

Hansard: Brown to Premier -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

From: "Basha, Cindy (CAB)" <cindy.basha@ontario.ca>

To: "Codd-Downey, Beckie (GHLO)" <beckie.codd-downey@ontario.ca>, "Ernesaks, Andrea (OPO)" <andrea.ernesaks3@ontario.ca>, "Forgione, Andrew (OPO)" <andrew.forgione@ontario.ca>, "Glista, Alex (OPO)" <alex.glista@ontario.ca>, "Killorn, Bill (OPO)" <bill.killorn@ontario.ca>, "Lazarus, Jordan (OPO)" <jordan.lazarus@ontario.ca>, "McPhail, Blane (OPO)" <blane.mcphail@ontario.ca>, "Sumi, Craig (CAB)" <craig.sumi@ontario.ca>

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. The financial accountability officer's report on the Liberals' unfair hydro scheme wasn't shocking to the opposition. We have been saying all along that simply the boring plan that kicks the can down the road. At the lowest estimate, this plan will cost taxpayers \$21 billion, and at the highest, a staggering \$93 billion. This plan is not about sharing cost. It's about saving seats. Not only will this cost the next generation billions of dollars, but the generation after that, too. This is a shortsighted reelection scheme. Mr. Speaker, is this unfair hydro scheme really about burdening Ontario with another \$93 billion of debt? Or is it about helping the Liberal party?

>> **Premier** Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our fair hydro plan is about helping people in this province. It's about helping mom-and-pop businesses on main streets, Mr. Speaker, and it's about helping farms, farmers, Mr. Speaker. It's about people who need relief on their electricity bill, getting that relief. Mr. Speaker, the member for Renfrew- Nipissing, in his- usual thoughtful way, is heckling about the last 14 years. Mr. Speaker, over the last 14 years we've invested in the electricity system in this province so that we have a clean renewable system, Mr. Speaker, that has been degraded by the very party that the member opposite is a member of. And, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly government after government have not made the investments that needed to be made. So electricity prices were kept artificially low, Mr. Speaker. The system was degraded. We had to make these investments and Mr. Speaker -- We're spreading the cost of those investments over a longer period of time. That's fair today and it's fair tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**. The **Premier** said she was investing in the electricity system over the last 14 years. Well, stop investing because, under your watch, you've raised hydro rates 400%. They've broken hydro in Ontario. Every time -- they've made it worse. So I've got a simple -- Mr. Speaker, I have a simple, simple multiple-choice question for the **Premier**. How many billions of taxpayer dollars is the **Premier** willing to spend on this hydro scheme for her reelection campaign? "A" 21 billion. B" 45 billion, or "C" 93 billion? Which is it, "A," "B" or "C"? How much taxpayer dollars are you going to waste for the self --

>> **Premier** Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that the -- Very clear that the leader of the opposition has a very different philosophy of how to grow this province and make it strong, Mr. Speaker. He would stop investing apparently in the new hospital -- He would stop investing in the transit that makes bracebridge able to have a bus -- Investing in small-town infrastructure like bracebridge. If he would stop investing in a clean, renewable electricity grid, Mr. Speaker, and he would stop investing in the education and the health care resources that are allowing this province to thrive. He would stop investing, Mr. Speaker. That's not a plan. That's -- THA is a strategy -- That is a strategy for undermining the growth of this province. We're not going to go there, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: To the **Premier**. The **Premier**'s absolutely correct for once. I will stop investing in bad Liberal contracts. According to the auditor general, we overpaid \$9.2 billion. That's our

investment. Overpaid by 9.2 billion? The 30 companies that got the contracts, surprise, surprise, donated \$1.3 million to the Ontario Liberal party. That's the investment they're proud of? They have supported the Liberal party's bank account, not Ontario ratepayers. And everyone sees it. Everyone in the province sees it. Just read the "Globe and mail" this weekend. In the "Globe and mail," I quote - unless you're planning on living off the grid in Algonquin Park or moving out of the province by 2028, you will be materially worse off under this scheme than had the Liberals just left bad enough alone. This plan is going to hurt Ontario. Why won't the **Premier** just do the right thing and admit they have broken hydro in Ontario? Stop trying to make it worse.

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, we've invested in the electricity system in this province. It is clean, its renewable and it is reliable, Mr. Speaker. People need relief on their electricity bills because of the investments that have been made in order to get us there, and we're spreading the cost of those investments over a longer period of time. And happy, Mr. Speaker, to talk to the next generation about that, that they are going to be able to access an asset that we have invested and we fixed, Mr. Speaker, because previous governments were not able to or not willing to. Mr. Speaker, the investments that we have made in this province, let's look at what those investments have LED to. Ontario's created almost 700,000 new jobs since the recession, almost 300,000 since I became **Premier**, Mr. Speaker. Ontario's economic growth has LED all G-7 nations for the past three years. Our unemployment rate has dropped to 5.8%, Mr. Speaker. Its lowest level in 16 years. That's what investment in the province has been, Mr. Speaker.

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