

Hansard: N. Miller (Thompson) to Thibeault (Duguid) -- Hydro Rates & Businesses

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP N. Miller: Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to point out the Minister of Energy said we voted against Bill 27. We actually supported Bill 27. My question is to the **Premier**. Speaker, Muskoka meet and 100 mile store's a small business in my riding. It's just the kind of business you'd like to see succeed in Ontario. They promote high-quality local food. I can attest to the quality of the delicious Ontario lamb they sell myself. Unfortunately the owner Dave Herdon is struggling to replenish the stock after being forced to launch a half-price sale of frozen meats on Facebook in order to pay his hydro bill and keep his business running. As a butcher, Dave knows that his freezers require substantial electricity to run. However when faced with a \$17 hydro bill and \$500 security deposit he had no option but to sell his quality products at a loss. Speaker, will the **Premier** explain how small rural businesses. Like Dave's to succeed and prosper while paying Ontario's outrageous hydro rates?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Honourable member for the question. The important thing for us as the government to recognize is, now, Mr. Speaker, we put forward a few programs to actually help small businesses and they're actually seeing help when they know about those programs, Mr. Speaker, so we're going to continue to promote those programs and make sure those businesses can actually find out that information and save those dollars, Mr. Speaker, because I do hope that the Honourable member let that company know about many of those programs, Mr. Speaker. But as the **Premier** has said quite a few times, Mr. Speaker, we've come forward with programs. We've had that 8% reduction that's just been in place since January 1st, Mr. Speaker. That 8% reduction applies to all retail price plan customers, Mr. Speaker, which includes farms, which includes small businesses and includes residents, Mr. Speaker. That 8% is coming off the bill but we know we need to do more, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work hard at that and make sure we find other ways to help those businesses.

>> MPP Thompson: Snobelen farms is a local grain drying and exporter supporting good rural jobs. On the January hydro bill there was a delivery charge of \$9,006 before H.S.T., Speaker. While the electricity cost was \$3,312. Speaker, when snobelen farms wants the **Premier** to listen and understand, and this is very, very important. If she doesn't start standing up for Ontario businesses, the only thing drying up in this province will be more good-paying jobs. Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** admit that her careless spending is perpetuating the ongoing gouging of

Ontario businesses through her outrageous delivery charges? Thank you

>> Min. Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the investments we've made with Ontario small businesses through the years. I wish the opposition would have been as supportive of small businesses when we made those investments. Our regional economic developments, Mr. Speaker, have seen us invest \$145 million. \$1.7 billion to private sector investment and created -- and supported 35,000 jobs in small businesses in eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Areas that have struggled today keep up with Ontario's burgeoning economy. We've also made Ontario one of the most competitive places for small businesses to operate. We've cut the tax and we've reduced corporate taxes from 5.5% to 4.5%. That saved businesses \$4.5 billion. Our corporate income tax is 13% lower than the average US That's saving significant amounts of money. We brought in the H.S.T., Mr. Speaker, saving \$4.7 billion. This is the most competitive jurisdiction in north America for small, medium and large businesses to operate. And we're going to keep growing, Mr. Speaker.

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