

Hansard: Brown to Wynne (Thibeault) -- Energy Rates - Fundraising

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. The **Premier's** Minister of energy said yesterday that this government has been tasked with finding ways to bring bills down. The Minister said he is going to save families \$2.45 by cancelling the next round of renewable contracts. But in fact he is not saving them a cent. He's just not going to raise prices. The definition of a saving is a reduction. No one is saving anything. Did I save \$25,000 this morning by not going out and buying a car? That's not how savings work. The government's logic is completely faulty. Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** come clean? Will she admit that this latest P.R. Stunt won't save families a cent?

>> **Premier Wynne:** So, Mr. Speaker, as I said we inherited an electricity system that had been badly neglected under the previous government, Mr. Speaker. Families and businesses across Ontario couldn't count on the electricity system, Mr. Speaker. It was dirty, Mr. Speaker. We shut down the coal-fired plants. It is 90% clean renewable energy now, Mr. Speaker. So by the elimination of coal, Mr. Speaker, we've avoided about \$4 billion in health care and related costs. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that kind of savings, that's direct savings to the people of the province. So, Mr. Speaker, we have made -- we've put in place initiatives to help people to deal with their bills, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the Ontario energy support program, whether it's the removal of the provincial portion of the H.S.T., whether it's the removal of the debt retirement charge, Mr. Speaker. All of those are initiatives that will help people and businesses to deal with their bills. We're further moving, Mr. Speaker, to take costs out of the system that will mean that there will be future cost avoidance.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**, and don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. I do applaud the government for finally realizing these renewable contracts that they signed were reckless and not in the best interests of Ontario. But the question, Mr. Speaker, is why did it take so long for this government to realize this? Is it because they milked 30 of these renewable energy companies for over \$1.3 million in donations to the Ontario Liberal party? It is clear these contracts were never what was in the best interests of Ontario. It was all about what's in the best interests of Liberal coffers. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is now that the **Premier** has acknowledged these renewable contracts for energy we couldn't use, had to give away to Pennsylvania and New York and Michigan, now that she's acknowledged that was a mistake, will the **Premier** consider. Apologizing to people of Ontario and giving back the \$1.3 million they took from these companies and help -- The families with their hydro bills?

>> **Min. Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it reckless, Mr. Speaker, that we have a party talking about energy with no plan. I want you to think, Mr. Speaker, just a few years ago we had to send warnings out to let people know that if they went outside, they would have difficulty breathing, Mr. Speaker. Breathing, Mr. Speaker. Breathing was difficult. But we've got a party on the other side that doesn't want to invest in that. They left a crumbling system, Mr. Speaker, for us to pick up. The 2013 long-term energy plan had forecasted some costs, Mr. Speaker, and we made

sure that we're removing those costs. They made fuel \$2.45 for families. That is important. I will find 50 cents and \$50, Mr. Speaker, to make sure we continue to help families, not to sit there and -- Make up --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the **Premier** again this question. I hope this time I can get an answer, not passing the buck. The reality is the government has acknowledged, has acknowledged that these contracts were reckless and unnecessary. The government has admitted that mistake. So my question is, given the fact that government has received, the Liberal party has received \$1.3 million in donations, because of these contracts that were a mistake, and also given the fact the auditor general said we are going to overpay by, hear this, \$9.2 billion because of these contracts the government has now acknowledged was a mistake. \$9.2 billion Ontario was going to overpay. Liberal party gets \$1.3 million. My direct question to the **Premier** -- and I hope she will answer it -- will she apologize to people of Ontario for taking \$1.3 million. To the Ontario Liberal party and causing Ontario to overpay on hydro by 9.2 -- Billion dollars.

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of renewable energy, our government is very proud of the electricity inics that we have in this province. 18,000 megawatts of renewable contracted or online. Ontario ranks first in Canada for installed wind capacity. More than 40% wind, Mr. Speaker. When we're talking about fund-raising Mr. Speaker -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope I have enough time to rhyme off the long list of the events that the leader of the opposition has done in fund-raising over the last little while. At the Albany club \$10,000 per person. Guests with the P.C. Health critic. That's \$500. At the metro Toronto convention centre --

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