

Hansard: Brown to Premier - Hydro costs

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. Michelle Michel, a gentleman in Ottawa- Vanier, called the Liberal campaign headquarters just the other day. Like most people, he was fed up with his hydro rates. Michel asked the Liberal campaign about his hydro bill. And can you imagine what he was told? Someone in that office told him to lower his thermostat and wear a coat. Mr. Speaker, is that the Liberals' new solution to skyrocketing hydro rates? She -- **should everyone simply have to turn down the thermostat and wear a coat inside in winter? Are they that out of touch?**

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly expect that any -- any resident of any part of the province, but certainly in a by-election, Mr. Speaker, I would expect that any resident who calls any of the offices of the parties involved would get the information, Mr. Speaker. And in this case the reality is that we are working very hard to reduce people's electricity costs, Mr. Speaker. We know that the cost associated with the rebuilding of the system, which we inherited, Mr. Speaker, which was degraded, had not been invested in, had not been kept up, Mr. Speaker, was dirty. The electricity grid was dirty, Mr. Speaker. The work that we have done, to shut down the coal fired plants, to rebuild over 10,000 kilometres of line, Mr. Speaker, to clean up the electricity grid and make it reliable, there's a cost associated with that. And we are working to take costs out of the system for people across the province, Mr. Speaker.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**. It makes me shake my head to think that that's an acceptable answer to just wear a coat in your own home. Now the Royal Victoria hospital in Barrie is doing their best to lower their energy use. That's because they're seeing a six-figure increase in their hydro bills this coming year. The hospital will see a four to 6% increase in the hydro cost. It will cost the hospital approximately \$200,000. In the local media in "The Barrie advance"

R.D.H. Spokesperson caulking said we know hydro rates are going up but we have to keep the lights on in the hospitals. But what expense? Should money not be going to frontline care instead of forcing hospitals to struggle to pay their hydro bills? Mr. Speaker, . Tell us what she's doing to help hospitals that are struggling to pay their hydro bills?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thanks very much. Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted that the leader of the opposition has made the connection between electricity and health care. Mr. Speaker, because I know that he knows that the shutting down of the coal-fired plants, Mr. Speaker, Brown outs and blackouts and smog days, Mr. Speaker, to no smog days means, Mr. Speaker, that we've hit \$4 billion in health care costs. [Applause] And kids with asthma, Mr. Speaker. People with respiratory disease have a much easier time breathing in this province because of the work that we've done. Thank you for asking that question. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. When it comes to Michel in Ottawa-Vanier, it's wear a coat. When it comes to a hospital that's struggling to pay their hydro bills, it's more Liberal spin trying to say everything is fine. Everything is rosy. It isn't. Working hospitals having to fire nurses because of hydro bills. It's not right. It's not appropriate.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, let me share with you to the **Premier** another hydro horror story. Adrian in Smith's falls. Adrian has autism and is on odsp. She shares the cost of living with her mother, a pensioner. They live in a small wartime House and are energy wise as they can be. But their hydro bill is almost the same as their mortgage payment. They are juggling other bills but they can't make ends meet. Adrian says they can't afford to live and that's not hyperbole. That's the legacy of this **Premier** because of the unmitigated failure of her hydro policies. So my question, Mr. Speaker, to the **Premier**. Does she really want energy poverty to be her legacy for

Premier Wynne: So, Mr. Speaker, as I said the work that we have done to clean up the air in this province, Mr. Speaker, to make a clean electricity grid, to rebuild a system that was degraded has a cost associated with it. We recognize that. So Adrian and all the people across the province who are struggling with their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker, we recognize they need support. That's why we have taken the debt retirement charge off their bills. Mr. Speaker. It's why in January there will be an 8% reduction across the province. It's why we've put in place programs to help people on low middle incomes. Mr. Speaker, with support on their electricity bills. We recognize there's a challenge. Mr. Speaker. We recognize that there needs to be support, which is exactly why we have made the changes that we have made.

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