

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

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: My next question's also for the **Premier**. Leaked documents show very clearly that the **Premier** knows her \$40 billion borrowing scheme is going to end up costing families and businesses on their already sky-high hydro bills. But she denies at that her plan is based on these documents. Well, if leaked information is inaccurate, Speaker, why won't the **Premier** just come clean and release the information that did inform her plan?

>> **Premier Wynne**: So again, Mr. Speaker, let me just reinforce what I have said in this House in previous days, Mr. Speaker. There is a short term, a midterm and a long-term plan around electricity prices. We know that people need relief now, Mr. Speaker. That's what the 25% on average reduction for all Ontarians is, Mr. Speaker, and it will be in place by the summer. We will then hold those -- the rate of increase of electricity bills down for four years, Mr. Speaker, to the level of inflation. And then, Mr. Speaker, the long-term energy plan this is being developed right now will give businesses and families around the province a snapshot of just that, the long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker. But we will continue over the medium and the long term to continue to take costs out of the system, which is -- Each one of our long-term energy plans, Mr. Speaker. We found ways to take costs out. That will continue and the people of the province -- when that plan is ready, they will see it, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what the **Premier** neglected to say is that, after four years, those bills are going to soar in Ontario. By over 50%. Leaked documents show that the hydro bills will absolutely go up. Yet the **Premier's** answer to this disgusting betrayal of Ontario families and businesses, just trust me. Just trust me. It's going to all be fine. Well, Ontarians are getting pretty fed up with the "Just trust me" line, Speaker. It's what the **Premier** said before she broke her promise not to sell off hide rodeo one and what she said about the Sudbury bribery charges right before a criminal investigation got under way. "Just trust me" is not good enough for the people of Ontario. When will this **Premier** release the information she says is showing the long-term effects of her borrowing scheme so that Ontarians have all the facts -- Before she rams this legislation through the House?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's be clear. We have -- So as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The fact is 25% is coming off of everybody's bills, Mr. Speaker, before summer once this legislation passes. 50% is coming off 800,000 families' bills, Mr. Speaker, in northern and in rural parts of our province. That's a significant savings for these families, Mr. Speaker. We're also helping small businesses and farms. When you want to -- when you want to continue to talk about facts, Mr. Speaker, it is this government that cleaned up the mess left by the opposition parties when they were in power and the system that they left for us to clean -- Mr. Speaker, our plan has been praised by poverty advocates, by indigenous leaders, by business leaders and by energy experts, Mr. Speaker. Francesca Dobben executive director of the United Way of Bruce-Grey says this government is listening to the people with positive changes our rural community will now truly benefit from the low-cost power it produces, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, clarity is actually what the people of this province need and deserve but they're not getting any of it from their government. The **Premier's** scheme punishes families who are already struggling with their electricity bills. She is rushing through the House, shutting down debates. If I chance of meaningful public input is being truncated by this government. And she claims that the leaked documents that came to light last week about the plan are inaccurate, but she refuses to come clean with the people of the province about the facts. Why is this **Premier** going to such great lengths, Speaker, to make sure that the people don't have all the information about a plan that will affect their lives for three decades or more?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we have short-term solutions, medium-term solution and a long-term solution, Mr. Speaker. 25% off with all of the other programs that are coming out, Mr. Speaker, through the fair hydro plan is something that all families will see right before summer, Mr. Speaker. We hope to have that passed and get it into their pockets, Mr. Speaker, as soon as possible. In the medium term we are holding rates to the cost of inflation for the next four years. And then when it comes to the long term, Mr. Speaker, we are the only party that actually can plan long term. These parties opposite have no idea. One of them doesn't even have a plan, Mr. Speaker. They have no idea on what to do when it comes to electricity. We're making sure, Mr. Speaker, that we're bringing forward reductions that will help families all at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we cleaned up a system. We've made sure it's clean. It's reliable and it is something, Mr. Speaker, we should all be proud of. People look to us to see what they can do to emulate our system, Mr. Speaker.

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