

RE: Hansard: MPP Tabuns to Premier - Hydro One sale and electricity costs

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Date: Wed, 31 May 2017 11:11:16 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, to the **Premier**. This session the **Premier** has done nothing but plow ahead with her own agenda to try and save herself and her party before the next election. Take hydro for example. The **Premier** went ahead with her wrong-headed Hydro One sell-off, even though 80% of Ontarians are against it. Does the **Premier** think she knows more than 80% of Ontarians? [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you. **Premier**?

Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know, I've had the opportunity over the last couple of days to talk about specifically these changes that we are making to labour laws and employment standards, Mr. Speaker, and for the minimum wage. And all of that, Mr. Speaker, is part of a plan. It's part of the reality that government, in my opinion, exists to help people. It exists to do things that we cannot do alone. [Applause] Government exists to make society more fair. So whether that's free tuition for students who will see that this fall, over 200,000 students will go to College and university. They will get free or better-than-free tuition, Mr. Speaker. Whether it is cutting people's electricity bills, whether it's building 100,000 new child care spaces, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's raising the minimum wage. And making sure part time and full-time workers are paid the same. All of that about is fair Ontario. That's what we've been doing, Mr. Speaker.

Tabuns: I'm not surprised the **Premier** doesn't want to talk about Hydro One. Under this Liberal government, hydro rates have gone up by a staggering 300%. Under this **Premier** alone, rates have gone up 50%. Instead of doing something to fix the mess that she's helped create in our hydro system, the **Premier** signed Ontario families and businesses onto a \$45 billion borrowing scheme that will cause our hydro bills to soar even higher. What does the **Premier** have to say to the people who will be hurt by her scheme? [Applause]

Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know, I know the member opposite. I know him quite well, and I know that he is committed to, for example, building transit, Mr. Speaker. I know that he believes in infrastructure building. I also know that he recognizes that over many years, because he knows a lot about the electricity system in Ontario. Over many years, government after government did not make the investments in the electricity system in Ontario that were needed. The system was degraded. By the time we came into office in 2003 under the previous **Premier**, Mr. Speaker, there had to be investments in order to upgrade the system. We made those investments, Mr. Speaker, and we are paying now for those in this generation and we believe that it is more fair to pay for those investments over a longer period of time. **Premier Wynne:** That's what we're doing in order that people can see some relief right now and they will see that relief come this summer, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Tabuns: Speaker, indeed I do know the system and privatization is daning the hydro in

this province. Damaging it. [Applause] The **Premier** didn't even give the people of Ontario or the opposition, for that matter, reasonable time to have their say about her hydro scheme. She's ramming it through the House in a little over two weeks. Two weeks. For legislation that will affect our lives for three decades to come. Why does the **Premier** insist on limiting public input and opposition debate on our hydro scheme? What is she afraid of?

Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there has been an enormous debate and discussion around this province about the cost of electricity. The member opposite knows that. We're moving forward to give people relief by this summer, Mr. Speaker, because we know that that will help people and it will help small businesses on main streets all over the province, Mr. Speaker. They will see a reduction in their electricity costs and people in more rural and remote communities will see up to a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it was an important decision to move ahead, Mr. Speaker. I also know that the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, was part of our plan to invest in the people of this province, invest in infrastructure. We were not, as the member opposite is I believe, Mr. Speaker, constrained by an ideology that says that never work with the private sector. Do not trust the private sector, Mr. Speaker. **Premier Wynne:** I believe that the way society works is that government, private sector, civil society works together to improve a lot of lives for the people of Ontario.

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