

Hansard: Brown to Premier (Thibeault) -- Energy Management

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. Another day, another Liberal energy scandal. The past seven days have been a banner week for the Liberals. \$12 million wasted on consultants and advertisements. \$28 million lost in a lawsuit for a project it hasn't even been built. And yesterday it was \$81 million Liberal accounting error by the IESO. And today, today we learned that Northland Power won their court case against the government and on October 21st was awarded -- hear this Mr. Speaker -- \$95 million from Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation. Mr. Speaker, someone has to pay for this \$59 million court case. When will the ratepayers learn from the government that they're on the hook again for another \$59 million because of Liberal blunder?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. So I know that the Minister of Energy is going to want to speak to the specifics, Mr. Speaker, but, you know, I just think it's important that we take a step back and we recognize that when this government under the previous **Premier** came into office in 2003, we were dealing with a degraded electricity system, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of work that had to be done over the years to build that system up. We completed the closure. I grant it was not the start -- Completed the closure of coal plants in this province, Mr. Speaker, taking -- saving \$4 billion in health-related costs, Mr. Speaker. And you know opposition can heckle that but they should talk to families of children with asthma, Mr. Speaker. \$4 billion in savings in health costs is not real, Mr. Speaker. Speak to the families of children with asthma. We've invested in a system that had --

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**. I had a very specific question on the Northland case. Yet another example of Liberal mismanagement. All we hear is talking points on coal, which by the way the Progressive Conservatives initiated the phaseout of coal. Mr. Speaker, my question is about Liberal waste. It's about Liberal scandal. I would actually appreciate the **Premier** could answer this. \$12 million. \$28 million. \$81 million. \$95 million all in the last week. \$216 million gone in a week because of this government's incompetence. Mr. Speaker, who is on the hook for that? Not pointing fingers, not trying to say what happened ten years ago. I want an answer. Who is going to pay for that \$206 million? Mr. Speaker, it's not the Minister of Energy. It's not the **Premier**. It's not the Minister of Finance. They're going to make ratepayers pay again. Does the **Premier** not appreciate that seniors, families, businesses can't afford these skyrocketing hydro rates?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I care very much that people are able to have clean energy, that they can afford the energy, Mr. Speaker, and that it's reliable, Mr. Speaker. And so -- Changes, Mr. Speaker, to help people to afford energy and, Mr. Speaker, what happened ten years ago, what

happened 15 years ago does matter in terms of this electricity system, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the opposition can take a very narrow short-sighted view and pretend that there is no history, that there is no -- Context but that is just not the reality. We are taking steps. We are removing 8% from bills across this province, Mr. Speaker. We're cutting delivery charges to 300,000 rural customers, Mr. Speaker. By 20% in total with the 8% and 12%, Mr. Speaker. We are --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. It's very clear the **Premier** does not want to talk about the four scandals that have happened on her watch just in the last week. A \$95 million court case isn't new to this government. They're used to losing court cases. They're used to throwing it on the backs of ratepayers. The oesd and northland have been battling it out in years. The oefc will now appeal the result again to the supreme court of Canada. Millions and millions have been spent on lawyers. What I'd like to know -- we know the cost of the judgment but, Mr. Speaker, can the **Premier** tell us how much she has ordered the government to spend on legal fees? Please show some clarity on this endless waste we're seeing that's being put on taxpayers and ratepayers.

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and answer this question. You know, Mr. Speaker, we are aware of this and this is an ongoing matter. It is still in process, Mr. Speaker, so we can't comment on that. But what we can comment on, Mr. Speaker, is the great work that we're doing on this side of the House to help families and to help businesses right across the province, Mr. Speaker. You know we've actually reduced bills on January 1st by 8% for families, small businesses and farms. For those that are living in rural and remote areas, Mr. Speaker, 330,000 families, those 330,000 families, Mr. Speaker, they will actually see a significant reduction of 20% as well. When it comes to the agreement that the opposition doesn't want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, which is that landmark agreement with Québec, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be bringing in 2 terawatts of power that will be targeted at our natural gas plants, Mr. Speaker. That will be saving, Mr. Speaker, 1 megaton of ghgs, Mr. Speaker. That's a 25% reduction. On that side of the House --
N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.