

Hansard: Gretzky to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro Rates/Hydro One service delivery

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Date: Thu, 08 Dec 2016 12:19:31 -0500

INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Gretzky: Thank you, speaker. My question is to the premier. While this government sits idly by and makes excuses, the rising price of electricity continues to make life more difficult for our most vulnerable citizens. The downtown mission in Windsor used to serve about 1,100 people a month. Now they serve 800 a week. It seems this is the only business that expands as hydro prices soar. Speaker, will this government admit that their token hydro rebate is too little too late, that the sell-off of hydro one is a mistake and finally commit to providing real relieve for people living on a low income? And I'll repeat because the premier wasn't listening. They went from 1,100 people a month to 800 people a week. No, you weren't listening, premier

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, it is very important to me that we recognize that there is more that needs to be done in terms of hydro prices, Mr. Speaker. As the minister of energy has said, we made an announcement in the throne speech that we were taking 8% off people's electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. We already had in place the Ontario energy support program, which is targeted at exactly the people who are living on low income, Mr. Speaker, who need support. That's why that program is in place, Mr. Speaker. And as the minister of inferring said, hydro one is paying closer attention, Mr. Speaker. The fact that those 1,400 people who have been cut off have been reinstated, Mr. Speaker. The company is more attuned to what is going on in the community. But we know there's more to be done, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue. To work to find solutions. And, Mr. Speaker, I can do more than one thing at a time.

>> MPP Gretzky: Thank you, speaker. People of Ontario are well aware that the premier can multitask. She can slash, cut and privatize all at once. Again to the premier. If this government was doing enough, then the people in Windsor wouldn't be going hungry. The mission wouldn't see an explosion in the population they serve. Essex power lines is installing load limiters at residences facing disconnection, allowing them to run a bare minimum amount of hydro so people can either heat or eat. The keep the heat program in Windsor has already helped more people in 2016 than in 2015, and that number will continue to grow. While businesses, charities and nonprofits are doing all they can, this government continues to make life more difficult. Speaker, will the premier make providing real relief from hydro bills and stopping any further sell-off of hydro one her new year's resolution in 2017?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the premier mentioned this. Yesterday hydro one reconnected 1,400 families just to show, Mr. Speaker, that they're actually a better customer focused company. And that's what's happening with the broadening of hydro one, Mr. Speaker, is they are becoming customer focused. When it comes to disconnections, Mr. Speaker, you know what is this we recognize that there's more to do and that's why we've put in bill 27 to give the O.E.B. More power to ban all disconnections, Mr. Speaker, in the winter months. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's sitting in front of committee because the opposition chooses not to act. They could have passed that, Mr. Speaker, with unanimous consent. We could have been making sure that that bill would have passed, Mr. Speaker, and we could have worked with the L.D.C.S to have that implemented asap. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, they chose not to. We on this side of the house, Mr. Speaker, recognize that we can continue to find ways to help those who are struggling, Mr. Speaker, and we've done that. 8% reduction. 20% for our rural folks, Mr. Speaker, and we've got the oesp and other programs.

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