

Hansard: Brown to Premier -- Hydro Rates

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. I want the Liberals to be aware of the F.J. Davy home, a long-term care home with 374 beds in Sault Ste. Marie. Their hydro bill -- Their hydro bill has gone up 39% and that's an additional 165,000.... Mr. Speaker, the government may laugh and heckle, but this is a seniors home. This is a long-term care home where their hydro bill has gone up 39%, \$165,000 in a year. It is not a laughing matter. Seniors in Sault Ste. Marie are having services, critical services cut. The home said they had no choice. It's hydro or cut services for seniors. So rather than heckle I would like an answer, Mr. Speaker, from the **Premier**. How can you allow this to continue to seniors in our province?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to just welcome everyone back and I want to -- I want to say that it is no laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely essential that the leader of the opposition and the people of Ontario understand that we, we understand that there are issues around the cost of electricity in this province, Mr. Speaker. I don't know the specific instance that the leader of the opposition is talking about in that particular home, but I certainly would be happy to get more information from him, Mr. Speaker. But I have made a commitment that the affordability of electricity in this province is of paramount concern, Mr. Speaker. We have made a number of changes, including the most recent 8% reduction across the board, but I have committed, Mr. Speaker, and our Minister of energy is working to bring forward a proposal before our budget. That would further reduce electricity costs across the province, Mr. Speaker

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**. The F.J. Davy home is just one example of how electricity is hurting even more than family House holds. Catherine crane, executive director of the Huntsville hospital foundation told the Huntsville Forrester about a return fund-raising e-mail card that she received. I'll quote what the card said -- sorry, no donation this year. The money went to paying my Hydro One bill. Mr. Speaker, it's unbelievable. How can the **Premier** justify the fact that families have gone from being able to donate to charity, now needing charity simply to pay their hydro bill. It is unacceptable.

>> **Premier Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you know the reality is that I have been talking to people across the province. I have made a commitment that we will be bringing forward further, further decreases to

electricity costs, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that, over the last number of years, we have made billions of dollars of investments into our electricity system. We inherited an electricity system that was degraded, Mr. Speaker, that had not been invested in, that had not been kept up. Mr. Speaker, electricity in this province was unreliable. We've made those investments and now we're confronting the reality that people have across the board seen unacceptable increases. We've made reductions, Mr. Speaker. We know that there's more to be done, particularly, particularly people living on fixed incomes and low income, Mr. Speaker. And people who are dealing with delivery charges that are out of whack, people in rural and northern communities, Mr. Speaker. We know there's more that has to be done.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, these rehearsed talking points are getting tired, and the people of Ontario aren't believing them. You know the **Premier** said she gets what ratepayers are struggling with in rural Ontario. Let me share an example. Matt recently tweeted a picture of his hydro bill from Lanark highlands to the **Premier**. I'm sure you've seen it. It was tweeted to you. His bill listed \$4 worth of hydro used and a shocking \$110 used for delivery. Mr. Speaker, how can the **Premier** justify that an individual here has a hydro bill for only \$4 for electricity and \$110 in delivery charges? It's out of whack.

>> **Premier** Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I appreciate the leader of the opposition quoting me because I just said that. I just said that delivery charges that were out of whack, Mr. Speaker, that were disproportionate that that's one thing I have heard about repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, as has the leader of the opposition and as has the leader of the third party and as -- As has every member in this House, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that the investments that have been made to make sure that this electricity -- Clean and reliable, that there's a cost associated with those -- We know there's more needs to be done to across-the-board help people with their electric tris bills, Mr. Speaker. To deal with the disproportionate cost of distribution in particular parts of the province, Mr. Speaker, and to help people living with low income to deal with their electricity prices. Those affordability issues are what are driving the changes. That we have already made and that we will bring forward before the budget, Mr. Speaker.

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