

Hansard: Brown to Premier -- Hydro Rebate

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. The scandal, waste and mismanagement by this government is astounding. Billions and billions wasted all paid for by the people of Ontario. And now again I say that they just see rebates as too little too late. It's too little for Lindsay. She's a mom from Sault Ste. Marie. Lindsay and her four children are forced to sacrifice food just to keep the lights on in their home. They've had as little as \$200 a month to spend on food for their entire family. Mr. Speaker, what will this **Premier** tell Lindsay and her kids that this 8% rebate will do to help their family keep the lights on when another increase is coming on November 1st?

>> **Premier Wynne:** So, Mr. Speaker, you know I think that I have said many times that we recognize that there are people in the province who are struggling to pay their electricity bills. So we have made changes in the past. We have put in place the Ontario energy support program. We've put in place property tax credits, Mr. Speaker, and we recognize that there needs to be more done, and that's exactly why, exactly why we've put the initiatives that we did in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker. You know we have, as I said we inherited a degraded electricity system, Mr. Speaker, a dirty unreliable grid. There have been no Brownouts or blackouts, Mr. Speaker, despite record temperatures. There have been no Brownouts and blackouts, Mr. Speaker, over -- no smog days, Mr. Speaker, because of the shutdown of the coal plants. So we've made investments. We recognize that there are costs associated with that and that's why we're working to help people who are struggling with their electricity bill.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**. This band-aid solution is also too late for Matt from Peterborough. I was watching global news. Hopefully the **Premier** had a chance to watch their story on hydro horror stories. But Matt is a Canadian forces veteran. Matt's hydro bills have been \$1,000. His hydro was cut off on remembrance day while he was at a service. Despite the fact the banks were closed, he managed to pay the bill that day. But his power wasn't turned back on for two days. Mr. Speaker, no one deserves that scene, let alone a veteran on remembrance day. And it's not just Matt. There are 567,000 Ontarians who are in arrears at the end of 2015 because of the hydro prices. Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** stop turning her back on Matt and the 560,000 families. In Ontario that can't pay their hydro bill?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I know that local distribution companies work with consumers who are in distress, Mr. Speaker. I don't know the full story but I am quite sure that in Peterborough there would be support and I hope, I hope that -- I hope that they were able to support this gentleman. But, Mr. Speaker, again the leader of the opposition somehow doesn't believe that I understand that people are struggling. That's exactly why we put the initiatives in place. I haven't actually heard a suggestion from him about what he would do, Mr. Speaker. All we know -- all we know is that -- We believe -- All we know is that he doesn't support. Take out of coal. He doesn't support green energy, Mr. Speaker, and he knows people are struggling. So do we. That's why we've taken action, Mr. Speaker.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Boy, Mr. Speaker. If the **Premier** wants to know what we do differently, we'd stop signing contracts for -- We'd stop the fire sale of Hydro One. Mr. Speaker, maybe the **Premier** needs to hear another story because she's not appreciating that people in Ontario are in pain. Let me tell you the story of kip van Kempen. Kip had her Hydro One disconnected. And the family's lines, they were unable to repair the lines because of logistical issues so you cut their hydro. You cut the hydro to kip van Kempen's family. They got a bill for having no hydro. They had to pay hundreds of dollars for getting no hydro. No power's being delivered. They can't get their line repaired. That hydro service is in Ontario under this Liberal government. Is this acceptable? Is it acceptable to charge Ontarians huge astonishing bills for receiving no hydro?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, you know, it is unseepable that people would have to face those kind of challenges and again I don't know the specifics of the situations and I don't know what the interaction with the local distribution company was, Mr. Speaker. My hope would be that they'd be able to work with Hydro One. You know one of the things -- one of the benefits of the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, is it is a more professionally run company. It's a better company than it was, Mr. Speaker, and it will continue to improve and that was one of the motivations behind the changes that we're making. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there are people in the province who need support around their electricity costs, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that there are people who need support in their lives on a day-to-day basis. This morning I was at - School in Toronto and we were talking about the Ontario student grant, Mr. Speaker, so that young people who want to go to postsecondary. From low and middle-income families --

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