

Hansard: Fife to Matthews --Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **MPP Fife:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Skyrocketing hydro prices continue to negatively impact the lives of Ontarians and businesses. This is to the acting **Premier**. **The Peterborough Examiner** is reporting a popular restaurant Roland's will close in April after a half century in business. Closing after 50 years. Peter burger the owner cited rising hydro costs as part of the reason behind the decision and I quote -- the hydro bill has more than doubled in the last two to three years even with energy consumption going down. Monthly bills went from \$2,500 a month to \$7,000 a month. Speaker, my question is to the acting **Premier**. Why did your government sit back for four years, according to your own pollina, and watch high hydro costs negatively impact businesses and jobs across this great province and do nothing?

>> **Minister Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker. And once again, we have an example of a business in this province who would benefit from reduced hydro prices. Businesses across this province, farm, residential owners, Speaker, people across this province are already benefitting and will benefit even more. Speaker, from our plan to reduce prices. Our plan provides for fast relief, substantial relief, widespread long lasting relief. Unfortunately the NDP Plan just doesn't pass the test. It is riddled with stats. It is rid wld ambiguity, Speaker. You don't do one thing to take one cent off one bill in this province, Speaker. They want to spend \$4 billion. You don't do one thing to take one cent off one bill in this province, Speaker. They want to spend \$4 billion.

>> **MPP Fife:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Now we haven't seen this **Premier's** plan, a plan that they haven't had the decency to introduce in legislation and bring to the people of this province. This **Premier's**

scheme won't save Roland or any of the other businesses that we heard about when the Ontario chamber of commerce was here on Monday. It's too late. Your governments did nothing for too long. The owner of Roland's pointed out that he cooks with natural gas with a high hydro cost for a turning point in his decision to close after 50 years. Speaker, what does this government say to the businesses who can't afford their hydro bills or to the employees who are going to be losing their jobs in this province?

>> Minister Matthews: Speaker, we're saying very, very clearly that hydro rates are coming down in Ontario. They've already come down by 8%. They're coming down to bring the total to an average of 25%, Speaker. More for people in rural and remote areas. More for people with low income, Speaker. We are making substantial changes to the electricity system to provide relief for exactly the kind of people we hear about in this legislature. But the NDP, Speaker, their biggest idea is to spend \$4 billion. That's \$4 billion taking away from schools and hospitals to buy Hydro One shares on the market. That would not take one cent off anyone's bill. Speaker, he has said on March 1st, there's no evidence that keeping it public would make this particular problem any better. Under the NDP Proposal, low-income Ontarians are being asked to wait and see.

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