

FW: Hansard: Fife to Thibeault -- Hydro Rates and Seniors

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **MPP Fife:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the **Premier**. This morning you have heard the voices of Ontarians from across the province and the negative impact of hydro costs. A few weeks ago while knocking on doors I met Liz and Kenneth who told me they can't get relief from their bills. Kenneth was diagnosed with a chronic lung disease. **Liz quit her job to become his primary caregiver. He is on oxygen machines 24 hours a day. Their bills have more than doubled. In January 2017 their bill was 623 dollars. They do not qualify for any of your government's hydro relief programs. They are on one pension. They have no other options. Premier, what is your plan to help Liz and Kenneth?**

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Honourable member for bringing up that family's situation because it is one of the situations, Mr. Speaker, that we are acting on right now. I do recognize that the Honourable member talked about the oesp program and that they don't qualify. So we are looking at that program and seeing ways we can enhance it. One of the things they'll get is that 8% rebate. That's one of the things I know they'll get right now. But we are working actively to try to find other ways to bring forward rate mitigation to help not only that family because there are other families across the province that need help. We recognize that. We're going to make sure that we act on that.

>> MPP Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure the Minister of energy fully understands the gravity of the situation. Their hydro bill was 289 dollars in 2014. Today it was 623 dollars. That is cost that can't be absorbed by an elderly couple living on a pension income, a fixed income. As I pointed out, 24 hours a day oxygen is not optional for them to use your peak times. What this family should be focussed on is keeping Ken healthy and focussing on his health. Instead their primary concern, their number 1 point of stress in their lives is their hydro bill. **Premier**, I ask you again today, do you have a plan that can help Liz and Kenneth cope with the skyrocketing hydro cost in the province of Ontario.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2003 that family wouldn't have been able to use their oxygen because the power would have been out on a regular basis. We made sure we invested in a system that will ensure the power is there. We'll making sure, Mr. Speaker, that we'll continue to find ways to reduce rates. We're working on. That we'll make sure we can have rate mitigation in the very new future.

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