

Hansard: Brown to Premier -- Hydro Advertising

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. This Liberal government has no business in possibly spending millions of hard earned taxpayer dollars on self-promoting hydro ads. They are blatantly partisan and they are literally radio stations and social media in a sad attempt to save this government's falling popularity. Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** do the right thing and stop spending public dollars on these advertisements and order that they be cancelled today? Yes or no?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I've been travelling the province. I've been talking to people for months, Mr. Speaker, including last week and people are very, very concerned about their hydro bills, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the opposition knows that. He knows, Mr. Speaker, as does the third party, they know that people are looking for relief, that the work that we have done up until now, Mr. Speaker, that there's more that we need to do. That's why the 25% reduction is very important. So, Mr. Speaker, we're moving ahead with our plan. I would have thought that, given the knows from the other side, Mr. Speaker, they understand that people are concerned about their electricity bills, that they would be supportive of the changes that we are bringing forward, Mr. Speaker, that -- Will give real relief to people across the province.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. As the **Premier** travels the province, no one is asking for more government vanity ads. The Liberal government has a bad track record, a long track

record of misusing taxpayer-funded ads for partisan purposes. We all remember the \$8.1 million in self-congratulatory ads for the job-killing pension scheme that never came to fruition. \$8.1 million just to tax and sell -- Mr. Speaker, how many millions of dollars is this government going to waste on more self-congratulatory radio ads?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, you know the two issues that the leader of the opposition has raised, retirement security for people across the province and lower electricity rates, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely proud of our record on delivering both of those, Mr. Speaker. The reality is -- The reality is that the leader -- this leader of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, sat in a federal government for nine -- The federal government, Mr. Speaker, for nine years. They wouldn't even talk to the province about retirement security. We couldn't talk about Canada pension plan enhanced position, Speaker. We moved on that. We now have a national agreement on pension enhancement, Mr. Speaker. Because of the work that we did on the ortc, Mr. Speaker. In addition we're going to deliver lower electricity rates, Mr. Speaker.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. It really is unbelievable. People can't afford their hydro bills. This government is spending millions on vanity ads self promoting their own agenda. I want to read a quote from the auditor general. The ads likely would not have been approved under the old government advertising rule. That's Bonnie Iysyk. Changes the Liberals enacted in 2015 reduce her office to a rubber stamp. I'll continue to quote from the auditor general -- It would likely not have passed because it does convey a positive impression of the current government and it's more a pat-on-the-back type of advertising. Those rules were put into place to prevent Liberal wasting taxpayer dollars on vanity ads. They changed the rules so they could use taxpayer dollars to promote themselves. The government can dance, point the finger, the government can avoid answering the questions. For years they complained about these type of ads when they were in opposition. Change the rules to not allow this to happen, and now they're doing the same thing. Mr. Speaker, to the **Premier**. Are you going to continue with these vanity ads?

>> **Premier Wynne:** This is a very important issue, and the reality is that, when this government came into office under my predecessor, there were virtually no rules around partisan advertising, Mr. Speaker. And in fact I can remember sitting in this gallery and listening to the Liberal opposition -- I can remember sitting in this gallery, Mr. Speaker, when the Liberal opposition was asking the then Tory government about advertising that had the Premier's face in it, Mr. Speaker, that was all over. There were kids out of school because there were strikes, Mr. Speaker. There were hospitals being closed. The amalgamations were being imposed. Mr. Speaker. Chaos was raining and the Premier of the day had his face all over advertising. We changed those rules, Mr. Speaker.

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