

Hansard: Horwath to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro Advertising

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker, my next question is also for the **Premier**. Yesterday the president of treasury board had a different explanation for why you the Liberal government thought it was these to spend \$5.5 million on these partisan ads. She said it was because people find their hydro bills quite confusing. Maybe the Minister should spend more time actually speaking to Ontarians, because no one that I've talked to is having any trouble understanding their bill. People are worried because their bills are too high, Speaker. That's the problem people have with their electricity bill. When will this **Premier** stop spending money on partisan ads and actually do something -- Keep up with their sky-high hydro bills.

>> **Premier Wynne:** So Mr. Speaker, I don't know if this will come as a surprise to the leader of the third party but there are a number of things that government has to do at the same time. So Mr. Speaker, yes, we have reduced electricity bills by an average of 25%, Mr. Speaker, for all the reasons that I outlined earlier. We know that there were concerns, we knew that people were struggling with their bills, and Mr. Speaker, we have made changes but it wasn't enough, and we have made further changes. Mr. Speaker, on top of that, I believe, and I have looked at many electricity bills from around the province as has the Minister of energy and a number of our Colleague, Mr. Speaker, and they're all different. They are could be fusing, some of them are less confusing than other, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker, I think that it is responsible that we would look at a way of simplifying those bills. But that's not the only thing that we're doing -- Lower people's electricity bills so they can cope with those on a monthly basis Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario want a government that will actually lower their electricity bills. Not spend millions and millions of public dollars on partisan ads talking about their \$40 million boiling scheme that the financial accountability officer says is going to cause the electricity rates in this province to jump even higher! When will this government unveil the ad campaign to help Ontarians budget for the huge rate hikes that are coming down the road pretty quickly as the F.A.O. Has warned about?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Speak, the people of Ontario have a government that has actually lowered their electricity price, Speaker. People are now. -- Seeing a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker, and in those rural and northern communities that we were just talking about in the House, Mr. Speaker, people have seen up to a 40% to 50% reduction, because on top of the electricity bill, the distribution cost was very, very high in many of those more remote communities, Mr. Speaker. And that has been reduced. That is the work that we have done, we have talked about consumer, and experts all over this province, Mr. Speaker. We have made known reductions and well--made those reductions and we will continue to work to find ways to support people -- Businesses can pay their electricity bills but people across this province have seen an average of 25% reduction this summer, Mr. Speaker.

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Do the people of Ontario have a government that increased hydro rates by 300% and sold off Hydro One to their friends?! The Minister of energy, Speaker, the Minister of energy, he said he thinks these ads are necessary because they promote a programme to help people pay for their soaring bills. That's incorrect, Speaker. The Minister thinks these ads are necessary because the people of Ontario don't understand their hydro bills. That's incorrect, Speaker. These ads were designed with the express purpose of countering bad media coverage for the Liberal party. Will the **Premier** admit that this ad campaign is designed to benefit her party and commit right now to stop spending money from the public purse on partisan ads that help the Liberal party!

>> **Minister Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the third party has it completely wrong, Mr. Speaker. The only people that are benefitting from these ads, Mr. Speaker, are the people of Ontario, learning about the 25% reduction that each and every one of them are getting, Mr. Speaker, along with the website. If they actually watch the ads, Mr. Speaker, rather than just complain about them, but if they watch the ads and look what's in the ads, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the programmes and we are talking about how to find out more information about how reducing rates even more, if you need more help, Mr. Speaker. And that help is included with the O.E.S.P. Programme. And just this month, Mr. Speaker, another 51,100 people have signed up that. Is important, Mr. Speaker, now we have over 232,000 people receiving the benefits they need. And you know what, Mr. Speaker ? They're getting this benefit, despite the opposition, despite the rhetoric that's coming, Mr. Speaker, they're actually receiving help. This government will continue to put programmes in place and let the people of Ontario know that these programmes are there to help them, Mr. Speaker.

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