

Hansard: Brown to Premier--Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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

To: "Appave, Priscilla (OPO)" <priscilla.appave2@ontario.ca>, "Codd-Downey, Beckie (GHLO)" <beckie.codd-downey@ontario.ca>, "Forgione, Andrew (OPO)" <andrew.forgione@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>

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 2017 10:48:12 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. According to government-commissioned polling, in December of 2013, electricity was the government's worst performing policy. Some three years later the government decides to act. For three years, families struggled to pay their bills. For three years families sat in the dark. For three years seniors had to choose between heating and eating, and for three years the government did nothing. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier just admit the only reason -- Action is because it's now affecting the Liberal party fortunes. Self-interest. That's all it is today.

>> Premier Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, I thank the member opposite for the question, and I acknowledge that the 25% reduction is very important, Mr. Speaker, that it is the most significant thing we can do to reduce people's electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. But let me just go through the fact of the time line in terms of the work that we've been doing and our recognition that this was an issue, Mr. Speaker. So in December of 2013, we deferred the construction of two nuclear reactors, Mr. Speaker, at Darlington avoiding \$15 billion in new construction costs. In June of 2013, Mr. Speaker, we renegotiated the green energy investment agreement with Samsung reducing contract costs by \$3.7 billion, Mr. Speaker. Also in December 2013, Mr. Speaker, we reduced feed-in tariff prices through annual reviews, saving ratepayers at least \$1.9 billion, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue the work that.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. For three years, people struggle today pay their hydro bills, but for three years Liberal friends got rich off more bad contracts. And we know according to Allison Jones from the Canadian press that it was Liberal polling firms Pollara and Gandalf that received large cheques to tell the government their policy wasn't working. Mr. Speaker, how much did the government pay these Liberal friends and the Liberals' campaign manager over those three years only to ignore that advice?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we were -- as I've said, we have made a very significant move in terms of removing 25% of people's electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. They will see those changes in the summer. But, Mr. Speaker, we were very aware that there was a need to take costs out of the system and to reduce people's bills, Mr. Speaker, long before we made the move on the 25%. So let me continue. In April of 2014, Mr. Speaker, we removed the debt retirement charge from people's bills saving the average family \$70 a year on their bills, Mr. Speaker. In March of 2015, Speaker, we introduced. That was a direct recognition that people were paying too much on their electricity bills. And a direct support for people who were paying too much on their electricity bills, particularly low-income families, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. We know David Hurley from the Gandalf group Liberals' campaign manager received at least \$3 million in contracts. Despite getting advice this electricity policy was very unpopular, Minister of Finance saying in the legislature his hydro bill was going down. We had the Minister of Energy saying there was absolutely no crisis. So we're paying millions for research that government ignores that research. So my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier -- if you're paying the Liberal campaign millions for research, ignoring that research three years ago is just -- is this just thanking Liberal friends with taxpayer dollars once again?

>> Premier Wynne: Minister of Energy.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to rise and talk about the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, in which all families will be getting a 25% reduction, you know, as well as businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to removing costs from the system, you know our government has demonstrated that very clearly, Mr. Speaker. For years and years, Mr. Speaker, we've been pulling costs out of the system. Since the 2010 long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker, we've been pulling costs out, Mr. Speaker. You can start talking about, you know, deferred nuclear plants, the renegotiated Samsung agreement, the competitive L.R.P. Process. Mr. Speaker. Again \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker, that we've pulled out of the system to ensure that the system that we've built, the system that we had to rebuild after they left it in tatters, Mr. Speaker, the cost of \$50 billion to make sure we find ways to pull costs out of the system, Mr. Speaker, and we know we have more work to do, Mr. Speaker, and that's what the fair hydro --

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