

Hansard: Sattler to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the **Premier**. Last month more than 100 people attended a hydro town hall in my riding of London west. They shared the anxiety they felt every time they opened their hydro bill. They shared their fears for the future of their children and grandchildren because of the \$40 billion hydro debt the Liberals are passing along. Many at the town hall, like Steve Everett and his wife, were seniors living on fixed incomes, who have been hit hard by soaring hydro bills. Since the Everetts' rent doesn't include electricity they are doing everything they possibly can to cut back their usage. They do their laundry off peak and only turn the lights on when absolutely necessary. Over the winter, they even shut off their electric heat, using blankets and a ceramic heater instead and dressing in layers to keep warm. But still they -- \$200 a month on top of their \$800 monthly rent. Speaker, why is the **Premier** planning to implement a scheme that will Jack up. Hydro rates even higher than they are now?

>> **Premier** Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the member in her town hall had the opportunity to tell this family particularly about the fact that they will see their electricity bill come down an average of 25%, Mr. Speaker, if the legislation passes. I hope that she also had the opportunity to make sure that they are signed up for the Ontario electricity support program, Mr. Speaker, so that they would be able to benefit from a further reduction, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the -- I hope that the member also, also made it clear that we were moving to put rent control in place. I don't know when the building they live in was built, Mr. Speaker, but I hope she assures the group we are moving to put rent control in place for all buildings, all private rentals across the province. I hope she made sure they got all of that information at the town hall, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Sattler: Again to the **Premier**, Speaker. It's not only renters who are being affected by the Liberal government's hydro fiasco. London homeowners are also starting to worry that they will lose their homes. Kurt and Phyllis Gopaul from London are seniors who live on fixed monthly incomes of \$1,475. Their hydro and gas bills are eating up more than \$400 a month, almost one third of their monthly income. They applied for the oesp but they were told they don't qualify. They are worried that skyrocketing energy bills will make it impossible for them to afford their bills and force them to have to give up -- Speaker, instead of a \$40 billion borrowing scheme that will cost hydro bills to soar, will the **Premier** listen to the concerns raised by Londoners? Will she reverse the privatization of Hydro One and bring down hydro rates once and for all?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So a few things in relation to the Honourable member's question. If passed the Ontario fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, will reduce that seniors couple bill by 25%, Mr. Speaker. One of the other things that the Ontario fair hydro plan does, Mr. Speaker, is it enhanced the Ontario electricity support program so more people can qualify for that program. Right now, Mr. Speaker, 192,000 families qualify for this program. We want more families on this, specifically seniors. They can see another \$580 reduced, Mr. Speaker, on top of

their bill when it comes to the 25%. That's significant, Mr. Speaker, when you butt those -- put those two together. When you're making sure this relief is sustainable for the next four years that relief is staying at the comfort of inflation. We will ensure it stays as low as possible moving forward.

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