

Hansard: Tabuns to Thibeault -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the acting **Premier**. Ontario families, businesses and municipalities are struggling under the weight of soaring hydro bills. Those bills have gone up 300% since the Conservatives first started to privatized hydro system, continues under Liberal rule. In fact 50% increase since this **Premier** came to power alone. We've told Ontarians stories in this House for almost two years now. We've told this **Premier** the family who have to choose between buying food and keeping the heat on in winter, who have to make the heartbreaking decisions not to contribute to their children's education fund rather than pay their hydro bills. The **Premier's** response this week was to move ahead with the disastrous sell-off of a majority stake in Hydro One move that will guarantee that these families will continue --To see their hydro bills rise. Does the **Premier** not listen to these stories or care about the people who are struggling to get by?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to rise to talk about the 17% reduction that families, small businesses and farms have received so far, Mr. Speaker, thanks to this government's fair hydro plan. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, 800,000 families across the province that live in rural or remote parts of our province, they'll see between 40 and 50%

reduction. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, many of those families are Hydro One customers. And when you're talking about the branding of ownership of Hydro One, yes, Mr. Speaker, our final ranch was done this week and with that sale we made \$2.8 billion that we can invest in things like the gtha, go rail regional express, Mr. Speaker. I know that's obviously something that the opposition party doesn't support. What about the \$5.3 billion in the Eglinton crosstown. Or the 1 billion in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker ? That's all great news for this province.

>> MPP Tabuns: Again to the acting **Premier**. We've told the **Premier** about businesses eager to expand and create more jobs. If only, if only they could get some relief on their hydro bills. No response for four years under her watch. We've told her about municipalities across Ontario, which are worried about having to close valued community centres and arenas because they can't afford to keep the lights on. No response. The people of Ontario said loud and clear, stop the wrong-headed sell-off of Hydro One, which the **Premier** knows will only cause more chaos and damage to our already fragile hydro system. No response. Why?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we go back just even a few years, we can start talking about how this government pulled costs out of the system, Mr. Speaker. \$3.5 billion in the renegotiation of the Samsung agreement saving ratepayers money. We cancelled the Irt2 project, Mr. Speaker, saving ratepayers money. We can go back further and further, Mr. Speaker, to talk about ways that this government continued to find ways to save ratepayers money on their electricity bills. But one thing that we had to do, Mr. Speaker, was rebuild the system. The system was a mess. And it was left a mess by those two governments when they were in power. We stepped in in 2003 and had to rebuild the system at a cost of \$50 billion. And, Mr. Speaker, when we rebuilt that system we made it clean and we've made it reliable and we no longer use coal in our electricity grid, something that is seen as a leadership role, Mr. Speaker, around the world.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again the acting **Premier**. The **Premier** ignores 80% of Ontarians opposed to the sell-off of Hydro One. She looks away when she hears about the Rea and devastating impact that her mismanagement of the hydro system has had on families, businesses and local governments. She doesn't have a credible plan to fix any of the mess that she and her government have helped create. Maybe bury it in a mound of buried money. That seems to be what they're thinking b.without a mandate and just a year shy of being booted out of office she's decided to complete the sell-off of a majority share of one of the most profitable public utilities in this province. Does the **Premier** listen to anyone but bay street bankers, high-powered investors and an energy Minister who just doesn't seem to understand this file? Thank you.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased to stand and talk about the significant reductions that families are already receiving, the 17% reduction that they are receiving today. When talking about not understanding the file, Mr. Speaker, outside experts and observers agree that the NDP's pamphlet on what they would do with energy won't even help Ontarians. Thomas Watkin from the " Toronto star" called their proposal thin gruel and said it consisted of wishful thinking, Mr. Speaker, and puts off tough decisions. This government is making tough decisions to make sure we're bringing lasting relief right now for families, small businesses and farms. So we take no lessons from a party that has no plan that, has no idea and won't do anything to help people now. We are acting. We are bringing forward legislation that is bringing forth 25% reduction. That is something we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

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