

FW: Hansard: MacLeod/Fideli to Minister Sandals on public accounts

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Subject: Hansard: MacLeod/Fideli to Minister Sandals on public accounts

INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier, Speaker. Halloween came early it appears yesterday when the government was so spooked by my question about the public accounts that they treated us to a hastily held technical briefing, a press conference and unaudited financial statements. **This is unprecedented. It's never happened in Ontario before. It showed an \$11 billion hole in their budget, and they tried to hide it by admonishing and undermining the auditor general. Despite the auditor's warning this past June of accounting changes in her -- and then again in the 2015 auditor's report in chapter 2 which I'll have one of the pages deliver.** The government has been aware of this, Speaker, for quite some time. And they want to know, as Ontarians, how this government is going to pay for it. Are they going to cut services to kids with autism? Are they going to be even higher hydro bills, new taxes, or are they going to trick us with all of the above?

>> **Minister Sandals:** Yes, thank you. I think, Speaker, we should maybe go back to the beginning of the story, which is that while there certainly has been an ongoing discussion between the public servants who do the accounts and the auditor general, not I would say the politicians for the record. While there's been an ongoing discussion, the first notification we got that the auditor general would not treat -- was rejecting the pension treatment which had currently been used for the last 14 years. Thank you very much. **For the past 14 years, since 2001/2 year, the auditors of Ontario have approved a particular accounting practice --** We were faced with the situation -- That the auditor presented us on September the 13th with written information that she was rejecting the treatment. Used for the.

>> Victor Fideli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Yesterday the auditor general confirmed there's an \$11 billion hole in the government's budget. Rather than co-operate with the auditor general, the government went into full panic mode with a desperate news conference. Rather than address the financial waste and mismanagement, the government continued to break their legal obligation. They stonewalled the province's independent officers. Speaker, there's a pattern here, and now they have released unaudited financial statements. No verification from the auditor general. Speaker, people in Ontario want to know what this government is hiding and how it affects them. I asked the Premier, if the auditor general refuses to verify their numbers, how can we ever trust anything they tell us?

>> **Minister Sandals:** Yes. We had advice from our public servants, who we certainly hold in high regard, that the books should be treated one way. We had advice from the auditor general that the books should be treated another way. The way Cabinet resolved it was to actually pass a regulation that the auditor

general's treatment would be used in 2015. So I would point out that using the treatments that the auditor general asked us to use, that in fact what we have is a \$5 billion deficit, which is \$3.5 billion lower than what we originally projected in the budget, Speaker. We do not have some sort of panic as the person over there seems to think. What we have is the desire to get this information to the public so the public can figure out what is going on.

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