

Hansard: French to Thibault -- Hydro Affordability

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP French: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the **Premier**. Last month I began Collecting hydro bills from my constituents to show the **Premier** what the reality is for hydro users in Ontario. Families in my community are at a breaking point and I have got over 100 bills sitting here on my desk to prove it. While dropping their bills off, I've heard from families and seniors in Oshawa that set alarms to do their laundry in the middle of the night and lower their food budget just to keep the lights on. This is the reality in my community. Will the **Premier** offer real solutions to hydro users in Oshawa or should we just continue living in the dark?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and answer the question from the member of the opposition. It is important for us as a party to ensure that we do put programs in place to help families like those in Oshawa, like those in all parts of the province, Mr. Speaker, and that's why yesterday I was so pleased to see that our bill that's helping families with the 8% reduction passed through this House unanimously, Mr. Speaker. I think that's very important. We also have the oesp program which I know, Mr. Speaker, helps families save up to \$45 a month and in some cases F -- they qualify, Mr. Speaker, if they have a medical condition that they need to use equipment for they can get up to \$75 a month. And some other good news that's going to help families, Mr. Speaker, is yesterday the Ontario energy board has announced that residential and small business electricity prices will not increase, Mr. Speaker, for next six-month period. So we've got the O.E.B. As a quasty judicial organization. Making sure that they're protecting Ontario ratepayers as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

>> MPP French: Thank you, Speaker. Under the Liberal government, hydro bills have nearly quadrupled since 2003. And it's Ontarians that have been force today pay for Liberal mismanagement and mistakes. While dropping a hydro bill off at my office, a constituent named Jeff told me that his plan for the winter is to turn his thermostat down to 62° and rely on a heavy House coat and warm slippers. Again, this is the reality in my community. Will the **Premier** commit to lowering hydro rates in Ontario, or should my constituents just keep turning the thermostat down instead?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again thanks for the supplementary question, and I think the important thing that we can tell all of our constituents is, as of January 1st, rates will be going down in this province by 8%, Mr. Speaker. That's something that I know this government is very proud of, Mr. Speaker, because we recognize, Mr. Speaker, that some folks are having a difficult

time when it comes to paying their electricity bills. We understand that, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we acted. We had to do all the heavy lifting, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have a clean, safe, reliable system and we've done that, Mr. Speaker. We've got the oesp program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So to ensure that they have the O.S.E.P. Program. There's the leap program in place, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned we've also ... the debt retirement charge and also making sure come January 1st that they will actually have an 8% reduction on their buys, Mr. Speaker. We're doing a lot to help families right across the province.

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