

Hansard: Horwath to Thibeault -- Toronto Hydro/Hydro One

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Deputy Premier, Speaker. Yesterday the Liberals and the Conservatives once again voted in favour of privatizing Hydro One and helping to privatize local utilities, local hydro utilities. So can the government tell the people on what page of their platform did it say that they were going to dole out tax give aways worth over \$100 million to help privatize even more hydro utility in this province including Toronto hydro?

>> **Min. Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased to stand and rise to answer this question, because I know the platform talked about jobs and growth, Mr. Speaker, and the investments that we're making with you know the broadening of the sale of Hydro One, Mr. Speaker. I know I didn't have enough time last -- the last time so let me continue, Mr. Speaker. The Hurontario L.R.T. In Mississauga and Brampton will provide 20 kilometres of new modern reliable rapid transit beginning in 2022, Mr. Speaker. \$1.4 billion investment, Mr. Speaker, by this government. Another \$1 billion will support phase 2 of Ottawa's L.R.T. Expansion, Mr. Speaker. And I know, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about \$173 million coming to help expand highway 69 to four lanes. Mr. Speaker, that's doing great things for us in the north. Not only does making our highway safer much it's actually bringing more jobs and growth to our community because we have opportunities for businesses to see it's part of the 400 series of highways, Mr. Speaker. I want to really thank the Minister from transportation for seeing the importance of that and investing in that, Mr. Speaker. Because we're doing great things right across the province, building jobs and building this province up, Mr. Speaker.

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, everywhere I go in Ontario people tell me that they can't afford their hydro bills. This government is not understanding where the people of this province are at. They tell me that they are bitterly, bitterly disappointed in the **Premier** and her party because the hydro sell-

off is making life harder for folks instead of making life better. And that is not what was promised to them during the last election, Speaker. When people tell me they can't afford privatized Hydro One or the sell-off of local hydro, their local hydro company, it begs the question for me. Think these people are wrong? Does the government think Ontarians are wrong when they're saying we shouldn't be selling off our hydro system?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only thing that's wrong, Mr. Speaker, is the understanding that the NDP has when it comes to the broadening of Hydro One. The O.E.B. sets the rates, Mr. Speaker. The sell-off and the broadening of the sale has nothing to do with it, Mr. Speaker. But we do, we do recognize, Mr. Speaker, that some families are having a difficult time with their electricity bills and so, Mr. Speaker, we have those six programs in place the O.E.S. D. program, Mr. Speaker, the leap program, you know, the -- we also have the northern Ontario tax credit, Mr. Speaker. We eliminated the debt retirement charge, Mr. Speaker, and on top of that, on top of that, Mr. Speaker, we actually brought forward our speech from the throne, which actually is having an 8% reduction for all families right across the province and for 330,000 families living in rural, remote and northern communities they will also see a 20% reduction, Mr. Speaker. So we've actually recognized that some families are having difficulty and we put in place programs to help, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what the Liberals don't understand is what 80% of the people of in province want and that is to maintain add public electricity system in the province of Ontario. For our generation and generations to come. That's what they don't understand. They want to know that there's going to be a good future for them, Speaker, a good future for them and their families right here in the province of Ontario. They know the Conservatives aren't the answer. They know that will lead to more cuts and more privatization but they feel that the Liberals have let them down, Speaker, in a very, very big way. Instead of stopping the sell-off of Hydro One the government is taking that bad idea and one upping it by clearing the way for the sell-off of local distribution companies, of local hydro companies. Speaker, people want hope for the future. Will this government stop the privatization of our electricity system. And do what 80% of the people in this province actually want?

>> Min. Thibeault: Speaker, what the people of Ontario want is actually jobs and growth, Mr. Speaker, and this government is delivering. We're building this province up, Mr. Speaker. You know what? Again they're not understanding the concept, Mr. Speaker, that we have a quasi-judicial organization called the O.E.B. Which is our regulator, Mr. Speaker, and the regulator is the one that sets the rates, Mr. Speaker. But what we've done, Mr. Speaker, by building infrastructure, we're making sure that we're creating jobs and growth right across the province but we've also invested, Mr. Speaker, heavily in renewables. We have 18,000 megawatts of renewable energy in this province, Mr. Speaker. You know what's really important is the 4.3 -- yes exactly but the \$4.3 billion, Mr. Speaker, that we're saving in health care costs and you know what? This year the Toronto vital signs report come out, Mr. Speaker, and let me quote. In Toronto premature deaths and hospitalizations as a result of air pollution have dropped. By 23 and 41% since 2004. That's a record, Mr. Speaker, that everyone should be proud of.

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