

Hansard: Horwath to Premier -- Hydro Costs

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's for the **Premier**. Yesterday the **Premier** said and I quote -- we're confronting the reality that people have across the board seeing unacceptable increases unquote on their hydro bills. If it's unacceptable today, why has the **Premier** caused this unaffordable hydro crisis in Ontario hydro system?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know I'm really happy to talk about what has happened over the last number of years to improve the electricity system in Ontario. When we came into office under the previous **Premier** in 2003, we inherited a system that was degraded, Mr. Speaker. This actually is less of a partisan comment than the heckling from the opposition would suggest, because government after government, of different party stripes, Mr. Speaker, had not made the necessary investments in our electricity system. Had checked dirty coal running, Mr. Speaker. Had not invested in transmission lines, had not invest under new, clean, renewable energy, Mr. Speaker. That, as I said, that is not a partisan comment. That is something that was a reality. We inherited a system that was sorely in need of investment. We have made billions of dollars of investment, Mr. Speaker, and we -- Are now seeing the impact of that. People across the province have had a steep increase in electricity prices, and that's why we've been working to take those costs out of the system.

>> Andrea Horwath: What this **Premier** and her government have done is systematically break our electricity system in the province of Ontario, Speaker. That's what they have done. Yesterday the **Premier** said that hydro rates were unacceptable, but she accepted it when she signed off on the decision to cancel the gas plants. When she signed off on the decision to cancel the gas plants. She accepted it when she decide today privatize Hydro One -- decided to privatize Hydro One. She accepted it when she watched the cost of electricity has risen by 280% in the province of Ontario. This is a **Premier**, Speaker, that just doesn't get it and hasn't been getting it for far, far too long. If the hydro bills are too high, if they're unacceptable, why has she been causing them to go up for 14 years?

>> **Premier Wynne**: So, Mr. Speaker, let's be perfectly clear, what the leader of the third party is saying first of all is that she would not have made the investments that we made in this province. She would not have jump start add renewable industry in this province. She would not have shut down the coal-fired plants. She would not have invested in ten -- thousands of kilometres of line, Mr. Speaker. She would not have built new generation in this province. She would not have made those investments. And, Mr. Speaker, today, today what she would do is she would cancel, she would cancel the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, which would not take one cent off the electricity bill in this province. That is the solution. That the leader of the third party is putting forward, a solution that would not take one cent off one electricity bill.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I don't think it's acceptable that in a province like Ontario people have to choose between paying their rent or having their power cut off. It is not acceptable now, Speaker. It wasn't acceptable last year or the year before that. Families are at a crisis point all across this province. For people who have to choose between child care or hydro, paying their rent or their hydro bill, filling a prescription or paying for hydro. What does this **Premier** expect people to do?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, on this weekend grid it is unacceptable. That is exactly why we started last year making changes, Mr. Speaker. The 8% reduction is -- I understand. It is not enough. It is something but it is not enough. And that's why we are working -- the Minister of energy is working day and night literally with his officials to find ways to reduce the costs. But, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that those investments in the electricity system to make it clean, to make it renewable, to make it one of the leading clean grids in North America, Mr. Speaker. To suggest that that was not a reasonable investment, to connect people in the north, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we had a reliable grid, to suggest that that was not a good investment, I think that's irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. That would have been an irresponsible -- We need to lower people's electricity prices. We are looking for more ways to do that, Mr. Speaker. But we have a reliable clean grid in Ontario.

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