

Hansard: Fedeli (Romano) to Thibeault -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Fedeli: Yesterdayed Minister had the audacity to suggest businesses in northern Ontario had it roast whi it comes to electricity prices. Let me quote directly from the association of major power consumers' most recent analysis. Quote -- Ontario has the highest industrial rates in Canada, and one of the highest industrial rates in north America. The Minister can ask North Bay's arcland about how their operation has the highest energy costs of all their North American branches. Actually, Speaker, he can't because their entire city-block-long factory is now closed. They left Ontario because of skyrocketing hydro. Speaker, given this Minister 's history. Of saying or doing anything for personal gain, why should anybody believe a word he says?

>> Minister Thibeault: Very please today rise and talk about what this government is doing for northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We continue to do more for northern Ontario than that party ever did, Mr. Speaker. They treated northern Ontario like garbage, Mr. Speaker, and never did one iota for our communities in the north. We can talk about, Mr. Speaker, all of the programs that we have brought forward that help the north, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to specifically talk about -- The northern Ontario industrial electricity rebate program, Mr. Speaker. That's \$120 million-a-year program that helps these companies in northern Ontario lower their electricity bills significantly, Mr. Speaker. The facts are Mr. Speaker -- and facts do still matter in Ontario -- the facts are that the northern Ontario industrial electricity rebate program helps these businesses have some of the lowest rates in north America, Mr. Speaker. So when it comes to helping people in the north, Mr. Speaker, and making sure that we bring forward programs that help northern businesses, that help northern families. Maybe they should do a little research first.

>> MPP Romano: Let's talk about treating northern Ontario like garbage. The Liberals have ran up hydro rates by over 300%. Their answer to the mess that they created was to play a shell game and then call it a plan. This game that you're playing is costing us \$4 billion more than it needs to. The Minister refuses to acknowledge that northern Ontario businesses are fighting to keep their doors open because we have some of the most expensive electricity costs in the country. Francis Tory, only early of white river forest products said and I quote -- most jurisdictions use energy costs to promote economic development, not to kill jobs, which is what we're doing in Ontario. So, Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister is this -- why does this Minister pretend that northern Ontario rates are competitive? Why do you continue to pretend that wasting 4 billion dollars. Is a plan when we all know the truth that your Liberal hydro disaster is costing us jobs in northern Ontario?

>> Minister Thibeault: Speaker, the last leader that couldn't even find highway 69 to drive up to it to debate. If you want to talk about a party that doesn't even know where it is on a map all you have to do is look right there, Mr. Speaker. When you want to talk about accomplishments in northern Ontario, I've got a list full of them here and we can start with sue sane -- St. Marie. Tavares tubes, Mr. Speaker. N.O.S. Sea grant, 450 new jobs going into that place thanks to this government investing

in that, Mr. Speaker. And making sure that we're helping in the Sault, in North Bay, in Sudbury, in Timmins. Northern Ontario heritage fund \$100 million a year, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we're delivering on the priorities of northerners. The ring of fire, a billion-dollar commitment that we're continuing to move forward on, Mr. Speaker, thanks to this government. Expanded broadband. More than 100,000 people in northern Ontario -- \$32 million invested in that. I have way more to say, Mr. Speaker. I can't wait to have a debate with these guys about who does --

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