

Hansard: Brown to Premier (Sandals) -- Hydro One Exec Salaries

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The C.E.O. Of the Ontario power generation earned nearly \$1.2 million last year. The C.E.O. Of Hydro One earned \$4.5 million last year. In total, the top five executives at Hydro One made a whopping \$11 million. Mr. Speaker, when people across Ontario can barely afford to keep the lights on, they can barely afford their hydro bills, how can the Premier allow these salaries that are completely out of control?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know the member -- or --E leader of the opposition makes a point that people across Ontario are struggling with their hydro bills. Mr. Speaker, that's why we're removing 25% from those hydro bills come this spring, Mr. Speaker. And that's why, for people in -- for people in more rural and remote communities, Mr. Speaker, they're going to see more like a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan. We are implementing that plan, Mr. Speaker. We know that there are people who are burdened by their electricity bills across the province. That's why we have the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly why it is going to reduce people's bills across the province by 25%, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. He's not just the million-dollar salaries and hydro that the Premier does not want to address. It is not just the energy sector. The government has backed up the Brinks truck for executives across all government agencies. Let's take a look at the president of union Pearson express or should -- should I say the former president Cathy Haley. She resigned March 21, 2016 but she still managed to earn \$230,000, not bad for three months' work. Mr. Speaker, how does this government manage that? How does this government allow salaries that are completely out of control? And try to justify that it's appropriate, whether it's \$4.5 million for the Hydro One C.E.O. Or \$230,000 for three months' work? Give me a break. The average Ontarian can't afford their hydro bill and they're allowing this -- Not right. How does the Premier allow --

>> Minister Sandals: Yes. Thank you very much. And of course after everyone knows we released on Friday the public sector salary disclosure, the sunshine list. And I think it's important to understand what's on the sunshine list. The sunshine list lists the salaries of Ontario's public service and broader public sector people who have been paid more than \$100,000. It's important to realize that that's not necessarily their annual salary. And in the case of people who have retired after serving in the public sector for a number of years, they may have vacation pay owing. They may have severance pay owing, and what you're seeing is not. 25% or 50% or 100% of annual salary. It represents those adjustments -- On severance.

>> Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier. I appreciate why the Premier doesn't want to be on the record on what her government is paying executives. Hearing the talking points from the Minister that \$4.5 million salary's appropriate because there are things like vacation pay or \$230,000 for three months' work? Mr. Speaker, it doesn't wash. And the reality in Ontario is, you know, those nurses working twice as hard because of Liberal cuts, they're not part of this millionaires' club. Those main in a maintenance crews at schools that are falling apart. Aren't part of those raises. It's offensive. The reality is these salaries are out of control, Mr. Speaker, and I want this Premier to stand in this House and say that she supports this, that -

- why she's allowed to how can you pay \$4.5 million. Patrick Brown: To the hydro C.E.O. When nowhere else in Canada do they allow salaries like that?

>>Minister Sandals: Yes. Of course we recognize that \$100,000 is a lot of money. It's more than the average Ontarian makes, and what we have seen is that, when you look at the increase in salaries, the average salary in the last year is about \$116 more than the average salary the prior year. So not a huge shift. But what we do see each year is more and more people on the sunshine list, and of course that's because the legislation that created this in the first place, the public sector salary disclosure act in 1996, has the 100,000 threshold embedded right in the legislation. In fact where the threshold to having -- Speaker, the current threshold would be about \$150,000 and 84% of the people on the list would be dropped.

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