

Chinese press summary

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Hi folks,

The 25% cut to electricity bills does not apply to all of Ontario as only a fraction of the people will stand to benefit. That is the worst and most misleading heading Ming Pao wrote in its top news coverage of the announcement made yesterday.

The story's intro was factual and fair. It is in the second paragraph that the view that not all Ontarians will get the 25% rate cut was made. This statement was qualified with the comment that only low income families and households in remote areas will get more mitigation in their electricity bills. (The 800,000 more people to benefit under the plan was not mentioned, deliberately or not.)

The plan is a short term relief and long-term pain. The fact that remote areas get will get more help is like "the communal sharing of big woks of rice" during the 50s in China's Great Leap Forward campaigns. (This was the time when no one in China was allowed to cook their own meals but eat together in communes)

Electricity bills gone up 70% since 2009. And now we can only get a 25% cutback. Premier Wynne admitted subsidies to the green energy sector has been too generous. According to the AG estimate, those subsidies have reached \$50 billion between 2006 to 2015. The rate of increase was a phenomenal 1,200% between 2006 and 2013.

Under the Fair Hydro Plan, OPG would have to pay at least \$2.5 billion in interest. And in the next 30

years, Ontarians would have to foot the interest bill of \$14 billion, said the paper.

Sing Tao carried the news as a regular in an A1 column. The reading was more political and historical. With quotes from political commentators, the paper said electricity rates have gone up from \$91 a month to \$156 on average, putting the Liberals at risk of losing the next general election.

Without mentioning the name of former Premier Dalton McGuinty, the premier repeatedly explained it was wrong to set the global adjustment repayment at 20 years rather than 30 years. It was noted some 350,000 farmers will benefit from the new policy and low income families will get an extra 50% help from OESP, observed Sing Tao.

Other echoes from the Chinese communities was a mixed bag. In an interview with Sing Tao, the chair of the Chinese Restaurant Association Chen Yong-yee said he understood the political motive behind mitigation plan. However, the initiative will bring instant relief to businesses like restaurants that face constant overhead cost increases. The repayment period might have been stretched, but at a smaller and slower pace is still better.

Chartered accountant Ben Leung (a PC crony) slammed the plan as a political shell game to fool the public. The political motive is more than anything else, he said. If Premier Wynne were to really fix the problem, she would have done better beginning with the system's structure, not handouts. Otherwise, the shape of Ontario finance will deteriorate further. The Liberal government has made a \$50 billion mistake, leaving a huge baggage for the next generation to carry. The 25% cut doesn't tackle the real issues here. Ontarians might have to pay 80% more in the next five years, he argued.

In their talks to Ming Pao, the president of the Mississauga Chinese Business Association Winnie Fung, and downtown Chinatown BIA chair Tony Yu welcomed the move. It's definitely good news to learn, they said. However, community leader Joe Tseng (a Liberal) said the news is nothing to celebrate about. It is the public who pay for the costs of waste and scandals, he said.

Fairchild ran the news as the second item in its broadcast last evening. The focus was the \$1.4 billion interest Ontarians will pay annually. Of course, there were Patrick Brown and Andrea Horwath howling at Q & A. There weren't any commentaries as yet.

Today Commercial and the onlines used the PO news release verbatim in their prominent coverage.

That's it for this morning. Thx.

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