

Hansard: Horwath to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's also for the **Premier**. The leaked documents show that hydro bills in Ontario will rise by over 50%. If the **Premier's** borrowing scheme is passed into law. Given that this plan will actually increase people's hydro bills, Speaker, and given that the **Premier** is not disclosing all the facts, we have called on an independent review of the legislation by the financial accountability officer for the province of Ontario. So will this **Premier** co-operate with the F.A.O. So that the public has the full truth, the unbiased facts about her \$40 billion borrowing scheme?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have and we always will work with the financial accountability officer, Mr. Speaker. And in fact we have a very good working relationship and expanded his authority recently, Mr. Speaker. So we will of course work with the financial accountability officer. But, Mr. Speaker, the plan that we brought forward, which is not based on the document that the leader of the third party is talking about. That document was part of the development of the plan, Mr. Speaker, but it was not used in the final analysis of the plan that we brought forward, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is designed to reduce people's electricity bills because, Mr. Speaker, we had to make investments in the electricity system in this province. The fact is that the shutting down of the coal-fired plants, the rebuilding of lines across the province - The development of clean renewable -- Electricity in this province, Mr. Speaker, has meant that there was a cost associated with that. We are spreading that cost over a longer period of time. Making structural changes to reduce people's electricity.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, we asked the **Premier** months ago, in fact two months ago today we asked the **Premier** not to ram this bill through the House. Bringing this bill in at the last minute, Speaker, especially now that we know how much damage it's going to do to Ontario families, is absolutely undemocratic. Shutting down the public's right to review this bill is not -- How a government with integrity would work. Will this **Premier** at least, at least allow the F.A.O. To conduct its assessment on the long-term impact of this borrowing scheme and direct her Minister

to release all documents, r sing -- every single document that they relied on to put this scheme together to the F.A.O. And do it immediately?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as the **Premier** said, we welcome and encourage the F.A.O. To review our fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker. You know the F.A.O. Has already received a full technical briefing last month and we've responded to all follow-up requests for information, Mr. Speaker. So remember, though, Mr. Speaker ,, that it was this government that the created the F.A.O. And we expanded its authority and oversight again last fall. But what's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP Know all this and yet they try to distract from the legislation we have tabled. We've been clear all along. Our plan is spreading out the costs over time, Mr. Speaker, and over our system. But it will reduce the burden on ratepayers today and it will share costs more evenly with future generations who will also benefit from our investment. But the NDP, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to seem to want to provide relief to ratepayers or reduce bills by 25% if passed and they have no credible ideas to replace it, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: This is nothing more, Speaker, than a new gas plant scandal. Except that this time, this time it's going to cost families 40 times more than the \$1 billion it cost them for the Liberals to buy that election. Everything seems to go up under the Liberals, Speaker. Withdraw, Speaker. Everything seems to go up under this Liberal government, including the cost of an election. How can the **Premier** ram this legislation through this House without sufficient time for debate, public input and without an assessment from the F.A.O.?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about what's been going up. Highways and bridges have been being built and being created. Creating jobs thanks to the Minister of economic development and work by this **Premier**, going up, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that schools are going up, Mr. Speaker, hospitals, programs that go in those hospitals going up. Thanks to the leadership of this **Premier** and this government, Mr. Speaker, our province is being built up right across this province. You know what's going down, Mr. Speaker ? If we get this legislation passed? 25% of everyone's hydro bills across this province. 800,000 families will see a 40 to 50% reduction in their hydro bills and for our low-income individuals, 50% reduction when they actually get on to the oesp program, Mr. Speaker. And let's not forget. That our first nations individuals, they're going to see their delivery charge eliminated, Mr. Speaker, but it's quite upsetting that either opposition party don't think it's important enough to vote on, Mr. Speaker .

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