

Hansard: Horwath to Matthews -- Hydro 25% Reduction Plan

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Date: Wed, 08 Mar 2017 10:56:50 -0500

INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. I also want to wish all the women legislators and staff and all the people that work in this building who are women a happy international women's day as well as all the women across Ontario. My question's for the acting **Premier**. Over the past few months, I've been welcomed into the homes of many women in this province who are worried about their skyrocketing hydro bills, women like Adele from Cambridge, a single mom who fought back tears as she told me how her children go with less because her hydro bills have doubled in recent years. Why doesn't the Liberal government come up with a plan that will permanently lower Adele's hydro bill and invest in the service that is her family needs instead of saddling her kids and their kids with the bill?

>> Minister Matthews: Well, thank you, Speaker. I want to start by saying that we are implementing a plan that reduces the average hydro bill -- 25%, Speaker. We have already done the first 8% and we are looking to take the further 17% off later this year, Speaker. So let's remember, we are implementing a plan that will help people like Adele. Speaker, that is for all the House holds, 25% on average. For those who are low-income families, there's even more support, Speaker. And for those who live in the rural parts of Ontario, there is even greater relief. We have a plan. We're implementing a plan. It addresses the stories that we heard. From people across this province, Speaker. I'm proud of it. I wish the leader of the opposition would stand up and say good work.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, Adele doesn't just need lower hydro bills. She needs good health care. She needs good schools for her kids. Instead of investing in health care and education, the **Premier's** hydro plan gives an extra \$40 billion to her well-connected friends on bay street. Bringing Hydro One back into public hands will put \$7 billion into the public purse, Speaker. It will mean we can invest in families like Adele's again. Doesn't the acting **Premier** think that making \$7 billion is better than spending \$40 billion, Speaker ?

>> Minister Matthews: You know, Speaker, I was really pleased when the NDP Actually came up with a plan to bring down hydro prices, because we had heard lots of identification of the problem from the opposition parties, both parties. We didn't see much by the way of solutions. Forth with a plan until I read the plan. And there just was nothing there that would bring down hydro prices, Speaker. There was nothing there that would achieve the goal that we all want, which is to provide immediate relief for people who are facing real challenges when it comes to their hydro prices.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, if there's nothing there, why did they scramble so fast to put -- All across Ontario, Speaker, we need to invest in schools and in hospitals and in child care and in stronger public services. Stopping the sell-off of Hydro One and returning it to public ownership will give the people of this province a \$7 billion payday and lower their hydro rates permanently. How is the Liberal government's \$40 billion investment in bankers on bay street going to help women like Adele, her children and her grandchildren live a better life?

>> Minister Matthews: Well, Speaker, let's be clear. Our plan is vast. It is substantial. It is widespread. It is long-lasting. The NDP Plan, sadly, is very vague. It relies on these expert panels to be struck sometime in the future. Their biggest idea, to buy back the shares of Hydro One does not take one penny off one bill in this province, Speaker. There is zero evidence that keeping -Speaker, as far as I could tell, the only idea. To get the Deputy leader elected leader, then Prime Minister of Canada and he will give them 5% off.

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