbers we have on this, because they put it in their people's guarantee, Mr. Speaker. They make sure that right in the people's guarantee, the Conservatives included the fair hydro plan in their platform magazine, it and now are standing there criticizing it, Mr. Speaker. Worst of all, when it came time to provide real relief for Ontario families, for half a million small businesses and farms and low-income consumers, Mr. Speaker, they voted against it, Mr. Speaker. Time and time again, they demonstrate they have no interest in helping the people of Ontario.

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