

Hansard: Horwath to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro One & Hydro Affordability

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Andrea Horwath:** My next question's also for the **Premier**, Speaker. But I've got to say in October of 2014, this **Premier** says she wasn't selling off Hydro One and look where we are now. On Monday, I sat down with a woman named Marie Garo. Marie lives in Sudbury with her husband Chad and her two beautiful young daughters. Marie watched her hydro bills go up by nearly \$100 since the same time last year. The cost of hydro means that they cannot save for their kids' future and she's concerned about whether she can afford even entering them before- and after-school programs, like sports for example. Like people all across Ontario, the sell-off of Hydro One means life is getting tougher for folks like Marie, her husband Chad and their daughters. And it means it's harder for them to give the future that they want to give to their children. She's actually not putting money away in their resps because she's taking that money and using it.

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, again thanks to the leader of the third party for the question. And I know that it serves the leader of the third party's interests to conflate these subjects, Mr. Speaker. I know that she tries to make a link between electricity prices and the changes with Hydro One. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have made massive investment in the electricity system in Ontario. We have shut down the coal-fired plants. We have built over 10,000 kilometres of line, Mr. Speaker, and we've done that so that we could have a clean grid in this province a reliable grid, Mr. Speaker, and there's a cost associated with that and we recognize that and so we are working to take costs off of people's bills millimetre and help people like Marie and her family. We are also working to help a family like that so that they have the supports that they need, whether it's child care, Mr. Speaker. 100,000 new spaces of child care spaces. Whether it's tuition, Mr. Speaker. Making sure that by the time those -- Kids get to postsecondary they have the support that they need whether it's free tuition if they're low income, Mr. Speaker, or support that is they need. Those are the kind we're doing –

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Minister of energy the MPP For Sudbury stood right here in this House and said, quote, a 20% reduction for families in rural, remote and northern communities, like in my part of the province, will actually be a significant savings for many families, end quote. But people in Sudbury, Speaker, people in the Minister's own riding, people like Marie and Chad, are not getting those savings. Instead they're watching their bills go up and turning Hydro One into a private for-profit monopoly is only going to make it worse, regardless of what the **Premier** claims. We've seen it happen over and over and over in virtually every jurisdiction across North America. When you privatize your electricity system, the costs go up for the public. That's what happens. Whether she likes to admit it or not. So the question is will this **Premier** stop any further sell-off of Hydro One and ensure that people get a break?

>> **Min. Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and answer the leader of the third party's question. When it comes to the great riding of Sudbury, we have talked to the

families there, and all the families in the great riding of Sudbury will be receiving that 8% reduction, Mr. Speaker, if this legislation passes today. Part of the issue, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP Doesn't have a plan when it comes to energy so they don't understand the whole process. Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about northeastern Ontario, my part of the province, there are over 69,000 families, Mr. Speaker. That will be receiving that benefit, Mr. Speaker. And we're very proud of that, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to Hydro One, we can talk about we're on track, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we're going to realize the target of \$9 billion generated through the I.P.O. And let's talk about greater Sudbury again, Mr. Speaker. We can talk about investment after investment after investment. \$173 million -- \$26 million for Mele drive. 23 million dollars through ocip, Mr. Speaker. This is fantastic for the north and I'm very proud of --

>> Andrea Horwath: You if it's not just people, Speaker. This is Ontario small business week. Small businesses across the province cannot afford their hydro bills, Speaker. Wherever I go, whether it's Sudbury, whether it's Kingston, whether it's Hamilton, whether it's right here in Toronto, niagara - you name it, Speaker. I talk to small businesses everywhere and they're all telling me cost of hydro is the difference between growing or going out of business. According to the Ontario chamber of commerce, one in three small businesses, one in three say the cost of hydro has a negative impact on their ability to invest in the future of this province by investing in their businesses. They simply can't do it. Will this **Premier** give some hope and confidence to small business people and start getting hydro costs under control by stopping the sell-off of our hydro system, stopping the sell-off of Hydro One?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for highlighting small businesses and the importance of small businesses because we recognize that on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a look at a couple of examples, Mr. Speaker, about the programs that we are offering and how they support small businesses. Donald Lee's Irish pub in Barrie took advantage of the business refrigeration initiatives offered through power stream, Mr. Speaker, and they received more than \$2,500 in onetime incentives and will save them \$2,400 annually on energy. Arbour memorial a funeral happen has its head office in Toronto. They used incentives from the save on energy program to green their office upgrading their intensive hvac system. \$100,000 per year in savings, Mr. Speaker. Canada Malton company up in Thunder Bay, that I was able to attend through the save on energy program, they got \$2.5 million back. They're saving \$1 million a year, Mr. Speaker, in their energy program. We get small business on this side, Mr. Speaker, and we help small businesses.

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