

Hansard: Horwath to Premier -- Hydro Rates-Hydro One

From: "Herman, Alan (CAB)" <alan.herman@ontario.ca>

To: "Codd-Downey, Beckie (GHLO)" <beckie.codd-downey@ontario.ca>, "Festeryga, Katherine (OPO)" <som.katherine.festeryga@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: Wed, 05 Oct 2016 11:00:40 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, for 100 years, reliable, affordable public electricity powered an economy that LED people from across the world to come to Ontario to build a life. It's one of the reasons my dad came here from Slovakia, but the cost of electricity today, Speaker, has businesses moving away, life getting harder and people losing hope. People are being forced, Speaker, to choose between necessities because their bills are so high. I believe in Ontario. And so do the people I talk with every day. But they need to see change and they need to see it now, Speaker. Will this **Premier** listen to what people need and stop the privatization of Hydro One?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the third party talks about the history of in province. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, if Conservative and NDP Governments had made the investments that were necessary in our electricity and in our infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't have been in the mess that we were in by 2003. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, we had to invest in a neglected electricity system. It needed to be cleaner. It needed to be upgraded. We did that, Mr. Speaker. And we recognize that there's a cost associated with that, but we also recognize that had we not made the decisions that we made, had we not shut down the coal-fired plants, had we not invested in renewable energy, Mr. Speaker, we would not have the clean air that we have now, Mr. Speaker. We would not have avoided \$4 billion in health care and associated costs, Mr. Speaker. And the decision around Hydro One, we have not made that decision. We would not be able to invest in the infrastructure that again, Mr. Speaker. Had been neglected by previous governments.

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, had we not had consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments privatizing our electricity system, we wouldn't have -- That we have in the province of Ontario today. Let me tell you about Ernest Warner, Speaker. He lives in my riding. He and his wife are retired and they are on a fixed income. Ernie's got in touch with my office because his wife is on dialysis and they've seen their hydro bill increase by 20% in just the last couple of months. Ernie wrote, quote -- my last bill was for \$540 plus an added \$220 in the so-called delivery and regulatory charges. They don't qualify for any help, Speaker. They don't qualify but they still need to run that dialysis machine whether it's peak hours or not. She needs that dialysis. The Warners cannot afford privatization. Will this **Premier** stop any further privatization of Hydro One?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me just address the issue of the family who was this this distress, Mr. Speaker. I hope that there's been a full exploration by them with the help of the leader of the third party, to look at what actually they might qualify -- because there are a number of programs. And I don't know the details of the situation, Mr. Speaker, but in terms of the Ontario energy support program, the property tax and electricity credit, Mr. Speaker. They certainly will qualify for the 8% reduction on their bill. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that in a situation like that, that is a family that does need support, and as I've said I hope that there will be a full exploration with them of what the options might be.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this **Premier's** not listening once again. They don't qualify for any of the programs. They still have to put the dialysis machine on. They can't afford to do that. Students can't afford to pay for hydro and pay off their student loans. Families can't afford to pay for hydro and pay for child care in this province at the same time. But instead of stopping the sell-off of Hydro One, the **Premier** is now greasing the wheel for the privatization of local hydro -- Now greasing the wheel for the sell-off of local hydro utilities. People cannot afford privatized for-profit hydro in the province of Ontario. Will the **Premier** stop all of these sell-offs now?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many programs that are out in the province right now to help families that are having a difficult time, Mr. Speaker, with some of the costs, with electricity and we recognize that, Mr. Speaker. That's why we acted with our three-point plan, Mr. Speaker, to help them come January 1st when we get the legislation passed to ensure there's a 8% reduction, 20% reduction for families in rural and remote communities, Mr. Speaker. It's also very important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the oesp program is there to help families that need to use medical equipment. It goes up to \$75 a month, Mr. Speaker, so I encourage every MPP And every family that needs this type of assistance, Mr. Speaker, to follow up with their local utility because they can make sure that there are systems in place to help these families, Mr. Speaker. Together the utilities and the government are working together to continue to help families, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to Toronto hydro, Mr. Speaker, that's a decision for council. We've been saying that over and over again.

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