

Hansard: Horwath to Matthews -- Education Investments

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the acting **Premier**. The government promised that their throne speech would be a reset, Speaker. People were counting on the government to make life a little bit easier, to make sure that they could get a good pay cheque and fair benefits, to fix our hospitals and schools, but instead the people of this province got a great big letdown on Monday. It wasn't a reset, Speaker. It was a disappointment. People know it's time for action in this province. Why doesn't the government?

>> Min. Matthews: Well, Speaker, perhaps we could review some of the highlights of the throne speech that demonstrate we are committed to making life better for Ontarians, Speaker. 100,000 new child care spaces I think is something we can all applaud, Speaker. Child care spaces. A significant reduction in electricity bills, Speaker, is something we can all support. The third party's been calling for this action. We're now in a position to take that action, and we are reducing by 8%

the electricity bills and a further reduction for those who live in the most rural part of our province, Speaker. We're also investing more to help companies reduce their consumption of electricity and they will save money as a result of that. So, Speaker, we have responded and will continue to respond to the wishes of the people of this province.

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm sure new Democrats were not the only MPP S this past summer who were out talking to people, and more importantly listening to people, Speaker. Every backbencher on that side of the House, every Minister must have felt the disappointment from the people of Ontario as we did. Whether it was the decision to privatize Hydro One or the choice to ignore crumbling hospitals and schools, this is not what people hoped for, Speaker. And I'm sure that every Liberal Minister and every Liberal member must have heard that. Does this government understand that? Do they understand where the people of this province are? Do they understand how disappointment -- disappointed and in many, many parts of this province upset people are about the functioning or malfunctioning of this government?

>> Min. Matthews: I think the leader of the third party hasn't been listening to one of the things that we are doing on this side of the House, Speaker, including 100,000 new child care spaces, including reducing the cost electricity in this province. Speaker, what I heard a lot about is the impact of free tuition for Ontarians with incomes, family in connection -- I met with a mom who told me that, because of this, her children will now be able to go on to College or to university, Speaker. I've met with young people in grade 11 and grade 12 who looked at me and said "Really" when I said tuition would be those with incomes of \$50,000 or less. In fact, Speaker, the middle class and up to \$150,000 income will benefit from the changes we're making on tuition.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, we're listening to the people of Ontario and what they're telling us is that they want something better, and they deserve something better, Speaker. They are worried about their future, but more than that they're worried about whether there will be a future for the next generation in this province. Instead of hope, the people of this province are feeling extremely let down. Privatization, flat wages, robbing schools and hospitals of the resources they need. That's not what people voted for, Speaker. Is this government ready to acknowledge that they have gone off course and commit to making big changes in direction today?

>> Min. Matthews: Mr. Speaker, there are many items I would like to highlight, but we are -- steps we are taking to make life easier for people. Let me focus on investments we're making in young people our youth, Speaker. An extra \$250 million over two years to help 150,000 young Ontarians focus on skills development, on labour market connections, on entrepreneurship, on innovation. We're investing in these young people because we know that if we make the investments, that will be repaid many, many times over as they enter the work force and make a real why, to this province, Speaker. When it comes to child care as I've said, 100,000 new spaces, which means more people will be able to get that solid foundation so that when they go into full-day kindergarten, which is another initiative that we're very, very proud of on this side, Speaker. Young people will be able to. To their absolute maximum, Speaker. And we will allow those parents of those children to participate as well.

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