

Hansard: Horwath to Thibeault -- Hydro-Meters

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: For the Premier, Speaker. The privatized Hydro One has applied for many rate increases already, including a plan that will hurt first nations communities in the far north. It's also planning to invest more than \$6 billion in a dirty coal-burning American power company instead of putting that money to work right here in Ontario, upgrading our power system for Ontario families. And now, instead of respecting the ban on wintertime disconnections, Hydro One is trying to find a way around t.why is this Premier still defending this private for-profit company that so clearly is not working in the best interests of families and businesses in Ontario?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no way around the law, Mr. Speaker. Hydro One cannot find a way around the winter disconnection program, Mr. Speaker. The law is in place. There will be no winter disconnection once it starts. They make tup as they go along, Mr. Speaker. That's very clear. When it comes to evista, Mr. Speaker, as we said before rates won't be affected here in Ontario. It won't affect local jobs either, and it doesn't affect the maintenance that Hydro One is doing on a day-to-day basis day-to-day maintenance of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, making sure that we have some of the cleanest and most reliable power in North America because, Mr. Speaker, we no longer have coal on our system and we're working to continue to have a partner, Mr. Speaker, and that's what Hydro One is doing. When you look at evista they've made sure that they're lowering their consumption. When it comes to being the tip of the spear, everyone looks to Ontario to be the one they want to represent.

>> Andrea Horwath: Last week the Minister of economic development and growth said this about prepay hydro meters and I quote -- they're not evil. There's nothing that affects vulnerable people in any way about this. That's not true, Speaker. When someone gets hyped on their hydro payments right now, the hydro companies will work with that person. They'll work with that fame to try -- family to try to find an appropriate repayment schedule that works with that person's budget. But with the prepay meter, the option is completely removed. It's either feed the meter or go without power. That's what's going to happen. How can this Premier actually endorse a plan that means vulnerable families could actually have their hydro cut off?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was this Premier who actually created the plan, who worked on a plan that actually helped low-income families reduce their bills by 25% or even more, Mr. Speaker, and it's that party that voted against it. It's this Premier and this government that worked on a plan that brought forward a 40 to 50%

reduction for those northern and rural customers, and it's that party that voted against it, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to protecting ratepayers, when it comes to having the best interests of the people of Ontario at heart, it's this Premier and this government, Mr. Speaker, and the actions that we have taken are representative of that fact, Mr. Speaker. When the opposition can continue to vote against things and fear monger, that's a scary thing, Mr. Speaker, because at the end of the day, there is no such plan in place. It is being looked at right now. The O.E.B. Is considering it, and if it is considered, Mr. Speaker, if it is considered by the O.E.B., then it is an opt-in program and people will choose it if it's benefit for them and nobody else, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, prepay meters are also extremely expensive to install. This Liberal government has already wasted millions on not so smart meters. I can't understand why they would want to repeat that unfortunate incident again. The bottom line is that the private energy system in Ontario isn't working for families or businesses in this province. Rates have gone up 300% under this government. Power producers are gaming Liberal energy regular late tors for millions – regulators, and the private Hydro One wants to install prepay meters that would hurt vulnerable Ontarians. Will this Premier support a ban on Margaret thatcher-style prepay hydro meters in our province?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I need to repeat, there is no repaid plan coming into place. The O.E.B. Is reviewing it, Mr. Speaker, and they will then make a decision. If the decision of the O.E.B., Mr. Speaker, is to allow this to move forward, they will then do this with the decision of making sure that they're keeping the best interests of ratepayers at heart. It is their mandate, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they keep costs as low as possible for all ratepayers. And if they do decide to do this Mr. Speaker – and that's our quasi-judicial organization that makes sure that they look at the impacts that this will have on ratepayers – if they make that decision, then it is still the customer's choice, Mr. Speaker. If this is something that they want to do. There is no backroom movement, Mr. Speaker, like the NDP Constantly say will happen. This is a plan that people will have an opportunity to choose to do if it actually gets approved and moved forward by the O.E.B., Mr. Speaker. There still is nothing moving forward on this.

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