

Hansard: Forster to Thibeault -- Hydro 25% Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Forster: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the **Premier**. My office has been flooded with complaints around the skyrocketing hydro bills from people like Lorna lanceman. Lorna has lived in St. Catharines -- the whip may know her -- for 30 years and says she's never in her life seen a hydro bill so high. Her bills have tripled over the last few years. Her last hydro bill was \$600. Lorna is in her early 50s. She has a decent job but her husband is on a disability pension, and they find themselves having to choose between whether they can put some money away for retirement or whether they're going to pay that hydro bill. Why is the **Premier** choosing to put \$40 billion in the pocket of bankers and ignore the very people like Lorna Lampman, who need our help most?

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. It is important, Mr. Speaker, that we acted to ensure that we're helping people like the Honourable member has mentioned, Mr. Speaker, and that's why the fair hydro plan, the single largest electricity rate reduction in Ontario's history, will be providing a 25% reduction for that family, Mr. Speaker, and for all families across the province. While I don't know the specifics of that individual family, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario electricity support program is there to help those type of families, Mr. Speaker, and we also increased, increased the oesp program, Mr. Speaker, by 50% and increased it so more families and more individuals will qualify, Mr. Speaker. So the oesp program is there to help. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, on top of that we created the affordability fund. The affordability fund will actually help them through their utility, Mr. Speaker, to actually make their home more energy conservation, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Forster: Thank you, Speaker. I'm not sure that the Minister understands because Lorna doesn't want this pushed onto her children and her grandchildren. And it's not just people like Lorna that are worried about retirement that I'm hearing from that are struggling to pay their bills. I also recently heard from a young student in my riding who suffer from the a disability. She expects to graduate soon. She worries about her student loans and the interest that she's going to have to pay when she's finished her studies. But she, too, is finding that choice. Do I put some money away for my student loan payments? Or do I pay the ever rising hydro bills? Speaker, why is the **Premier** continuing to support wealthy bankers instead of the very students and people trying to retire in this province?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to say that that individual student, Mr.

Speaker, will also qualify for the 25% reduction. But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, by the great work by Deputy **Premier** and her ministry, all students moving forward, Mr. Speaker, get free tuition as well, Mr. Speaker, and that's fantastic. So not only are we providing free tuition, Mr. Speaker, but we're working with folks right across the province to help them reduce their bills, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, I was in Hamilton. You know, Mr. Speaker, the mayor isn't the only hamiltonian that is excited about our plan. Elektra, Mr. Speaker, they're talking about how the homeowners in Hamilton will see more than 25% savings, Mr. Speaker. The folks in Hamilton will see between 27 and 28% reductions, Mr. Speaker, because our fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker. That's a significant savings for families and small businesses. And that's something, Mr. Speaker, I do hope that the opposition will support. Because it is helping all families right across the province.

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