

Question Period

TBS Business Lines

June 1-May1, 2017

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June 1, 2017

MPP Tabuns to the Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, to the Premier. The Premier has show Ontarians time and too many again, throughout this session that she simply

doesn't get what they're going through. Families are at a tipping point when it comes to things like keeping up with their skyrocketing hydro bills. But instead of helping, the Premier has put herself and her party first by ramming through a borrowing scheme that she knows will call -- cause bills to soar even higher than they are now. When will the Premier apologize to Ontarians. For putting her political agenda ahead of the very real struggles of the people of Ontario?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, my plan, our plan for the people of Ontario is to invest in this province, to grow the economy, to work with business, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that young people have access to education, an excellent education from preschool right through to postsecondary, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that families have access to child care, to make sure that kids have access to the medication that they need and their families can afford to look after them, Mr. Speaker. To make sure that kids have access to all of the services that they need and families have the support they need, including, including a reduction in their electricity prices, Mr. Speaker. A reduction that will happen this summer, not in the distant future if a federal government should dare to agree with them as the NDP Plan would have, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is to make sure that people have the resources that they need and that they are able to take part in the economic growth of this province, Mr. Speaker. That's what our fair workplace plan is about. That's what our fair hydro plan is about. That's what our fair housing plan is about.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the Premier. The Premier is focused on bringing up her dismal poll numbers. This became obvious when, even after the financial accountability officer confirmed that her hydro borrowing scheme would mean higher not lower bills for families and businesses, she rammed it through the House anyway. This plan is not good for everyday Ontarians. It is good for those at the top though. Why is the Premier more concerned about her wealthy bay street friend than she is about the people who voted for her?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's the last day in the legislature before we go on to the summer portion of our -- I'm not going to say break because I know that everyone in this legislature's going to be working very hard once the House rises. But because it's the last day, Mr. Speaker, I really have to say this. I know that the opposition parties believe that by making a personal attack and raising the issue of my personal polling numbers, that somehow that's going to get under my skin and that's a good political tactic. Here's a news flash, Mr. Speaker. I know what the polls say. I understand that, and I am absolutely focused on doing what's in the best interests of the people of this province. Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the Premier. That was strangely nixonian I have to say, Speaker. Speaker, families and businesses have been telling the Premier for years now that they can't afford more hydro rate hikes. Yet she has pushed ahead with the sell-off of Hydro One and her borrowing scheme, both of which will, will drive up hydro rates. Why is the Premier ignoring what Ontarians are telling her?hikes. Yet she has pushed ahead with the sell-off of Hydro One and her borrowing scheme,

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about what happened in the House yesterday, Mr. Speaker. We voted in a plan that's going to reduce everyone's rates by 25% on average. They voted against that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to makings sure that you have in place a program to help the most vulnerable in this province when it comes to lowering rates, Mr. Speaker, both opposition parties voted against it, Mr. Speaker. First nations, first nations on reserve individuals who many live in abject poverty, Mr. Speaker. We're reducing their rates. One of the things that they did, Mr. Speaker, they voted against it. We make sure with our plan that we're helping every single family in this province. That's something they continue to vote against.

MPP Gelinas to the Premier (Hospital Funding)

>> MPP France Gelinas: My question is for the Premier. Well, it's not just our electricity system that the Premier's Liberal government has made worse. After years of frozen hospital budgets and cuts to frontline health care staff, the Premier's 2017 budget short changes hospitals again, this time by about \$300 million short change. Why is the Premier so intent on keeping our hospitals chronically underfunded?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think that the member opposite knows that there is -- in our 2017 budget, a 3.1% increase to those hospital budgets, those operating budgets across the board, Mr. Speaker, and at least a 2% increase for every hospital in the province, Mr. Speaker. On top of that there's I think it's \$9 billion, Mr. Speaker, that will be available for construction and capital costs, Mr. Speaker. So we absolutely recognize the critical work that done by hospitals. We also recognize that there was a need on top of the more than \$450 million that we put in year funding onto hospital based funding last year, Mr. Speaker, that there needed to be an increase in hospital operations. We put that in the budget in recognition of those concerns, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Gelinas: Budget freezes and cuts to frontline staff leads to overcrowding. It leads to pour quality care. It leads to hallway medicine. Hospitals like the ones in Thunder Bay or Sault Ste. Marie are in constant state of gridlock. We've seen occupancy rate of 120% in acute care units, and people receiving treatment in hallways, TV rooms, shower rooms, storage area, patient lounge and the list goes on. The

Premier's constant cuts to health care is hurting people. The very people she is supposed to help. Why does the Premier refuse to properly fund our hospitals?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, when we provide a 5% increase to the operating budget of the Sault hospital you just referenced, this year, \$6 million -- more than \$6 million. When health sciences north in Sudbury received an additional \$6 million as well this fiscal year, in a budget that provides more than half a billion new dollars to our hospitals to help them address those issues that are most pressing to them. And, Mr. Speaker, it boggles my mind when the member opposite would argue so vehemently in support of increasing hospital budgets, yet she voted against a budget that does exactly that. Mr. Speaker, we have a long list of hospitals, and I'm happy to go through, which received this year -- Substantial increases in funding.

>> MPP Gelinas: What does hospital underfunding look like? Well, let me tell you about Anisha from my riding. What does his H.S.N. Look like? His first two days was on a stretcher in E.R. Then he was moved to a TV room. What he told me was that it was humiliating, embarrassing and a demeaning experience that he never wants to have to go through again. Unfortunately Mr. Chartrand is just one of literally hundreds of people from across the province that have suffered the same indignity because of our hospital overcrowding, because of underfunding by this government. When will the Premier stop the cuts and finally invest in people's health and dignity? Minister Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we just did last week in a budget that that member voted against and her party voted against. Mr. Speaker, I know that I think perhaps she's imagining what an NDP Government would look like. She might be imagining 1994 when the NDP Announced a \$53 million cut to 10 of Ontario's psychiatric hospitals, representing 17%, a 17% cut in those hospitals. Or, Mr. Speaker, she might be remembering the last time that they were in government when they delisted 10% of all the drugs that were provided to Ontarians. By the way more drugs were delisted by that government than in their meager proposal to add 125 essential drugs in their so-called pharmacare plan, Mr. Speaker. They closed 24% of the acute hospital beds in the province. They closed as I mentioned 13% of the mental health beds. And they reduced hospital funding in their last year. Thankfully their last year as government.

MPP Vernile to Minister Chiarelli (Infrastructure Spending)

>> MPP Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of infrastructure. Every member of this House knows that our province is well into an unprecedented period of investment and infrastructure where building and repairing critical public infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and public transit because we're committed to making life better in Ontario. In my own riding of Kitchener Centre just last week I announced \$2.3

million to repair sewers and deliver clean water. Speaker, as I said at the time, sewers may not seem that glamorous but they're essential to create a livable city. And we know that this multibillion-dollar infrastructure strategy is improving lives, not just in my riding but in every riding in this province, including every single one represented by members of the opposition. Speaker, could the Minister -- First speak to how the benefits of these investments are being felt in communities right across Ontario?

>> Minister Bob Chiarelli: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. I have to start by saying thank you to the leader of the opposition and the leader of the third party. I'm sure they're aware that not one member of their caucuses has asked me a question on infrastructure in this place since I became Minister of infrastructure over two full sessions, Speaker. Speaker, that must be because they think we're doing a terrific job on infrastructure in the province. Because it's hard to criticize a plan that will deliver at least \$53 million in ocip funding directly to municipalities and P.C. Ridings in 2017. And a plan that has delivered a -- a 474 million mental health facility in the opposition leader's riding as well as over 8 million in ocip and water infrastructure funding to communities in his riding. Speaker, our record speaks for itself. And the opposition's deafening silence on infrastructure is worth a thousand words.

>> MPP Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for his very informative answer. So with these facts, Speaker, facts do matter. Perhaps the leader of the opposition might stop giving speeches where he's claiming we aren't getting shovels in the ground. Just come to my community of Kitchener Centre and you will see plenty of shovels in the ground. In the L.R.T. Projects, the Shirley avenue widening and the new G.O. Train and G.O. Bus storage facility. It's important for every member of this House and every constituent that we represent to have these facts. We're moving forward with our \$190 billion infrastructure investment plan. Our economy is responding, Speaker, to the steps that we're taking making life easier and more affordable. Our unemployment rate is lowest it's been in 16 years. we've added 700,000 net new jobs since the height of the recession. Could the Minister please share more facts on how he is helping to build Ontario up.

>> Minister Chiarelli: Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad to share some important facts about our infrastructure investment. Here's the fact to the leader of the third party. Our government has procured four major health care projects in Hamilton worth almost \$1 billion. All four use the A.F.P. Procurement model the NDP Detests so much. To vote for all are delivered on budget and all but one were delivered on time. Another fact, Hamilton is receiving \$1 billion for its L.R.T. And up to \$33 million this year for water and wastewater infrastructure. And our current budget added \$30 billion more for critical infrastructure. Both leaders opposite voted against enhanced quality of life for all Ontarians by opposing our budget. So, Mr. Speaker, the next time those two leaders go

to the ballot box they should take a good hard look in the mirror and then vote for Kathleen Wynne.

MPP Potts to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Arthur Potts: Well, thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Minister of energy. Now this week I'm so delighted to say, we all know that we passed legislation with the government's fair hydro plan which will lower electricity bills by 25% on average across the province. This change is going to result in significant and much needed relief for every House hold in Ontario, and I know my constituents in Beaches- East York are looking forward for their discounted hydro bills in the coming months. However there are other elements of the government's plan that provide additional supports particularly to communities who need it most. Many low-income Ontarians are taking advantage of the Ontario electricity support program which provides an on-bill subsidy to those qualifying for the program. And intend -- I understand the fair hydro plan will be expanding on this program much so, Speaker, would the Minister please provide the House more details on how the oesp is being expanded for the benefit of low income families and individuals across –

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank the member for the question and of course on his hard work on this file for his constituents in Beaches- East York as well. Unlike the opposition parties, our government has made support for vulnerable communities a central pillar of our plan. The official opposition have no plan. The third party forgot to talk about vulnerable Ontario in their energy plan, Mr. Speaker. We didn't. Mr. Speaker, we'll use existing fund through the Ontario energy board that they already have to expand the oesp program based on our direction, Mr. Speaker. The on-bill rebates offered to recipients have increased by 50% with the maximum credit now \$900 a year, Mr. Speaker, and a special credit for those with unique electricity needs. They can see that credit, Mr. Speaker, up to \$1,300. The expanded program. Not only offers higher credits but is also accessible to more people because we have increased eligibility for the program, Mr. Speaker. We heard, we will act and we listened.

>> MPP Potts: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for the incredible work that he is doing to make electricity affordable for all Ontarians. On this side of the House we were so thrilled to see that bill pass and I know that Ontarians are asking, because the opposition on the other side of the House, what were they thinking? How could they be voting against lower people's electricity bills? Ott E.C. Program provides supports to low income House holds in my community and I'm proud our government is demonstrating our government by helping these people in expanding the program. Expansion of oesp is not the only social initiative being taken in the fair hydro plan. All

taxpayers will receive the savings of 25% on ample there are other programs which would support savings of upwards of 40 and 50%, Speaker, for certain customers who qualify.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank the member for that follow-up. Speaker, one of the other programs that would be expanded under our fair hydro plan is one designed to lower delivery rates and that's called the rrrp. This program provides the subsidy that lowers distribution costs for those in the most expensive-to-serve areas of our province. That's 800,000 families, Mr. Speaker, that will see a 40 to 50% reduction. I could only assume the opposition voted against that, Mr. Speaker, because that 40 to 50% reduction was too much too soon, Mr. Speaker. Just like when you're talking about bringing forward a minimum wage that will help families in this province. That's too much too soon, Mr. Speaker. But what about part-time workers to get paid the same as full-time workers, Mr. Speaker ? I know for the official opposition too much too soon, Mr. Speaker. 100,000 new child care spaces. Free tuition, too much too soon.

MPP Wilson to Minister Hoskins (Hospital Funding)

>> MPP Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of health, Mr. Speaker, by now the Minister would be well aware of the need for new hospitals in my riding. I brought this issue to the government's attention on a number of occasions. I've written letters. I've made statements. I've asked questions. I've Collected thousands of petitions. The local health integration networks in my riding have indicated that their top priority are the new hospitals in Collingwood and Al list ton. To date the government has been very good to listen to our concerns, Mr. Speaker. But has never really indicated its support for the new hospitals in Al list ton and Collingwood. So today's litmus test is to see if our hospitals really do have the government support. So Speaker, late this afternoon all parties will debate my private member's resolution that calls on the government to approve the planning grants. By both hospitals. So I ask the Minister, will the government do exactly that and –

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to have the last word before the summer break in question period. And especially on such an important subject. However, however I do have to say it's slightly ironic, because a party that has consistently told the government to spend less, which was a question about investing in hospitals and spending more, and ironic as well of course because we had \$9 billion of new capital infrastructure in this year's budget that was just recently passed that that member and that party voted against. Notwithstanding that, the Collingwood and the Stephenson hospitals are important hospitals to their communities and they're important hospitals to this government. They have both submitted pre-capital submissions, which they've now moved on with the ministry's support. To stage one. We continue to move forward, and I think it is positive that we continue to work collaboratively as we move through and all hospitals in this province. The various process and stations required.

May 31, 2017

PC Leader Brown to Premier Wynne (Ontario Finances and FAO Report)

PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Thanks to the financial accountability office, we now know that Ontario does not have a balanced budget. The books, the books were cooked for an election illusion. The F.A.O. Said the Liberals won't --

The Speaker: I'm sorry but that the phrase can't be used. Please withdraw.

Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

The Speaker: Carry on.

Patrick Brown: The S.A.O. Said the Liberals won't be able I quote to balance the budget without significant policy adjustments. I repeat significant fiscal policy adjustments. What does that mean for Liberals? It means either hidden new taxes or frontline service cuts. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier, given what the F.A.O. Has clearly said, what will it be?

The Speaker: Question.

Patrick Brown: Is it going to be new taxes or is it going to be cuts to frontline service?

[Applause]

Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the work of the financial accountability officer. I was --

The Speaker: The member from Leeds- Grenville will withdraw. The person that continues that trend. It's unparliamentary and I won't accept it. Premier?

Premier Wynne: You know, I was pleased, Mr. Speaker, that his economic forecasts are broadly in line with ours, showing strong economic momentum in 2017 and 2018 and confirming strong job gains, Mr. Speaker. His analysis is also in line with the major Canadian banks and financial institutions, and they also predict Ontario will continue to lead Canada in economic growth, Mr. Speaker. That is very good news for the people of Ontario. Our unemployment rate is at the lowest that it's been in 16 years. Great news. And has been below the national average.

The Speaker: Answer.

Premier Wynne: For the last two years, Mr. Speaker. So I thank the F.A.O. For his report and, Mr. Speaker, we've got a good strong outlook and he agrees with that.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. And I get the Premier's talking point is to thank the F.A.O., and that may sound good, but the reality is the F.A.O. Is calling this government's budget a charade, a sham. You know, look at what has actually been said. The F.A.O. Projecting continued Ontario budget deficits over the next five years. I quote -- 2017/18 F.A.O. Projects a deficit due to more taxes and a \$3 billion boost from onetime nontax revenues. Ontarians will not be fooled. The F.A.O. Is saying your numbers do not add up. Ontario has -- does not have a balanced budget. This is a significant deficit. And if I'm supposed to believe, if I'm supposed to believe the F.A.O. Or this Liberal government, I'm with the F.A.O.. Nonpartisan legislative oversight.

The Speaker: Question.

Patrick Brown: Is calling the government out. Will you do the right thing? Will the Premier admit we still have a huge deficit in Ontario? The Speaker: Premier?

Premier Wynne: Minister of finance.

The Speaker: Minister of finance.

Minister Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member opposite, recognizing that the F.A.O. Has also revised his numbers from the spring to the fall, increasing the economic growth that the province of Ontario's been having, recognizing the trend are improving over time. The F.A.O. Max reference to that, Mr. Speaker. An independent work -- have also assessed it and we have actually taken their projections, papered it down in order to be -- tapered it down in order to be prudent. What's more important, Mr. Speaker, is the actual numbers. And the actual numbers year over year have always exceeded our budget and our targets. This coming year we project a deficit of \$4.5 billion. It's now down to 1.5 billion and improving, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

The Speaker: It's going to calm down. Final supplementary.

Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Minister of financing is saying all that counts is the actual numbers. The F.A.O. Is saying we have a deficit well beyond \$5 billion. So how is it possible that we've got a Premier and a Minister of finance has the audacity to say to people of Ontario we have a balanced budget when we don't? The nonpartisan legislative oversight is saying your numbers do not add up. I want to make sure the government tells the truth to Ontarians. Is the F.A.O. Correct that your numbers do not add up? Is the F.A.O. Correct that we don't have a balanced budget?

[Applause] The F.A.O. Is correct that Ontario's economy is improving. The F.A.O. Is correct that we are trending downward. The f.a.o.'s correct that our debt to G.D.P. – And those are projections by the F.A.O., which we actually do appreciate. In fact we appreciate others and their input so that we can then taper and --

Minister Charles Sousa: Speaker, we've put forward a budget and it's a living document. We always overcome challenges that they perceive and take those efforts. The member opposite is voting against pharmacare for children. He's voting against increased funding for hospitals. He's voting against increased funding for schools. He's voting for the elimination of free tuition for our students, the very measures that improves our economy that enables tous come to balance.

[Applause]

MPP Tabuns to Premier Wynne (Hydro One Sale and Electricity Costs)

MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, to the Premier. This session the Premier has done nothing but plow ahead with her own agenda to try and save herself and her party before the next election. Take hydro for example. The Premier went ahead with her wrong-headed Hydro One sell-off, even though 80% of Ontarians are against it. Does the Premier think she knows more than 80% of Ontarians? [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you. Premier?

Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know, I've had the opportunity over the last couple of days to talk about specifically these changes that we are making to labour laws and employment standards, Mr. Speaker, and for the minimum wage. And all of that, Mr. Speaker, is part of a plan. It's part of the reality that government, in my opinion, exists to help people. It exists to do things that we cannot do alone. [Applause] Government exists to make society more fair. So whether that's free tuition for students who will see that this fall, over 200,000 students will go to College and university. They will get free or better-than-free tuition, Mr. Speaker. Whether it is cutting people's electricity bills, whether it's building 100,000 new child care spaces, Mr. Speaker, or

whether it's raising the minimum wage. And making sure part time and full-time workers are paid the same. All of that about is fair Ontario. That's what we've been doing, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Tabuns: I'm not surprised the Premier doesn't want to talk about Hydro One. Under this Liberal government, hydro rates have gone up by a staggering 300%. Under this Premier alone, rates have gone up 50%. Instead of doing something to fix the mess that she's helped create in our hydro system, the Premier signed Ontario families and businesses onto a \$45 billion borrowing scheme that will cause our hydro bills to soar even higher. What does the Premier have to say to the people who will be hurt by her scheme? [Applause]

Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know, I know the member opposite. I know him quite well, and I know that he is committed to, for example, building transit, Mr. Speaker. I know that he believes in infrastructure building. I also know that he recognizes that over many years, because he knows a lot about the electricity system in Ontario. Over many years, government after government did not make the investments in the electricity system in Ontario that were needed. The system was degraded. By the time we came into office in 2003 under the previous Premier, Mr. Speaker, there had to be investments in order to upgrade the system. We made those investments, Mr. Speaker, and we are paying now for those in this generation and we believe that it is more fair to pay for those investments over a longer period of time. Premier Wynne: That's what we're doing in order that people can see some relief right now and they will see that relief come this summer, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

MPP Tabuns: Speaker, indeed I do know the system and privatization is daning the hydro in this province. Damaging it. [Applause] The Premier didn't even give the people of Ontario or the opposition, for that matter, reasonable time to have their say about her hydro scheme. She's ramming it through the House in a little over two weeks. Two weeks. For legislation that will affect our lives for three decades to come. Why does the Premier insist on limiting public input and opposition debate on our hydro scheme? What is she afraid of

?Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there has been an enormous debate and discussion around this province about the cost of electricity. The member opposite knows that. We're moving forward to give people relief by this summer, Mr. Speaker, because we know that that will help people and it will help small businesses on main streets all over the province, Mr. Speaker. They will see a reduction in their electricity costs and people

in more rural and remote communities will see up to a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it was an important decision to move ahead, Mr. Speaker. I also know that the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, was part of our plan to invest in the people of this province, invest in infrastructure. We were not, as the member opposite is I believe, Mr. Speaker, constrained by an ideology that says that never work with the private sector. Do not trust the private sector, Mr. Speaker. Premier Wynne: I believe that the way society works is that government, private sector, civil society works together to improve a lot of lives for the people of Ontario.

MPP Fedeli to Minister Sousa (FAO Report)

MPP Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for Premier. The headline on the financial accountability officer's release this morning says it all. Quote -- F.A.O. Expects steady deterioration of Ontario's budget deficit. Despite the government announcing a so-called balanced budget, the F.A.O. Confirms this is only by using onetime revenue from the sale of Hydro One. He confirms this is also due to using revenue from the onetime sale of buildings such as the O.P.G. Headquarters across the street. Speaker, what business in Canada would be allowed to pull the wool over their investors' eyes? In the real world, people have gone to jail for pulling a stunt like that. So I ask the Premier. Will you Fess up to the taxpayers and provide the real state of Ontario --

[Applause Premier Wynne: Minister of finance.

Minister Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the question because it does give us an opportunity to reinforce the tremendous growth in Ontario's economy, outpacing Canada -- Because of these initiatives and efforts we put forward a budget that not only is a balanced and balanced this year, next year and the year after that. Public accounts coming forward in the fall will reinforce that we've outperformed yet again even last year. Those are actual numbers, Mr. Speaker. But the member opposite is asking a question -- I say the member opposite is asking these questions because he and his party are uncomfortable with the warning. By increasing minimum wage. He even had the audacity to say --

MPP Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the Premier. We know the government only announced a balanced budget through these onetime sales. They're going to run out of things to sell next year. So the financial accountability officer said the budget deficit will continue to deteriorate, quote, without additional government measures. We saw the government trying to balance the budget on the backs of frontline health care workers. They fired 1,600 nurses. We saw the government trying to balance the budget on the backs of students. The Liberals have closed more schools than any other government in

the history of Ontario. So my question is to the Premier. Which group is she going to target next to continue this charade of balanced budgets?

Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we're always looking at our economic policy, putting forward fiscal plans that enable us to grow our economy. We are of course looking at assets that are unproductive and propose to reinvest, Mr. Speaker, in making even greater contributions to our economy, and that is exactly what is happening. And part of that contribution, Mr. Speaker, in this budget is to increase support for our health care by \$11.5 billion, which that member opposite is voting against. He's voting against an additional 9.5 billion dollars more into our education. He's voting against pharmacare, free medicine for all young people under the age of 25, Mr. Speaker, and he's voting against free tuition for our students. He's voting against the very measures that enable our economy to succeed. As I said before he is distracting from the issues around minimum wage and that is what affects the people of this province. We are talking about a plan for the people of Ontario for today and tomorrow. [Applause]

MPP Forster to Minister Hoskins (Hospital Closure)

MPP Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. My question to the Premier. Niagara health serves tens of thousands of families, some of who are with us here in the gallery today and they made that long trek on the Q.E.W. For three hours on a bus to be here, along with the Ontario health coalition Natalie Mara and Sue Hutt. They brought over 2,500 letters that I will deliver actually to the Premier and the health Minister after question period, from community members asking the government to stop the proposal to close hospitals in our riding. The Liberal government has a proposal in place to close more hospitals in south Niagara Welland, in Port Colborne all based on a nonvalidated report issued in 2012 by Kevin Smith that experts describe as lacking in total evidence and reference. It's without any formal consultation with families in my community. And this restructuring will be unprecedented in Ontario. Will the Minister explain. To my friends that are here in the gallery today and those watching at home why the Liberal government refuses to put a stop to this shortsighted proposal?

Premier Kathleen Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

The Speaker: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to first welcome and acknowledge the members of the Ontario health coalition who are here this morning and other community members and leaders from Welland in the Welland area, the Niagara region that have made that trip here today to advocate on behalf of health care in Ontario.

[Applause] And in their region, Mr. Speaker. And I want to begin, and I'll have more to say in the supplementary, but I want to begin by saying that that party voted against our budget which allocated 9 billion more dollars in capital infrastructure for hospitals, including a dedicated brand-new hospital in niagara for the niagara region, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause] And it was the hard work not of that member opposite but the member from St. Catharines, from the local niagara mayor, mayor diodati, and many other local leaders. That worked so hard over the years to get us to the place where we are today, to be able to make that financial commitment to build a brand-new hospital for the niagara region. The Speaker: Thank you.

[Applause] Forster: Well, unfortunately it's not site under south niagara which is actually where the hospitals are closing. But in any event we know that niagara has one of the highest populations of seniors in the province many of whom live on very low incomes. Worse, the region has the lowest, second lowest number of long-term care beds in the province. And studies from the niagara region show that the growth is actually going to be in south niagara. So while Niagara Falls deserves a new hospital and needs one, welland and port colborne and Wayne fleet also deserve to have a hospital for their residents.

[Applause] And closing the hospital will have devastating impacts on not only economic development in the south end of niagara, but on the people who live in our community. So I will ask again, will the Minister listen to the experts and to the message brought from the constituents of my riding today. Put an immediate stop to the closure of the welland and port colborne hospitals?

[Applause] Minister Hoskins: So, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that I've spoken with her about the hospitals in the region, including the welland hospital that she is most preoccupied with. I've met with mayor campion as well, Mr. Speaker. I've met with other community leaders, other mayors in the region about welland hospital. She knows that I have been absolutely only and flexible to the future of the welland hospital. In fact I have instructed my officials to demonstrate that flexibility. I grew up not very far from welland. I understand the importance of that community hospital to the community and I will do everything I can to work with my ministry and with the community to keep welland open. That is my commitment. That is what we have been working towards. The member opposite knows that. I'm glad that the members in the gallery also are here to listen to that commitment that we are working and we are working with the lhins, local leadership. The mayors, the communities, everybody to find the right solution.

MPP Jeff Yurek (Oosterhoff) to Minister Hoskins (Welland Hospital Closure)

MPP Jeff Yurek: Speaker, my question's to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, today a large number of welland area residents are here today to voice their concern over the Liberal government's plan to close their hospitals. The hospital services that are needed over -- excuse me. The hospital services treat over 100,000 welland area residents. However, due to this government's fiscal mismanagement, the health care system's become rationed. Because of the rationing nurses have been fired, access to services cut and the Liberal government's planning to close hospitals across the province. Speaker, area mayor versus concerns about that. The replacement of their hospital will make it very difficult to recruit doctors. Speaker, will the Minister reconsider the closure, listen to the residents here and across the province, and keep the welland hospital open?

Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really grateful for the opportunity to the welland hospital for a second time this morning and to do it in the context, as I referenced in my previous answer, of anticipate unprecedented capital investment in our hospital's \$20 billion over the next decade. We added 9 billion in this budget alone, that that party of course voted against. And one of the specific items referenced in that budget was a new niagara hospital, Regional Hospital. We have many Regional Hospitals around this province. A brand-new niagara hospital which will serve that entire community, including the community the member opposite has expressed concern for I believe for the first time. And, Mr. Speaker, that brand-new hospital is the result of the hard work of individuals like the coalition that's here today and their fight for welland and other hospitals in that region, which is critically important and I admire them for that and respect them for that. So we will be working together. I'm happy to talk talk specifically about welland in the supplementary.

MPP Sam Oosterhoff: My family are also hurting because of Liberal mismanagement in health care. Now they're afraid the Minister is going to close the welland hospital. Closing this hospital would mean elderly in sick and remote rural communities would have to travel almost an hour to reach an emergency room. One elderly family is very concerned because they have no public transit and do not know how they will be able to receive the care they need and visit their loved ones in hospital. Mr. Speaker, my question is simple and to the Minister. Why must you make seniors and families pay for the waste and mismanagement of this Liberal government?

Minister Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the member opposite can check Hansard from about 40 minutes ago, when I specifically -- and I think emphatically, expressed my commitment to do everything I could to keep welland hospital open. I've

met with the local -- I've met with the mayors throughout the region, including mayor champion, Mr. Speaker. I've met with certainly the NDP Party that has for some time to their credit, unlike the P.C.S who have addressed this as a concern of the communities involved. And, Mr. Speaker, I will work with the community and with the Ihin and the local leadership to see what solution is best for that community. As I have said before, we have made no decision. There has been no decision made in terms of the future of the welland hospital. We are building a brand-new hospital for the niagara region. We've given them a \$26 million planning grant. We're going to continue with a capital investment. Commitment is in the budget, a budget that member voted against.

May 30, 2017

MPP Brown to Minister Naqvi (Duguid) (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. I'm going to quote the head of Ontario public service employees union, Mr. Smoky Thomas. He said -- and it's important the government actually listens to this. He said bill 132 is terrible, terrible legislation, and I urge you to stop it. Mr. Speaker, will the government do just that? Will they stop their \$93 billion unfair hydro scheme?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Well, Speaker, our objective on this side of the House is to cut hydro rates for hard working Ontarians, Speaker. And that is why our government and the leadership of our Premier is focused on cutting the hydro rates by 25%. Now of course, Speaker, from the opposite side, we have heard that they have had no plan whatsoever when it comes to energy. They kept talking about they're going to have a hydro plan. They're going to keep telling Ontarians somehow they will be able to magically cut hydro rates for Ontarians but we have seen no plan whatsoever. Speaker, what we have done through the fair hydro plan act is put forward a concrete plan by which hydro rates will be cut by 25%. And the only reasonable and sensible thing for the opposition to do. Is to support that plan, to support that legislation so that Ontarians can have the relief they deserve so much.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the government House leader. I know why the Liberals' favourite pastime is attacking the nonpartisan independent watchdogs are seen auditor general. She too has had an interesting comment I'd like to share. She said -- we would recommend the government reconsider this bill 132. Mr. Speaker, I'll give the government another chance to take the a.g.'s advice. We've got civil service workers saying this is a big problem. You've got the auditor general saying it's a big problem. Ontarians are concerned their buys are going to skyrocket because of this. Will you do the right thing? Take the a.g.'s advice and reconsider this unfair hydro scheme?

>> Minister Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the leader of the opposition said something that I think was historic in this legislature. He actually made a policy declaration. What he said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, is I will not invest in energy infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, we've heard that line before and we saw the impact of not

investing in energy infrastructure. My parents and Ernie Eves said exactly the same thing and, Mr. Speaker, they did exactly the same thing. They had no plan to invest in energy infrastructure and they left the energy system in a mess, Mr. Speaker. Not only do we have a clean and reliable energy -- Mr. Speaker, not only do we have a clean reliable energy system. We're moving now to make that system more affordable for everyday Ontarians by reducing costs by 25%. The leader the opposition won't support that either.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the government House leader. The Minister's right, I will not invest in bad Liberal contracts. It's not right. The people of Ontario are paying too much because of these bad contracts. The Liberals have benefitted too long and it's hurt the people. So let's hear another assessment on this unfair hydro scheme. Cupe's Fred Hann made interesting comments about bill 132. He said the following to this government -- I want you to know the people of Ontario will not be fooled. They were members in the long-term what you have done to mess up our look tristy future in the province of Ontario. The unfair hydro scheme will not fool anyone. Hydro rates are going to skyrocket. Every independent assessment says that very clearly. We can't afford our hydro bills. It's not right. Mr. Speaker, one more chance for the government House leader to come clean and say this is going to cause hydro rates to spike and we're going to stop it.

>> Minister Duguid: If the member really believed what he just said, he wouldn't have started out his question period talking about rubber ducks, Mr. Speaker. The fact is you want to talk about ducking, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about ducking questions on sex Ed. Let's talk about ducking questions on the carbon tax. Let's talk about ducking questions on the energy plan that we're still waiting to hear, Mr. Speaker. All he does is duck every time anybody asks him a question on the energy plan. Let's talk about ducking questions about your own caucus members. Let's talk about ducking questions, Mr. Speaker, about just about anything of substantive policy. Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward with a clean reliable energy plan that's going to ensure it's more affordable for everyday Ontarians. We're proud of that plan. No wonder you don't want Ontarians to know about it, Mr. Speaker. That might be bad policy for you. But it's good for the people of Ontario. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Horwath to Minister Matthews (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> NDP leader Andrea Horwath: This question's for the acting Premier, Speaker. But I think what people want to see is the government stop using precious public dollars to promote the Liberal party and Kathleen Wynne. That's what I think people want to see. Clearly the electricity companies who will be forced to deliver this politically motivated message on behalf of the Premier didn't think it was necessary, Speaker, or else they would have provided the information themselves on their own. Does the Premier know something that every electricity in the province -- somehow doesn't need to know or doesn't know? Is there something that they're aware of that every electricity company isn't aware of, Speaker ?

>> Minister Deb Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad we're having the chance to talk about hydro prices today and I'm particularly disturbed to hear that yesterday it was announced that the NDP Will not support, in fact will repeal the bill that will bring hydro relief for people across this province. They announced yesterday that they will actually increase hydro prices, that they will take the 25% back, Speaker, that the 40% that many people in rural and northern Ontario, relief that they will get will be rescinded under the NDP They said the Ontario electricity support program that provides energy relief for the most vulnerable in this province will be repealed. Speaker, it's no surprise that the opposition is asking about our insert in an envelope because they are not prepared to talk about their plan. To repeal this whole bill.

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. We replaced it with a plan that actually creates systemic change and bringing --S Hydro One back into public hands and creates savings for the long term for people of Ontario. It's really shocking actually. We announced this almost a month ago and the Minister just realized yesterday that this was the NDP's position? Shame on her. Look, when the Premier forces electricity companies, Speaker, to do something that they deem unnecessary, it's a political tactic, plainly and simple. That tactic is meant to harness the power of the office of the Premier for political gain. There is no way around that fact. And it's time the Premier takes responsibility for this manipulation. Will she revoke the regulation now and apologize to the people of Ontario for misusing the power of her office?

>> Minister Matthews: Speaker, let's be really clear. The MPP Wants to the cancel the decreases to hydro prices for the people of Ontario. That in my opinion is a shameful position for the third party to be taking. They claim they will replace it with something but they have no idea what they are going to replace it with, Speaker. But what we do know for sure that it will take away relief from the people of this province. And they will also take money from health and from education, because part of their plan is to buy back the shares in Hydro One, Speaker. Let's just be really clear. Anyone who is watching, anyone who is paying attention to this, the NDP Want to increase your hydro bill. They want to take away the support for the most vulnerable people. They want to take away the -- The delivery costs for on reserve first nations, Speaker, and now --

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I think you can get your bottom dollar that every person in Ontario is watching the mess the Liberals have made of our electricity system and what it's costing people today and for generations to come. The F.A.O., the financial accountability officer, an independent officer of this legislature, said that the Premier's \$45 billion hydro borrowing seme will cost Ontarians, will cost Ontario families and businesses more money and that it will actually drive bills up. Now that's not me as a partisan saying that. That's the financial accountability officer. There is no hiding the

fact, Speaker. Even though it's conveniently excluded from the Premier's regulation forcing companies to promote her and her political party. The Premier has decided to use her position, her office as Premier, to mandate that the Liberal party's politically motivated description of this scheme is delivered to Ontario doorsteps regularly now and throughout the next election.

>> Minister Matthews: You know, Speaker, for months in this House the third party came with examples of people who were really suffering with high electricity prices. Speaker, we heard those stories in our own ridings, too. We went to work. We rolled up our sleeves and we developed a plan that will provide immediate relief, 25% reduction electricity bills, Speaker, and more than that for people who are paying the highest rates. We have a plan. We've been very transparent about that plan. It's a plan that reduces electricity bills, and to think that the NDP Party will stand in their place day after day after day after day to complain about a problem and then when we develop a solution say no to that, Speaker, without coming up with their own is just not ok. We've got a plan.—it wil—

May 29, 2017

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Hydro Rate Reduction)

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The financial accountability officer's report on the Liberals' unfair hydro scheme wasn't shocking to the opposition. We have been saying all along that simply the boring plan that kicks the can down the road. At the lowest estimate, this plan will cost taxpayers \$21 billion, and at the highest, a staggering \$93 billion. This plan is not about sharing cost. It's about saving seats. Not only will this cost the next generation billions of dollars, but the generation after that, too. This is a shortsighted reelection scheme. Mr. Speaker, is this unfair hydro scheme really about burdening Ontario with another \$93 billion of debt? Or is it about helping the Liberal party?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our fair hydro plan is about helping people in this province. It's about helping mom-and-pop businesses on main streets, Mr. Speaker, and it's about helping farms, farmers, Mr. Speaker. It's about people who need relief on their electricity bill, getting that relief. Mr. Speaker, the member for Renfrew- Nipissing, in his- usual thoughtful way, is heckling about the last 14 years. Mr. Speaker, over the last 14 years we've invested in the electricity system in this province so that we have a clean renewable system, Mr. Speaker, that has been degraded by the very party that the member opposite is a member of. And, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly government after government have not made the investments that needed to be made. So electricity prices were kept artificially low, Mr. Speaker. The

system was degraded. We had to make these investments and Mr. Speaker -- We're spreading the cost of those investments over a longer period of time. That's fair today and it's fair tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. The Premier said she was investing in the electricity system over the last 14 years. Well, stop investing because, under your watch, you've raised hydro rates 400%. They've broken hydro in Ontario. Every time -- they've made it worse. So I've got a simple -- Mr. Speaker, I have a simple, simple multiple-choice question for the Premier. How many billions of taxpayer dollars is the Premier willing to spend on this hydro scheme for her reelection campaign? "A" 21 billion. B" 45 billion, or "C" 93 billion? Which is it, "A," "B" or "C"? How much taxpayer dollars are you going to waste for the self --

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that the -- Very clear that the leader of the opposition has a very different philosophy of how to grow this province and make it strong, Mr. Speaker. He would stop investing apparently in the new hospital -- He would stop investing in the transit that makes bracebridge able to have a bus -- Investing in small-town infrastructure like bracebridge. If he would stop investing in a clean, renewable electricity grid, Mr. Speaker, and he would stop investing in the education and the health care resources that are allowing this province to thrive. He would stop investing, Mr. Speaker. That's not a plan. That's -- THA is a strategy -- That is a strategy for undermining the growth of this province. We're not going to go there, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: To the Premier. The Premier's absolutely correct for once. I will stop investing in bad Liberal contracts. According to the auditor general, we overpaid \$9.2 billion. That's our investment. Overpaid by 9.2 billion? The 30 companies that got the contracts, surprise, surprise, donated \$1.3 million to the Ontario Liberal party. That's the investment they're proud of? They have supported the Liberal party's bank account, not Ontario ratepayers. And everyone sees it. Everyone in the province sees it. Just read the "Globe and mail" this weekend. In the "Globe and mail," I quote -- unless you're planning on living off the grid in Algonquin park or moving out of the province by 2028, you will be materially worse off under this scheme than had the Liberals just left bad enough alone. This plan is going to hurt Ontario. Why won't the Premier just do the right thing and admit they have broken hydro in Ontario? Stop trying to make it worse.

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we've invested in the electricity system in this province. It is clean, its renewable and it is reliable, Mr. Speaker. People need relief on their electricity bills because of the investments that have been made in order to get us there, and we're spreading the cost of those investments over a longer period of time.

And happy, Mr. Speaker, to talk to the next generation about that, that they are going to be able to access an asset that we have invested and we fixed, Mr. Speaker, because previous governments were not able to or not willing to. Mr. Speaker, the investments that we have made in this province, let's look at what those investments have LED to. Ontario's created almost 700,000 new jobs since the recession, almost 300,000 since I became Premier, Mr. Speaker. Ontario's economic growth has LED all G-7 nations for the past three years. Our unemployment rate has dropped to 5.8%, Mr. Speaker. Its lowest level in 16 years. That's what investment in the province has been, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Partisan Advertising)

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Another day, another Liberal partisan advertisement. This time it was the recent budget add. It's becoming quite repetitive around here these days. First the Liberals spend millions of taxpayer dollars on advertising. Second the auditor general says the ads are clearly partisan. Third the Liberals skew some nonsense about Ontario prohibiting partisan advertising. Rinse and repeat it is the same line.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, will the Premier just come clean to the people of Ontario and admit these ads are wrong? They are partisan. The Premier's using taxpayer dollars to benefit the Ontario Liberal party. Do the right thing. Cancel these ads.

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I would say that, as the leader of the opposition knows, Ontario's the only province in the country that has advertising restrictions, Mr. Speaker, that are legislated. Mr. Speaker, we've made it very clear that partisan advertising is not allowed. Mr. Speaker, the benchmark that's used for partisan advertising is what that party did when it was in office, Mr. Speaker. It's quite clear, it's quite clear that because of our legislation, we have moved very far away from that partisan advertising. But, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to be in northeast Ontario, northeastern Ontario over the last week, and one stop that I made in Sudbury was at a unit in a hospital called neokids. And I had the opportunity to meet with families there, Mr. Speaker, who have kids who are chronically ill or they have very serious illness, Mr. Speaker, and many of them need regular medication every day every month, Mr. Speaker. They were very happy to know that ohip plus pharmacare is starting on January 1st, 2018.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker again to the Premier and back to the actual question. From Wawa to Petawawa, from Parry Sound to Owen Sound, to Kapuskasing to Nipissing, what do we have in common? These are towns that are opposition-held ridings, and as reported a Q.P. Briefing I quote the auditor general's office noted this could suggest that these areas were targeted for that reason. And I agree with the

auditor general. Without a doubt the Liberal government is campaigning using taxpayer dollars in opposition ridings. It's unethical. It should be illegal and, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Premier again, will the Premier do the right thing and stop abusing taxpayer dollars for the sole purpose of benefitting the Liberal party?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely understand why the leader of the opposition does not want us to talk about our budget. I absolutely understand that. He does not want -- especially, Mr. Speaker, especially -- Especially given what he said earlier today, Mr. Speaker, is that his strategy would be to stop investing in Ontario. So he doesn't want us to talk about the 100,000 child care spaces that we'll create, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't want us to talk about free tuition because that's an investment in the people and young people of this province. He doesn't want us to talk about ohip plus, Mr. Speaker, because that's investment of the children and the youth of this province who need medication, and it's an investment in their families to allow them to make end meet and support their children. He doesn't want us to talk about any of that, Mr. Speaker. Because his strategy is just to stop investing in the people of this province.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The word investing is all of a sudden code word for what is acceptable to use taxpayer dollars. Investing in partisan Liberal ads? You call that investment? People right now in Ontario are struggling to get by. They can't pay their hydro bills and yet you've got a government wasting millions on partisan ads. This isn't the opposition party's say. This is the auditor general, the independent legislative oversight saying this is wrong. This is unethical. We get the same spin, the same talking points. Abusing taxpayer dollars is not investing. It is wrong. When will this Liberal government learn? Stop abusing taxpayer dollars. Do what's right and cull these ads.

>> Premier Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I say to the leader of the opposition once again he knows full well that there's only one province in this country that has legislation that forbids partisan advertising that has standard, Mr. Speaker, and that is Ontario, and we are the government that's moved on that, Mr. Speaker. But I will go back to what the leader of the opposition does not want to see us talking about. He does not, Mr. Speaker, want us to talk about the capital investments that we are making in hospitals. He does not want us to talk about the fact that, in Moose Factory, there is a hospital that was built in 1950, Mr. Speaker. And he doesn't want us to talk about the fact that we're going to rebuild that hospital. We're going to replace that hospital, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't want us to talk about that because that's an investment in the province. It's an investment in the people of Moose Factory and the James Bay coast. He also doesn't want us to talk about the fact that we are put a 2% max -- minimum --

Investment in every operating budget in the hospitals in this province and that, Mr. Speaker, is an investment in people in every corner of Ontario

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hydro Advertising)

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question's for the Premier. The Premier recently put forward a new law that will force all electricity companies to include her political messaging with hydro bills right up until the next election. In fact her regulation contains the exact messaging that she plans to force the companies to use. How can this Premier justify the shameless self promotion at the expense of everyday families in Ontario?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of energy is going to want to speak to the details of this. Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that even the leader of the third party would like to see everyone who's eligible receive the reduction that they are -- that they're eligible for, that they're entitled to. That they're entitled to. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the leader of the third party knows, because she's been talking about it in this legislature for weeks, Mr. Speaker, she knows that people need that relief on their hydro bills. She knows, Mr. Speaker, people need that 25% reduction. She knows, Mr. Speaker, that, in rural and remote communities, that people need even more than that because distribution charges are so high. So, Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the third party supports a reduction, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of energy will speak to the details in the bill.

>> Andrea Horwath: People are going to get it regardless of partisan advertising in their bills or not. So why is the Premier doing that? Electricity companies to do the Premier's dirty work by trying to sell the people of Ontario on her \$45 billion hydro borrowing scheme. This is a new low, Speaker, in political manipulation at the expense of Ontario families, who are already struggling to just keep up with their skyrocketing bills, Speaker. Is this Premier so desperate to save her political skin that she is going to force families to pay for her own partisan advertising?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault :Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very pleased to rise and talk about our fair hydro plan, because I find it interesting from the questioning from the leader of the third party. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, when I was in Sault Ste. Marie and when I spoke with Steve and Lucy, who own the m&ms and the other country style doughnuts that the leader of the opposition spoke to, I thought it very interesting that they didn't know about the fair hydro plan. They didn't know about the benefits that they were going to be getting when the fair hydro plan passes, Mr. Speaker. But it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the leader of the third party chose not to tell them about the plan. She chose not to tell them about all of the things that will be coming, Mr.

Speaker. So you know what we're doing, Mr. Speaker ? We're going to ensure that we -
- I know, Mr. Speaker, that we have one party that doesn't have a plan. We have a new party. We'd like to hear what that new party will have to say. And then from the third party, Mr. Speaker, they don't even talk about their plan any more. We will ensure. That we talk about our plan so everybody in this province knows that they'll be getting 25% off before summer.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, everybody in Ontario will be shocked when they see their bill. They'll be shocked to learn that they're now paying for the Liberals' advertising to be delivered right to their doorstep. By law, Speaker, because the Liberals are putting it in legislation, in regulation. To put the advertising for that party into people's bills. People expected so much better from this Premier. But time and time again, they have been let down. Instead of forcing electricity companies to advertise her borrowing scheme, had the Liberal Premier instead put her energy into coming up with a plan that helps people instead of helping her political party and herself?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 800,000 families in this province will see a 40 to 50% reduction thank you to the Premier and this government bringing forward legislation, Mr. Speaker, that will help families. Every single House hold in this province, Mr. Speaker. 500,000 small businesses and farms. They will receive a 25% reduction on average, Mr. Speaker, come summer when we can get this legislation passed. But what really is bothersome, Mr. Speaker, is last week the NDP Confirmed that they would repeal the fair hydro plan. The admission courtesy of the candidate in Sault Ste. Marie and that comes as a shock to everyone. We talk about the need to help families with the cost of electricity. But when we could have supported the plan to cut bills by 25% for those low incomes between 40 and 50? You know what they said, Mr. Speaker ? As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, you know what they said, Mr. Speaker ? No.

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's also for the Premier. I have to say I look forward to forming a government and cleaning up the mess Liberals made in our electricity system. And it's gonna happen. In her political -- in her political insert, Speaker, the Premier isn't even telling the people of Ontario the whole story. Political insert, Speaker, the Premier isn't even telling the people of Ontario the whole story. Not even close. She's leaving out the part about her hydro borrowing plan, wiping out any savings for families and costing Ontarians much, much more in the long run. Why is the Premier ok with telling Ontarians only half the story?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear with the people of Ontario and we'll continue to be clear with the people of Ontario that we understand that

the investments that we've made in the electricity system in this province had a cost associated with them, Mr. Speaker, and that that cost is being borne right now by this generation. And that this is an asset that is going to last for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, and that we are going to spread the costs over longer period. Like the mortgage, Mr. Speaker, there is a cost associated with doing that. We've been very clear from the moment we brought out this plan, Mr. Speaker. But this is a plan that is being implemented right now. People are going to see these reductions. They're already beginning to see these reductions and they will see full implementation by summer if the legislation passes, Mr. Speaker. Not in 2020, not somewhere down the line if the federal government agrees to do something maybe sometime, Mr. Speaker, as the NDP Strategy would have it. We're acting right now helping people right now with their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well here's a news flash, Speaker. She's so clear that nobody believes her anymore. Nobody believes a word she says anymore. That's how clear she's been with the people of Ontario. In about four years, Speaker, in about four years, Ontarians will see the whole truth of this plan in black and white in the form of higher hydro bills that are going to continue to skyrocket for the next 30 years. By neglecting to include this fact in her political insert, the Premier is showing Ontarians once again where her priorities lie, with herself and her party. The Premier is willing to tell Ontario families and businesses a half-truth in hopes that it is going to bring her power or hang onto her power for just a little bit longer, Speaker. That is the M.O. Of this Premier and her Liberal government. Will she show some leadership? Will she show some respect for the people of this province and withdraw that odious regulation immediately?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that 25% is coming off of everyone's bills, Mr. Speaker, right across the province. Small businesses, farms and families. And I hear they keep talking about four years, Mr. Speaker. For the next four years it is true we are holding the cost to the rate of inflation. That's good news in the short term and it's good news in the medium term, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to the long term, it is this party, the only party that actually has a plan, Mr. Speaker, that is working now, is going to work in the medium term and it's going to work in the long term. Our long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker, will continue to find ways to pull costs out of the system. Their pamphlet, their ideas is coming up with some type of pie in the sky committee. Oh, that we talk about things, Mr. Speaker. We're acting. We're making sure that we're reducing bills now, in the future and we'll continue to look after Ontarians in the long term as well, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Ontarians are smart and I think that they're going to see right through this Liberal hydro scheme, Speaker. They'll see through the Premier's \$45

billion hydro plan and they will see these political inserts for exactly what they are, a sneaky way for the Premier to try to save her own political skin leading up to the next election. Will this Premier stop the political games once and for all? Stop the political games and withdraw this regulation immediately?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's be clear. The L.B.C.S and the government advertised for price updates, Mr. Speaker, for rate hearings, for programs like the Ontario electricity support program which they've votings against, Mr. Speaker, the save on energy program which will help small businesses which they're voting against, Mr. Speaker. It seems, you know, they like to say "No" to everything. No to that expanded Ontario electricity support program, no to the new \$200 million affordability fund for families, and no to eliminating the delivery cost on on-reserve first nations, Mr. Speaker. I know regional chief day and achieve ava hill have talked about how this fair hydro plan is going to change the lives of many first nations peoples, Mr. Speaker. And that is something that this Premier and this government is%\$. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that the party opposite has been watching a little bit too much -- Kenney. All they're saying is it's a hard no.

MPP Fedeli to Minister Sousa (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Vic Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. It's not just the financial accountability officers who weighed in on the government's hydro scheme. The auditor general attended the hydro committee hearings last week and exposed yet another secret. The government plans on borrowing all these billions and not declaring it on their books. Well, the Liberals got caught again. The auditor said, quote -- for obvious reasons, this is not allowed under Canadian public sector accounting standards. They tried to bury all these billions and not have the cost of their scheme show up anywhere. Did they think they were not going to get caught, Speaker ? I ask the Premier why does it always take the auditor general, the financial accountability officer or the OPP For the people of Ontario to get to the truth?

>> Minister Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. Let's remind everyone in this House d that process that's being proposed is being endorsed by pricewaterhouse, by a number of accounting professionals in the system. It's being enabled to protect the interest of ratepayers and consumers, Mr. Speaker. It's enabling them to benefit from lower costs today and taking an asset that's registered and enabling it to be valued over a longer period of time and that is what's being established. It's being established to reduce rates today and enable us to provide for a good system and clean reliable system throughout the future, Mr. Speaker. And the member opposite may oppose that. He may wish not to provide for a lowering of rates. He may decide that it's not appropriate for an asset to be registered and extended over

a period of time, but professionals in the accounting system has decided that that is appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Fedeli: That's not what the auditor general decided. Two weeks ago we asked the government why they co-opted O.P.G. as the financing arm of this financing scheme. We asked if it's because the billions this hide rode scheme will add to O.P.G.'s debt won't show up on the province's books. Despite all their denials, the auditor general has confirmed that's exactly what this government was planning. They plan to spend billions now, bury that money on O.P.G.'s books and not have the province account for any of this debt. But the auditor general says no way. They got caught yet again. I ask the Premier, now that your scheme has been revealed, will you drop this charade with O.P.G. And properly account for these billions on the province's books?

>> Minister Sousa: So, Mr. Speaker, again I remind the member opposite that the process that's been delivered here has been done in consultations with numerous experts, over 1 jurisdictions in north America have provided and utilizing similar accounting practice within the system. We have been working with O.P.G., who by the way has the next expertise in assisting with the financing. They currently manage over \$18 billion in nuclear funds that can be used in infrastructure and proceed in this field to help administer long-term financing, Mr. Speaker. This is not a novel approach. This has been done in other jurisdictionsment duke energy in North Carolina, Long Island lightning. We are moving forward to help consumers to help our people in Ontario, to help our businesses to be more competitive. The member opposite obviously don't have a plan. They don't want to invest. They've made that clear and now they're going to vote down something that's going to help the people of Ontario and our businesses, and that, Mr. Speaker ,, is a shame.

MPP Tabuns to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. To the Premier. Last week the financial accountability officer confirmed what Ontarians already knew. The Premier's wrong-headed hydro borrowing scheme will end up costing families and businesses more in the long run. The borrowing scheme will add nearly \$45 billion to Ontario hydro bills after a few years of temporary relief. In light of this confirmation, now there can be no doubt about the effect of this politically motivated scheme. Does the Premier plan to present Ontarians with a better option?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We work very closely with the financial accountability officer to provide information and analysis on our proved fair hydro plan and we welcome his final report, Mr. Speaker. The F.A.O. Report confirms the foundation of the fair hydro plan, a cut in electricity rates by 25% on average for all

residential consumers and as many as a half a million small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker. And what's more rate increases will be held to the rate of inflation for four years while low-income Ontarians and those living in eligible rural and northern communities would see savings of up to 40 to 50%. And it's important to remember, Mr. Speaker, that the f.a.o.'s projection of electricity costs reflect the point-in-time estimate that demonstrates how we can ensure greater affordability and fairness in the shorter term and medium term. For the long term we are focused on our long-term energy plan which will lay out our plan to continue to keep costs down. Families in the province, Mr. Speaker, have asked for real immediate relief on their electricity bills. And that's why we are working to deliver the largest rate reduction in Ontario's history if this legislation is passed, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Tabuns: Speaker, again to the Premier. The F.A.O. Is a nonpartisan, independent officer of the legislature whose sole job is to protect the people of Ontario. He told us, without doubt, that Ontario families and businesses will be worse off in ten years under the Premier's hydro scheme than they would be if there was no intervention at all. How can the Premier just ignore the F.A.O. And forge ahead when she knows, knows that her plan will end up doing more damage than good?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Speaker. Again a 25% reduction in the short term, holding the cost to inflation for the next four years and bringing forward the long-term energy plan will continue to keep the rates as low as possible for families, small businesses and farms right across our great province, Mr. Speaker. And as mentioned it's important to remember the f.a.o.'s projection of electricity costs. It reflects a point in time that estimates and demonstrates how we can ensure greater fairness and affordability in the short and the medium term, Mr. Speaker. The F.A.O. Report confirmed the foundation of the fair hydro plan, that we will be reducing rates by 25% on average for families, small businesses and farms right across our province, Mr. Speaker. And for those that live in rural and northern parts of our province. They will see a 40 to 50% reduction thanks to us and the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker. The opposition parties are voting against that.

MPP Horwath to Minister Del Duca (Rural Transportation Development)

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Premier. Last week in Sault Ste. Marie I announced that an NDP Government would fund the province's fair share to keep the Huron central railway line to Sudbury open for business. This rail line is essential for protecting and creating good jobs in the Sault. Does the Premier plan to keep this rail line operating, Speaker ?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. Of course as I've said many times in this chamber and every corner of the province, we are a province absolutely committed to continuing to make the right kind of strategic investments we need in every corner of Ontario. Whether we're talking about northern Ontario, whether we're talking about the south, highways, transit, transportation. All forms of transportation, Speaker. That's why in this year's budget we literally added billions of dollars to our infrastructure plan so that over the next I believe it's 12 years, Speaker, we're talking about 130 plus billion dollars that will flow through this program out to the 444 communities across the province. I would be happy to provide a bit more extensive answer on the follow-up question to the leader of the third party. Thanks very much.

>> Andrea Horwath: I look forward to the details from the Minister of transportation or the Premier, because the fact of the matter is this rail line is the rail line that 65% of the goods that are produced at S.R. Steel travel. 65% of the goods that are on that rail line are from S.R. Steel. So we need some detail, Speaker. Beuse without a firm commitment from this Premier and her Liberal government to help fund the improvement to keep this line open, people in the Sault will continue to be devastated by job losses. Too many young people have already left the Sault because of the lack of jobs and the uncertainty that this Premier's policies have created in that part of northern Ontario. So will the Premier actually step up and undo some of the damage that her Liberals have already done by agreeing to fund the province's fair share. Hdry rail line.

>> Minister Del Duca: Speaker, thanks very much. Happy to take the follow-up question from the leader of the NDP And also happy from the ministry of transportation's perspective to have a conversation here on this side with my Colleague the Minister of northern development and mines around this specific request, Speaker. So there will be an opportunity I'm sure to provide additional details with respect to the specific questions being asked today. But I will say, Speaker, in my time here in this legislature not only is the Minister of transportation but as an MPP For Vaughan, year after year this government, our Premier, our finance Minister have literally come forward with budgets on an annual basis that have contained billions of dollars to support whether we're talking about goods movement of transportation or commuter transportation, Speaker, and almost every year, almost every year without exception, Speaker -- Thanks, Speaker. As I was saying, almost without exception the leader of the third party and members of her caucus have consistently voted against budgets that contain funding to support the transportation network that we are working hard to build across the province of Ontario. And now shockingly, Speaker, on the eve of a by-election in Sault Ste. Marie this question comes across the floor to me. The timing is certainly curious. Thanks very much, Speaker. -

May 18, 2017

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Partisan Advertising)

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It seems yesterday the Liberals launched a new ad campaign about their budget. Mr. Speaker, how much more money will the Liberals be spending on these clearly partisan budget advertisements? Can you tell us a number? Ontarians deserve to know how much of their money this government's using to sell their tired old lines.

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have to say that, on this side of the House we are very happy that the budget that we have brought forward has been passed in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. Submitted across the province. Obviously the member opposite is not happy about that. He voted against ohip plus so that 4 million people -- 4 million children, Mr. Speaker, 4 mill -- 4 million children and young people will have access to free medication starting January 1st, 2018. He voted against that, Mr. Speaker, so he is not supportive. We believe that that is a very good and important thing for young people and families in this province, Mr. Speaker. And he also doesn't want us to implement free tuition for young people in the province, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't want to see \$16 billion invested in new schools in places like Ottawa, Waterloo, Thunder Bay across the province, Mr. Speaker. We think those are important investments.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The question was on partisan government advertising, and I can see why the Premier doesn't want to answer, because they're embarrassed of how much they're using taxpayers. From wawa to petawawa, from Owen Sound to Parry Sound, this government is wasting taxpayer money on partisan vanity ads. And they applaud. They clap when they hear about how much money they're wasting, but I can tell you Ontarians are not applauding because it's unacceptable. It's unethical. Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable, it's unethical, it's irresponsible. They are campaigning on the public's dime. And my question, Mr. Speaker, is, for once, will they do the right thing? Will the government cancel these partisan ads that are being paid for by taxpayers? It's not right. In the world and you're spending more to promote your own selfish partisan purposes.

>> Premier Wynne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is one province in this country that has a law in place that forbids partisan advertising, and that province is Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We are the only province that prohibits partisan advertising. So, Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite again, I understand he does not want people in the province to know about ohip plus but we think it's important, Mr. Speaker. We think it's important that the 4 million children and young people in this province know that on January 1st, 2018 that they will receive free medication much it's important to

their families and important to them, Mr. Speaker. We think it's important, Mr. Speaker, to implement free tuition across the province and to build hospitals in niagara, Windsor, Hamilton, markdale.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier, and the Premier said that only one -- Passed a law to prevent partisan ads. Well, that was before this Premier. That was before this team completely eroded the powers of the auditor general for their only partisan purpose. Right now has the auditor general saying these are partisan self-congratulatory vanity ads and we have the government saying no. The auditor general's in favour of them. Who do I trust? Do I trust this Liberal Cabinet -- Or do I trust the auditor general? Mr. Speaker, I'm with the auditor general. They are abusing taxpayers. They are abusing tax pay Tories pay for their own partisan ads. You know what? Maybe it's -- But it's not right. They need to stop using taxpayers to sell their misguided agenda. No one in Ontario. Thinks it's right to use taxpayer money for partisan ads. Do the right thing. Pull these ads.

>> Premier Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me just remind the member opposite that, because facts still matter in Ontario, the legislation that bans partisan advertising is still in place in Ontario. And, Mr. Speaker, let me just pick up on something that the leader of the opposition said. He talked about a misguided agenda. But what is he talking about? He's talking about ohip plus pharmacare for young people from zero to 25. He's talking about free tuition for young people from low income families. He's talking about building hospitals and schools across this province. He's talking about hydro leave across the province, Mr. Speaker. These are supports people of this province need. We have the first balanced budget in nearly a decade, Mr. Speaker. We are going to make investments in the people of this province because the people of this province have earned that support, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Hydro rates have gone up 300% under the Liberals and 50% just under this Premier. People have good reason to be suspicious about any action that the Premier takes on the hydro file. And now leaked documents of course show that hydro rates will be going up even further as a result of the Premier's scheme, causing even more scepticism about the Liberals' handling of our electricity system in this province. Will the Premier come clean with Ontarians on the future costs of hydro before they are hydro scheme, her borrowing scheme is voted on in this legislature?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of energy's going to want to comment in the supplementary. But let me just say that we have been very clear. I

have been very clear. The Minister of energy's been very clear with the people of this province that we have made investments in the electricity system in Ontario. \$50 billion to make a reliable, clean, renewable electricity grid in -- Clear that there was a cost associated with that, Mr. Speaker, and that that cost needs to be shared over the generations that are actually going to use that asset, Mr. Speaker, and so we are bringing forward a reduction of 25% on people's electricity bills to be in place by the summer, Mr. Speaker, and, to do that, we are spreading the costs over a longer period of time and that means that not just this generation today will pay for those costs. But that will be spread over a longer period of time. We've been very clear with the people of Ontario that that's what we're doing.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier's borrowing scheme will cause hydro rates to soar by over 50%. She denies this but she hasn't shown the people of Ontario any evidence to back up that denial. Will the public get any additional information on how much the Premier proposes to increase hydro costs after the next election so they can provide educated, informed feedback at the committee hearings next week, Speaker ?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As stated, we're bringing forward legislation that will actually reduce everyone's bills by up to 25% on average, Mr. Speaker. It's important that people know about this so they can understand that this government is acting to ensure that we're making our system as affordable as can be, Mr. Speaker, for many of these families. 800,000 families that live in the rural and northern parts of our province, Mr. Speaker, they'll see a 40 to 50% reduction. And that's what we're doing right now, Mr. Speaker, in the short term. In the medium term, Mr. Speaker, we're ensuring that we're holding the rates to the cost of inflation. And then for the long term, Mr. Speaker, the 2017 long-term energy plan will project where costs are going to be so people can see the transparent process that we have. Because we rebuilt the system, one that is coal-free, that is clean. That is reliable.

>> Andrea Horvath: The Premier and her Liberal government have made a mess of our hydro system, and it has cost Ontario families and businesses far too much. And they think it's funny, but it isn't funny when people have to make choices about paying their hydro bill or putting food on the table, or choices about keeping people employed or paying their business's electricity bill. From the gas plant scandal to the broken promises not to sell off Hydro One, to the four years, four years of denying that there was any problem at all with people's rising hydro bills, why has this Premier had so much trouble reconciling what she says with what she does?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of reconciliation, when it comes to talking, Mr. Speaker, and acting, it's this Premier that actually committed this

government to bringing forward the fair hide rode plan and that's reducing everybody's bills across this province, Mr. Speaker, by 25%. If you look, Mr. Speaker, at a plan that has no reconciliation and no idea on how it ever achieve a number, it's the pamphlet that the NDP Put together, Mr. Speaker. There is absolutely no way that they're going to take off one cent, not a single cent off of anyone's bills. And let alone, Mr. Speaker, they don't even talk about helping low-income individuals until the last page in one line. Mr. Speaker, part of our -- a large part of our plan is helping our low-income individuals. Our seniors. Our on-reserve first nations people that they don't even mention in their plan, Mr. Speaker. This is a plan that will work for every Ontarian.

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: My next question's also for the Premier. Leaked documents show very clearly that the Premier knows her \$40 billion borrowing scheme is going to end up costing families and businesses on their already sky-high hydro bills. But she denies at that her plan is based on these documents. Well, if leaked information is inaccurate, Speaker, why won't the Premier just come clean and release the information that did inform her plan?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: So again, Mr. Speaker, let me just reinforce what I have said in this House in previous days, Mr. Speaker. There is a short term, a midterm and a long-term plan around electricity prices. We know that people need relief now, Mr. Speaker. That's what the 25% on average reduction for all Ontarians is, Mr. Speaker, and it will be in place by the summer. We will then hold those -- the rate of increase of electricity bills down for four years, Mr. Speaker, to the level of inflation. And then, Mr. Speaker, the long-term energy plan this is being developed right now will give businesses and families around the province a snapshot of just that, the long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker. But we will continue over the medium and the long term to continue to take costs out of the system, which is -- Each one of our long-term energy plans, Mr. Speaker. We found ways to take costs out. That will continue and the people of the province -- when that plan is ready, they will see it, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what the Premier neglected to say is that, after four years, those bills are going to soar in Ontario. By over 50%. Leaked documents show that the hydro bills will absolutely go up. Yet the Premier's answer to this disgusting betrayal of Ontario families and businesses, just trust me. Just trust me. It's going to all be fine. Well, Ontarians are getting pretty fed up with the "Just trust me" line, Speaker. It's what the Premier said before she broke her promise not to sell off hide rode one and what she said about the Sudbury bribery charges right before a criminal investigation got under way. "Just trust me" is not good enough for the people of Ontario. When will this Premier release the information she says is showing the long-term effects of her

borrowing scheme so that Ontarians have all the facts -- Before she rams this legislation through the House ?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's be clear. We have -- So as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The fact is 25% is coming off of everybody's bills, Mr. Speaker, before summer once this legislation passes. 50% is coming off 800,000 families' bills, Mr. Speaker, in northern and in rural parts of our province. That's a significant savings for these families, Mr. Speaker. We're also helping small businesses and farms. When you want to -- when you want to continue to talk about facts, Mr. Speaker, it is this government that cleaned up the mess left by the opposition parties when they were in power and the system that they left for us to clean -- Mr. Speaker, our plan has been praised by poverty advocates, by indigenous leaders, by business leaders and by energy experts, Mr. Speaker. Francesca Dobben executive director of the United Way of Bruce- Grey says this government is listening to the people with positive changes our rural community will now truly benefit from the low-cost power it produces, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, clarity is actually what the people of this province need and deserve but they're not getting any of it from their government. The Premier's scheme punishes families who are already struggling with their electricity bills. She is rushing through the House, shutting down debates. If I chance of meaningful public input is being truncated by this government. And she claims that the leaked documents that came to light last week about the plan are inaccurate, but she refuses to come clean with the people of the province about the facts. Why is this Premier going to such great lengths, Speaker, to make sure that the people don't have all the information about a plan that will affect their lives for three decades or more?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we have short-term solutions, medium-term solution and a long-term solution, Mr. Speaker. 25% off with all of the other programs that are coming out, Mr. Speaker, through the fair hydro plan is something that all families will see right before summer, Mr. Speaker. We hope to have that passed and get it into their pockets, Mr. Speaker, as soon as possible. In the medium term we are holding rates to the cost of inflation for the next four years. And then when it comes to the long term, Mr. Speaker, we are the only party that actually can plan long term. These parties opposite have no idea. One of them doesn't even have a plan, Mr. Speaker. They have no idea on what to do when it comes to electricity. We're making sure, Mr. Speaker, that we're bringing forward reductions that will help families all at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we cleaned up a system. We've made sure it's clean. It's reliable and it is something, Mr. Speaker, we should all be proud of. People look to us to see what they can do to emulate our system, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Harris to Minister Del Duca (Electric Cars)

>> MPP Michael Harris: To the Minister of transportation. Speaker, \$1 million can go a long way here in the province. It could help children with special needs or people struggling to pay their hydro bills. But instead of helping those in Ontario to need it the most the government has decided to use \$1 million of taxpayer money to open up an electric vehicle car shop. Minister Murray called this an absurd waste of taxpayers' money the first of I understand -- its kind. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell us if this taxpayer-funded vanity project will be also the last of its kind?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. Very happy to take the question from the member. This member who's served in this legislature for a number of years would know that over the last number of years there have been a number of initiatives that our government has brought forward with respect to supporting consumers who tell us loudly and clearly, Speaker, that they want to do their part in the very crucial fight against climate change. Speaker, we know here in the province of Ontario that roughly 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions flow as a result of activities within the transportation sector, and a large share of those, Speaker, come as a result of people who are driving vehicles that have traditional internal combustion engines. That's why over the last number of years we have brought forward a number of initiatives, including the electric vehicle incentive program, Speaker, including support for the expansion of a significant build-out of a charging infrastructure network in every corner of the province of Ontario. Because we want to help enable the kinds of choices that consumers tell us they want to make in order to do their part with respect to that fight against climate change, Speaker.

>> MPP Harris: Yes, thanks, Speaker. You know, Speaker, this government refuses to fund life changing treatments for rare disease patients. While these Minister s hand out 14 grand rebates to luxury electric Tesla owners and waste millions every dollars on electric car lots. Now in the real world, if someone wants to open a car lot they use their own money. But when the Minister s of transportation and environment unveiled Steven Glenn's electric car shop yesterday, they used \$1 million of taxpayer money on their government-funded vanity project. They can call it a discovery centre, an education centre. They can use whatever verbal spin they choose, but when it comes down to it, the Liberals just waste \$1 million taxpayer dollars building an electric car dealership. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister s be working weekends at the car dealership?

>> Minister Glen Murray: Mr. Speaker, -- I just want to point out that we are in a strategic partnership with all the major auto manufacturers and global. Every single vehicle, electric vehicle made in Ontario is sold in Ontario has been donated to be part

of it. The car dealers -- Dealers know this centre's absolutely essential to advance e.v.sales and the development of them. Every major auto manufacturer. But, Mr. Speaker, it does not surprise us over here that the party that voted -- Against every investment we've made in the auto sector that would have seen the Collective our auto sector -- Support this. The party who doesn't support 200 million, the biggest investment in E.V. Mobility to develop. Autonomous vehicles didn't support that.

May 17, 2017

MPP Brown to Premier (Hydro Advertising)

Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Surprise, surprise recent hydro bills across the province were stuffed with what appears to be partisan advertising. It appears like there's no line this Liberal government will not cross. Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to know specifically from this Premier is how much did this partisan Liberal advertising cost in hydro bills?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: I not Minister of energy's going to want to speak to the supplementary but let me just say that what is happening across the province is people are seeing their electricity bills go down, Mr. Speaker. They're seeing reductions of their electricity bills. That's what our fair hydro plan is about, Mr. Speaker. I understand the leader of the opposition wants to talk about anything but the fact that he doesn't have a plan and did not ever have a plan to reduce people's electricity bills. We are doing that people are seeing those reductions on their bills millimetre and that's exactly as it should be as people struggle to manage their finances on a day-to-day basis, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that the Premier can defend this propaganda with a straight face -- face. It's wrong. She knows it's wrong. The member for Prince Edward- Hastings wrote to the auditor general about these Liberal ads stuffed in hydro bills n.her response she essentially said this is not the first time the Liberals have used hydro bills for partisan purposes. They jammed election-style ads in hydro bills just before the 2011 election. Now we know the government has no shame. They will continue to cross lines to try to pitch this alternate reality of their farce of a hydro plan. As usual the Liberals will do anything to look out for the Liberal party, not for ratepayers in Ontario. I ask this. When do they realize that they have to stop using Ontario taxpayer resources to push their own partisan agenda? It's getting worse and worse. Will you listen to the auditor general and do the right thing?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things we continue to do as a government, Mr. Speaker, is bring forward a plan that will reduce rates by 25% by July 1st of course, Mr. Speaker, if this legislation passed. That's 25% reduction for

small businesses. That's 25% reduction for farms, Mr. Speaker, and 25% -- For all families right across the province. When it comes to making sure people -- this government that brought forward that plan. It's this government that is making sure that those 800,000 families in this province that live in the rural or northern -- Actually will see a 40 to 50% reduction. What they also know, Mr. Speaker, is the opposition have no plan and when they have no plan for electricity, Mr. Speaker, that just means they have no plan for Ontario.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. Partisan false propaganda. That's what this is, Mr. Speaker. The auditor general had this to say. She said the government's most recent advertising on its fair hydro plan would not have passed review. That's the auditor general. Further, the auditor general said they found that advertising to be misleading and self-congratulatory. It's not just opposition. Not just the media saying this hydro plan is a farce. It is the independent legislative oversight saying it's misleading and self-congratulatory in terms much these ads. Clearly the Liberals are using taxpayer money for their own partisan gains. That's not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, will the Liberals pull their hydro election ads and stop campaigning on taxpayers' dime? It's pretty simple request. Will you simile do the right thing and stop abusing taxpayers for their own partisan gain?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the P.C.S don't want the people of Ontario to know there's going to be a 25% reduction coming by summer, Mr. Speaker. I know that the P.C. S don't want people tock especially with the utilities. We have about and I know they don't like telling people of Ontario what's actually happening, Mr. Speaker, because they have no plan when it comes to electricity. Mr. Speaker, they don't know -- they have -- you know, when it comes to their approach, Mr. Speaker, their approach doesn't lower bills for families. It doesn't lower bills for small businesses. It doesn't lower bills for long-term care homes. And it doesn't do anything to address Ontario's indigenous communities, Mr. Speaker. And why is that? Because, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan. When they don't have a plan for electricity, they have no plan on what to do in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We have brought forward a plan that's going to reduce bills by 25% that will help everyone in this province.

MPP Horwath to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, in less than an hour the Liberal government is going to force through you a time allocation motion that severely limits debate on their hydro financing scheme, borrowing scheme really is what it is. When that happens this legislature will have had about 7 hours of debate on this bill. Seven hours, Speaker. Seven hours for legislation that will impact people's lives for the next 30

years. It's ludicrous. Why does this Premier insist upon ramming this legislation through the House ?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the government has leaders want to speak to the procedural mechanisms. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to just make it clear that what we are doing is working to help people in their lives. Whether it is the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's ohip plus pharmacare, which will give all children across the province from zero to their 25th birthday free medication, Mr. Speaker. Those are -- that we believe are critical. It is outrageous to me Mr. Speaker -- It is very pricing -- surprising the NDP Has indicated they will vote against both those measures, Mr. Speaker, and they would rather, would rather focus on procedural mechanisms and games, Mr. Speaker, that actually deal with the substance.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what is outrageous is the plan that the Liberals are trying to ram through this legislature that will cost people more money in a couple years' time when it comes to their electricity bill. Look, in addition to the limited debate that they're allowing here, they're also going to limit where the people of Ontario will have an opportunity to have their say. All of the public hearings that they've just had a change of heart on this morning are going to be happening here in Toronto. Why won't the people in London be able to have their say, Speaker, or the people in Windsor or in Ottawa or in Thunder Bay or anywhere else outside of Toronto, Speaker ? Why will those Ontarians not have a chance to have their say on this legislation?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Well, Speaker, thank you very much. I can tell you on this side of the House we are extremely proud to bring forward bill 132. That is going to provide for immediate relief for all Ontarians by cutting their hydro bills by 25%, Speaker. In fact, Speaker, the bill does not Speaker, it is beyond comprehension. It's why the NDP's again giving Ontarians a significant relief from their hydro bills. Speaker, NDP Say they haven't had enough time to debate this bill. Yet they announced the opposition to this bill within the first hour of introduction of this bill. Clearly their minds are made up. They don't want to help Ontarians.

>> Andrea Horwath: What the NDP Is against is giving the people of Ontario the shaft on their hydro bills. That's what this government is about to do. This morning, this morning we did. We did call on this government to have a change of heart and to provide an opportunity for more public hearings, and of course the Liberals said no and then they had a sudden change of heart. But not surprisingly the government has decided to have all of the public hearings here in Toronto. That is not giving the people of Ontario a safe, Speaker. That's giving some people an opportunity to have a say, a say. So here we have an extremely important piece of legislation that's going to impact

people's hydro bills in a very negative way in the short order. And this government's not prepared to seek input from people across the province. Why?

>> Minister Naqvi: (Transcript cut out for beginning of response)...We don't want to delay people of Ontario. Our government wants to have that 25 right away. The NDP Wants to debate the issue.

MPP Horwath to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

Andrea Horwath: My next question's also for the Premier. In 2013 the Premier said this about her party's cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants and I quote, I never said this wasn't a political decision. Ment. Will the Premier admit right now. That her hydro borrowing scheme is just a political decision design today try to -- Hold on to power in the next election.

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our decision to reduce people's electricity bills by 25% has everything to do with people's ability to pay their electricity bills and to manage their budgets, Mr. Speaker. That's what our plan is about. And, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the \$50 billion of investment that has been made in the electricity system to make it clean, renewable and reliable, Mr. Speaker, investment that was necessary because previous governments have not made those investments, Mr. Speaker, and we were dealing with a degraded electricity system in 2003, we recognize that the costs associated with that needs to be spread over a longer period of time. That's what we're doing, and in doing that, Mr. Speaker, we are able to give people immediate relief, 25% reduction this summer, and, Mr. Speaker, in rural and northern communities, some people will see. A 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. That is in response to people's need in this province. That's what the fair hydro plan is about.

>> Andrea Horwath: Last fall the Premier also admitted that soaring hydro bills were per his her mistake in the first place. She said and I quote, I take responsibility as leader for not paying close enough attention to some of the daily stresses in Ontarians' lives. Electricity prices are a prime example. Why is the Premier pushing forward, Speaker, with a hydro borrowing scheme when documents know -- documents show, rather, as she knows that it will cause hydro bills to go up even further and cause even more stress for the families and businesses that she just apologized to six months ago.

>> Premier Wynne: So, Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear that we were working on a number of initiatives. We removed 8%, Mr. Speaker, from people's bills. We renegotiated the Samsung contract, Mr. Speaker. We've been workings on this not for months but for years to remove costs from the system because we recognize that those

investments to upgrade the system were costly and had a cost associated with them. In removing 25% from people's bills, Mr. Speaker, we have said that that means that the costs will be shared over a longer period of time. And in the short term that 25% reduction will help people immediately. In the midterm, Mr. Speaker, we will hold those bills down to the rate of inflation, and in the long term, the long-term electricity plan, long-term energy plan is being developed and we will continue to take costs out of the system. This is immediate relief, Mr. Speaker, but we recognize that there's a longer-term plan that's needed. That plan is being developed, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this Premier and this government are plagued by scandal. The Sudbury by-election, bribery charges, the broken promise not to sell Hydro One, the gas plant decision and now, ramming an ill thought out hydro borrowing scheme through the House with no F.A.O. Assessment, with just six sitting days left and very very little time for the people of Ontario to review it and most importantly when she knows it will end up costing people in this province more on their hydro bills. When will the Premier put an end to Liberal scandals and just admit she has no real plan to lower people's hydro bills, only another political decision.

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, people across this province are going to see a 25% reduction on average between 23 and 2% reduction on average. On Nair electricity bills by summer, Mr. Speaker. People in northern and rural communities, many will see up to a 40 to 60% reduction, Mr. Speaker. On January 1st, 2018, children across this province will have access to free medication, Mr. Speaker. This fall, this September students will be going to College without having to pay tuition. Low-income families will go -- Kids will be going to university and to College and taking training programs without having to pay tuition. My job as Premier is to put in place plans that are real, that give people real relief and that work and have real-time --

MPP Fedeli to Sousa (Ontario Budget)

MPP Vic Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Later this morning we'll be voting on the government's budget measures bill. This includes giving the availability did to municipalities to implement a new hotel tax. On this new tax, the Liberal MPP From mississauga-streetsville stated, and I quote, this is a bad idea and I do not support it. He went on to say, and again I'm quoting, to attempt to tax out-of-town residents is taxation without representation. Even the Premier's own members have serious objections to this bill. I ask the Premier, is that why debate was cut off? Did the Premier not want the member from mississauga-streetsville and others to share these objections with the legislature?

>> Minister Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was correct on one point. We are passing a bill this afternoon to pass a first balanced budget since the depth of the recession, Mr. Speaker. A balanced budget that's going to meet the needs of the people of Ontario. A budget that's going to support all our children under the age of 25 with free medication, a budget that's going to provide supports for education and health care, with record investments. A budget that's going to provide for more roads and bridges and public transit, Mr. Speaker. And next, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide the city of Toronto and other municipalities with more powers at their request. Mr. Speaker, what's important here is that we're providing for the people of Ontario and that member opposite should be supporting that as well.

>> MPP Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, my question is back to the Premier. Premier, the member from Mississauga-Streetsville isn't the only one of your members that disagrees with your policies. The Liberal member from Beaches-East York said, quote, the rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP Government under BOB Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto, and other communities in Ontario because it didn't allow the private sector to contain the bill. He went on to say, quote, I would resist tremendously any amendment to this legislation that would bring -- Premier, did you cut off debate on bill 24 so that your members couldn't raise these objections in the legislature?

>> Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has just made reference -- The member opposite just made reference to 16 measures, comprehensive measures to try to cool the market, to address demand and supply in our housing sector. To provide and support the people of Ontario and homeowners who are trying to get into the market. The member opposite is suggesting otherwise. Again they're voting against the people of Ontario. They're not supporting the very families that are trying to get into the marketplace as we've addressed in those measures going forward, Mr. Speaker. I asked the member opposite a first question, what will they cut as we proceed forward in these measures, Mr. Speaker? Will they cut pharmacare for the children of our communities? Will they cut hospitals and education and schools -- That's what they're voting for. They're voting against the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Hillier to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

MPP Randy Hillier: My question is for the Premier. Throughout April and May, I received hundreds and hundreds of letters from my constituents expressing outrage over their hydro bill and the excessive costs of electricity on their families and their homes -- and businesses. Every single one of these letters is addressed to the Premier and it has the hydro bill attached to it. Mr. Speaker, my constituents blame the Premier for her interference, her meddling and ideological pursuits which result under this hydro scandal. I'm going to

send these letters over to the Premier with the page. These people deserve an honest answer and response from the architect of this anarchy. Speaker, will the Premier be straight with my constituents? In response? Or will they have to continue to rely on leaked Cabinet documents instead?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate, I appreciate the correspondence that the member has sent and that we certainly will look at it and respond, Mr. Speaker. And I assume that these letters have come into my office. I'll have to look at them, Mr. Speaker. You know what, I will say to each one of them is that we recognize that electricity costs needed to be dealt with. We recognize that making sure that we had a reliable, clean electricity grid had a cost associated with it, Mr. Speaker. And we recognize that it is very important that we take 25% off their bills by summer, Mr. Speaker, so that they will have an easier time -- Mr. Speaker, and. I will further say the way we are doing that is we are asking the people of Ontario over a longer period of time to pay for the purpose those upgrades of the electricity system. And even the playing field, Mr. Speaker. I will absolutely be happy to say that --

>> MPP Hillier: Speaker, again to the Premier. I asked for a straightforward and honest response because I read that confidential Cabinet document on the global adjustment smoothing, as well as so many others have. And it states, after this year, we can expect rates to continue to rise, and in ten years' time 50% higher. Everybody sees this as a sleight of hand, Speaker and craft electioneering tactic to try to refloat their floundering political ship. Speaker, the Premier needs to explain and be truthful to the people of Ontario, that what this government says in this House and to the media appears to be very different than what is being said behind those very secretive Cabinet doors. And I believe -- Suffering energy poverty deserve the truth. Does the Premier believe they deserve the truth?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Talking about being truthful, Mr. Speaker, let's be truthful about those bills. Those are Hydro One bills, Mr. Speaker. R1 and R2 customers, they will see 40 to 50% off on those bills, Mr. Speaker. I hope that that member will be honest with them and let them know that he and his party are voting against that. 40 to 50%. And you are voting against that. Seniors in your riding. You're voting against -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for that. Through you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the member is telling the constituents in his riding that they are getting a 40 to 50% reduction that he's voting against. I hope that he's telling the constituents in his riding that they have no plan, that they have no idea on what to do. The only thing that they can do, Mr. Speaker, is --

MPP Yakabuski to Del Duca (Highway 417 Expansion)

MPP John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of transportation. I'm sure the Minister of transportation was as surprised as I was when the 2017/2018 budget was tabled and there was not a single mention of the continued

expansion of highway 417 in Renfrew county. Mr. Speaker, All officials and my constituents were equally disappointed. This is a vital transportation corridor which is not only of great importance to the economic success of Renfrew county. It is also part of the trans-canada highway system. Speaker, will the Minister explain why this most important link did not speed any -- receive any priority in the government's recent budget? And can we expect him to ensure that mistake will be rectified in the next five-year infrastructure plan?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I do want to begin by thanking the member from Renfrew- Nipissing- Pembroke for his question. I have said before in this House, in response to a very similar question from that member on this exact same topic, Speaker, that I certainly do respect the advocacy that he brings to the discussion around this important infrastructure project. For his community. In fact, Speaker, I will say as I said a number of weeks ago to that member, I do appreciate the work that he's done locally including inviting me out to speak with municipal representatives from his community and others, including from our military, our military base in that part of Ontario. What I said that day when I went to that community, Speaker, was that I recognize the Minister of transportation that we have a critical need to make sure that we continue to invest in all of the highway projects that are deserving of the investment on every corner of the province of tomorrow. In fact, Speaker, it's what our government's doing. In this year's budget. There are nearly \$3 billion set aside to invest in capital highway, potholes and improvements, Speaker. I would be quite happy to provide additional information on the follow-up question I know that member's going to ask. Thank you very much.

>> MPP Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's kind words. What I'd really like to hear is the roar of diesel engines and bulldozers and tandem trucks. The Minister will recall his visit to Renfrew county last year. I know the visit was hopeful to the Minister and was most appreciated by the municipal officials and others in attendance. The Minister conceded that a compelling case for continued expansion of highway 417 has certainly been made. The requirement to show that the project is vital and worthy of the Minister's support has been made. Not having it in the recent budget was again, I say, a disappointment. Speaker, will the Minister please correct this glaring omission in the 2017/2018 budget and commit to putting the expansion of 417 into his ministry's next five-year infrastructure plan?

>> Minister Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. So again I'll thank the member for the follow-up question. It's very clear I think to everyone here in this chamber that he brings a lot of passion to the advocacy for this particular issue, Speaker. It's certainly something that I certainly appreciate. Speaker, you know, this member has said what he

hopes to hear is that we're \$to be investing in highways in every corner of Ontario including in his community because he wants to hear the sound, the roar I think he put it, Speaker, of the machines that are building roads and highways and bridges again in every corner of Ontario. Speaker, that's why year after year, for the purpose literally five years that I've served here as an MPP, we have could be sicily invested unprecedented -- consistently invested in every corner of Ontario including in eastern Ontario. This year alone in the budget we are investing not only billions of dollars specifically for highways but overall \$190 billion over the next I believe it's 12 or 13 years, Speaker. An additional amount. Putting in, Speaker, because we understand for a couple of reasons we need to have the infrastructure for the future of our economy and for the quality of life we're proud to represent, Speaker. We also want to --

May 16, 2017

MPP Brown to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of energy. Yesterday the Premier said of the leaked Liberal Cabinet document, I quote -- not the document on which our plan was built. Mr. Speaker, if this is the case, will the Minister release the document that their plan was built on? The people deserve to know. Yes or no, will they do that?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The plan was introduced in the assembly last Thursday, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the opposition has already come out and said that he's going to vote against making sure that you know families and farms and small businesses in this province are going to get a 25% reduction. He also said he's going to vote against giving rural and northern families a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. You know, when it comes to making sure that we're acting in the short term, our fair hydro plan is going to bring that relief for families, for small businesses and for farms once we can get this legislation passed, Mr. Speaker. It has been 76 days since they've said that they would have some sort of idea on how to do something, Mr. Speaker. They've actually done nothing since that time. We've brought forward a plan that's going to work. For every single family in this province, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to getting this bill passed through the House .

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. My question was about the document, the Liberal Cabinet document, a graph that showed hydro rates are going to skyrocket in Ontario. We got an answer that was completely irrelevant to the question. So I'm going to ask again. We have the Premier saying the document was out of date, that their new plan was built on something else. This is a recent Liberal Cabinet document saying that their plan is going to skyrocket hydro rates. So I would give the Minister of energy another chance. If this was not recent, if this was not the plan --

Speaker, this document was not the one they built their plan on, like the Liberal Cabinet document says. Will the Minister release the graph that will show this is not the case? The people deserve to know. Yes or no, will you release the document?

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, the 2013 long-term -- Our government, with consultation with stakeholders and energy experts, showed where we believed prices were going to go. But what we've done, Mr. Speaker, is we've pulled costs out of the system. The \$3.5 billion renegotiation of the Samsung agreement, the cancellation of Irap, Mr. Speaker, both took significant billions of dollars out of the system. So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what the 2013 long-term energy plan said where we were going to be, we've actually reduced that number significantly. This plan that we have brought forward, Mr. Speaker, and are hoping to get passed through this House, we want to see that passed because we're going to bring 25%, on average, a reduction on every single electricity bill for families, small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker. 76 days, they've done nothing. It just shows, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan for --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. The Minister of energy quoted a 2013 long-term energy plan. I'm talking about a Liberal Cabinet document for 2017. Let's talk about what we're talking about right now. And right now the Liberal Cabinet have a graph that shows hydro rates are going to skyrocket and skyrocket and go through the roof. And I know they're doing damage control right now because a whistle-blower from this government exposed this government, that once again every time they touch hydro, they make it worse. Now a third time to the Minister of energy. If the Liberal Cabinet graph is wrong, if hydro rates are not going to skyrocket, will you do -- will you at least be fair to the people of Ontario and provide us a new graph, a new document that your plan is based on? Will we have that disclosure, yes or no?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course. Just like we did with the 2010 long-term energy plan and the 2013 long-term energy plan. We'll be bringing forward the 2017 long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker. That will show where we were going to project where prices are going to be. And you know where they're going to be right now, Mr. Speaker ? 25% lower than where they were last year and that's thanks to this government, Mr. Speaker, bringing forward a plan going to make sure that we help every single family, farm and small business in this province. Where's their plan, Mr. Speaker ? The last I heard they were joking it was in policy development. But now we know, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to conjure something up on that magic weekend in November. But what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is we're making sure 40 to 50% is coming off for 800,000 families as we make sure that we're helping those in rural and remote parts of our province and 25% coming off for every family, 500,000 small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Brown to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of energy. Based on the Liberal Cabinet document leak that shows hydro rates are going to skyrocket, I want to ask a very direct question to the Minister of energy. What will hydro rates be in Ontario in 2022? The document says they're going to skyrocket. Please correct the record. Tell us what hydro rates will be, what type of increase are we going to see in 2022?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again we've been talking about what we're going to do in the short term which is bring about 25% reduction. Oh, I know, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the medium term --Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the medium term for the next four years, we're holding our thoughts and rates of increases, Mr. Speaker, to the rate of inflation. The 2017 long-term energy plan. By 2022, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping we might see something from them that relates to a plan because I think it will take them that long, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. And he had a very revealing remark there. He said we're only focused on the short term. Surprise, surprise, Mr. Speaker. What's happening next year, it's an election and that's what costs Ontarians every time. They come up with gimmicks. They come up with games to create a House of cards and Ontario ends up paying more. Remember when we had the gas plant? Every time they're concerned about elections and not the long-term costs for Ontario, Ontarians pay more. So, Mr. Speaker, according to this Liberal document, this Liberal Cabinet document, by 2024. Electricity prices will reach a record high in Ontario. So my question to the Minister of energy, this document says we'll reach a record high in 2024. Is that correct? 2024 your document. This government's document says it will be a record high. Please tell us otherwise.

>> Minister Thibeault: That's incorrect, Mr. Speaker. The 2017 long-term energy plan is still being worked on, Mr. Speaker. We're still making sure that we're going to pull costs out of the system. And I know they have a hard time understanding anything about the electricity, Mr. Speaker, because they don't even have a plan. They first started talking about a five-point plan, then a three-point plan. And then a zero-point plan, Mr. Speaker. I not people of Ontario can't wait for a magic weekend in November. That's why we're bringing forward legislation, if passed, will reduce rates by 25%. That will help families, small businesses and farms. We got oesp program, Mr. Speaker. We have a first nation on reserve reduction, Mr. Speaker. These are things that are helping families. They've got nothing in their plan, Mr. Speaker. They don't even have –

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. This Liberal Cabinet document that shows hydro rates are going to skyrocket is so disappointing. I think many Ontarians hope that when the Liberals said they're finally going to address their own hydro mess that maybe we would have seen executive salaries be reined in. Maybe we would have seen the government say we were wrong to Collect \$1.3 million in donations from the 30 magna renewable contracts. That was bad policy. Maybe they would have apologized to Ontarians. Instead right now we've got an election gimmick. As the Minister of energy said himself, this is about the short term. I'm concerned about the long term. I'm concerned that our hydro rates are going to continue to skyrocket, and their own document says that. Actually, 2022 it goes up. 2024 it goes up. In your own document, in 2028 it's going to jump 10%. Mr. Speaker, families can't afford this. When are we actually going to address the structural problems in hydro? When will this government actually clean up their own mess?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A, structural changes are being done right now by our system operator with market renewal, market reform and a capacity option, Mr. Speaker. We're already two steps ahead of this party on many things, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the electricity file, we've even got a plan bringing forward serious reductions for all families. You know what, Mr. Speaker, a 25% reduction in the short term and in the medium term is something that families in this province want and need, and we're delivering, Mr. Speaker. A 40 to 50% reduction for families that live in the rural and northern parts of our province. That is something they need in the short term and in the medium term and we're delivering, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to the long term, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is going long term right now is we're 76 days without them putting one iota, one idea on the table about what to do. We've got a long-term plan coming. The 2017 long-term energy plan will continue to address and pull costs out of the system.

MPP Horwath to Minister Matthews (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> NCP Leader Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question's for the acting Premier. The Premier is trying to sell the public a bill of goods here. Leaked documents show that she knows that her hydro plan will end up causing hydro rates to soar, Speaker. But in a few months that she's been bragging about this plan, she's never mentioned that fact, know a once. Why is the Premier trying to hide the real cost of her hydro plan, Speaker ?

>> Minister Deb Matthews: You know, Speaker, we really want an Ontario where everybody has an even chance, where there's a level playing field. And we know, Speaker, that when you're worried about your hydro bill, you're not able to focus on those other things, Speaker, that will make your life better. So that's why we are reducing electricity prices by 25%, Speaker. We have a plan. It's an important plan. It

will provide relief for people. We are still waiting -- Speaker, we have had a plan, if you want to call it that, from the NDP And I'm happy to see that they're actually starting to execute that plan because one piece of that plan, Speaker, was to get the federal government to pay for -- Hydro prices. Now we're one step closer to having the member from Bramalea- Gore- Malton elected leader. Elected Prime Minister and then --

>> Andrea Horwath: I saw the Deputy leader over there prepared to vote for Jagmeet Singh for the leadership of the NDP Who knew she was a closet new Democrat, Speaker. She certainly doesn't act like one. Look, we know that this document was leaked last week, Speaker. It's a document that this government continues to claim is a document that's out of date. In fact the Premier uses that language. The Minister uses that language but I have to say that sounds more like, and I quote, the gas plant will only cost \$40 million, or I promise we won't sell Hydro One. Or nobody tries to bribe everybody in the Sudbury by-election. So that how the Premier and her Liberal party govern. They move from one scandal to the next, Speaker. Will this Premier stop the cycle of scandal and just come clean with the people of Ontario about the real cost of her borrowing scheme. That the people cannot afford?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise and talk about our fair hydro plan and of course, Mr. Speaker, the plan that is actually going to bring forward a 25% reduction to help all families, all small businesses, 500,000 of those small businesses and farms across the province, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we've acted to make sure that we have this legislation to get through this House because, if it passes, we're also going to help 800,000. 800,000 families in rural and northern parts of our province, Mr. Speaker. And I know the NDP And the P.C.S have already said that they're going to vote against this, Mr. Speaker. They're going to vote against giving families relief now, relief in the midterm, Mr. Speaker, and relief in the long term. Mr. Speaker, our plan is making sure that we build Ontario up, make sure that we create jobs, build the infrastructure we need and at the same time find ways reducing rates for all people right across this province.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker the bottom line is that the people of Ontario deserve the facts. They deserve the facts. The Premier needs to tell families and businesses what the real cost of this borrowing scheme will be, and they deserve to know how much Premier Wynne intend to increase the hydro bills, and they deserve to know now. They deserve to know now, Speaker, before the next election. That's when people need the information. So will this Premier and this Minister do the right thing and tell Ontario families and businesses, tell everyone that's sitting in this chamber right now what the real cost of their plan is going to be?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about facts. 25% reduction for all families. 500,000 small businesses and farms in this province. Another fact, Mr. Speaker, 800,000 families in rural or northern parts of our province will see a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker, once we can get this legislation passed. The Ontario electricity support program, fact, Mr. Speaker. Increased by an additional 50%. New line items including more people to qualify for that. Fact, Mr. Speaker, 192,000 families are currently on the oesp program. Nor fact, Mr. Speaker, is that we've reduced the delivery line for first nations, on reserve first nations. That's an \$85 savings, Mr. Speaker, to those families. That's a fact that we're making a difference in their lives. Another fact, Mr. Speaker, is both the NDP And the P.C.S have said they are voting against this, Mr. Speaker. The other fact is that's going to hurt every family in this province.

MPP Horwath to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's also for the acting Premier. Last week I was in Sault Ste. Marie where I met Steve and Lucy fronzly. Steve and Lucy are business owners, Speaker. They have a number of country style doughnuts and m&m meat shops. At each store their monthly hydro bills are now costing \$2,000. They spend over \$10,000 a month just on their hydro bills. They've done everything that they can do to reduce costs. They've changed all the lighting. They extra work on their freezers to make them more energy efficient, but nothing is bringing their bills down. How can the Premier implement a hydro plan that will end up costing this hard working family even more in a couple years' time?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've said, the fair hydro plan applies to small businesses. Many of these small businesses that the leader of the third party has mentioned will qualify for the fair hydro plan and that 25% reduction. So these businesses and these family-run businesses will see that 25% reduction if passed, Mr. Speaker, and that is making sure that we are helping these small businesses keep more money in their pockets so they can continue to expand and grow just like we've been seeing other businesses like outspoken do that in Sault Ste. Marie, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to find ways to help our small businesses in this province, and when it comes to electricity concerns, we've even addressed toast that don't qualify for the 25% reduction. We changed the I.C.I. Program once again, Mr. Speaker. This will actually reduce the rates of qualification to ensure that thousands more businesses. Will qualify again, Mr. Speaker, saving businesses in this province thousands of dollars on their electricity bills.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the congys employ over 50 people in the Sault. They pride themselves on being able to offer good jobs to Sault residences. But with their exorbitant hydro bills they're worried they have to cut back on staff. Why is this Premier,

why is this Liberal government forcing good community-minded employers like Steve and Lucy to choose between providing jobs in Sault Ste. Marie and paying hydro bills?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again as I said, these type of businesses will qualify for the 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker, so that's good news for the 500,000 small businesses that actually qualify for this program. We're also working with the Ontario chamber of commerce to make sure that we can get all of the programs that are out to help many of these businesses lower their consumption. When they lower their consumption, Mr. Speaker, they also lower their bills. The I.C.I. Program that I know many of the businesses in the Sault are actually seeing, Mr. Speaker, this will actually help them lower their bills by up to a third. For those that weren't qualifying before, Mr. Speaker, for this program, we lowered the threshold from 1 megawatt to 500 kilowatts or .5 megawatts, Mr. Speaker. That opens up this program for thousands of businesses right across the province. We're going to continue to work with the chamber of commerce. We're going to continue to work with small businesses to make sure that they can continue to grow and make Ontario prosper.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Steve and Lucy are not alone. All over Ontario, businesses that were promised relief are now reeling from the truth that the Liberal hydro plan is a borrowing scheme that is designed to make Liberal friends rich at the expense of hard working Ontario families. Why is this Premier punishing, punishing Ontario families and businesses with this wrong-headed hydro scheme?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only two parties that are punishing Ontarians are the opposition parties, Mr. Speaker, by voting against this bill. How can they say, Mr. Speaker, that a 25% reduction today is punishing? It is actually helping families, small businesses and farms right across our province. Not only this year, Mr. Speaker, not only next year and not only the following year but the year after that, Mr. Speaker. And then the 2017 long-term energy plan will kick in and you know what, Mr. Speaker? We're going to continue to take costs out of the system that will see rates even drop more, Mr. Speaker. We found ways to make sure that we can help Ontario families. We're going to continue to do that. They can talk about magic weekends in November and coming up with policies or ideas that's pie in the sky, Mr. Speaker, that don't do anything and don't even take a single cent. Neither party has talked about how they can take a single cent off any bill. We're taking 25%, Mr. Speaker, and we're proud of that.

May 15, 2017

PC Leader Brown to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last week we revealed a leaked Cabinet document showing that skyrocketing hydro prices were going to be back to Normal in Ontario. Hydro bills will hit a record high in 2024, and then in 2028, the average bill will hit well over \$200. Those families already faced with a ridiculously high hydro bill will see it jump another 6.5%. And 10.5% in 2028. Hydro rates will be higher than they've ever been before. Mr. Speaker, why does this government refuse to actually fix the structural problems in hydro? It's about time they -- Hydro.

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member opposite knows that he's referring to a document that is out of date, Mr. Speaker. A document that was part of -- that was part of the deliberation as we developed our fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, the reality is, as a plan -- as a plan is developed, and it may be -- Mr. Speaker, as a plan is developed, there is much input and there are many -- Mr. Speaker, the many iterations of options and information that come forward in the development of a plan. We want an Ontario with an even playing field, Mr. Speaker. Our fair hydro plan is about moving in that direction, creating a fairer Ontario where people have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, all Ontarians, to achieve equally, and so taking 25% off all the electricity bills of residents in this province, Mr. Speaker, from the residential bill, that is the fair thing to do and that's what our plan will do.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. So the Premier's defence is the document was out of date. We're talking about just a few months ago. 2017 is out of date. The only thing out of date is this government. Population of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal press secretary called these leaked Cabinet documents on energy false and inaccurate. Now the new speaking point is out of date. The Minister of energy said he's seen thousands of graphs but he couldn't comment on the leaked Cabinet document. Well, if he can't comment on that leaked document, will the Premier pledge here today to show us the graph, recent graph that will actually show hydro rates going down? That would be one -- Mr. Speaker --

>> Premier Wynne: Speaker, a document can be false and out of date at the same time because it is not a document on which our plan is built. It was part of the process of developing our plan. But, Mr. Speaker, you know, when I talk about a fairer Ontario, I talk about an Ontario where people have the opportunity to live out their dreams. And, Mr. Speaker, we recognize, we recognize that we have wonderful institutions in this province. We have a wonderful health care system. We have a wonderful publicly funded education system, Mr. Speaker. They are strong. They have been built up over

the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, and we intend to keep them that way. But, Mr. Speaker, there are people in this province, even though our economy is doing very well, there are people who are not sharing in that. So our budget, Mr. Speaker, is about addressing those concerns, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that it is the first balanced budget in a decade. In nearly a decade in Ontario. We have the opportunity now to invest in people and make sure that that playing field is more level.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. And my question was, given the recent Cabinet document that hydro rates are going to go out of control again -- and that's their graph -- my question was will the Premier commit to showing a new document that shows hydro rates actually going down? This fair hydro plan is a boring plan. It kicks the can down the road. It does nothing on reining in executive salaries. Does nothing on these bad contracts. It does nothing on the water power every day. It does nothing on the hydro we're giving for free to Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York. It's not a plan. It's a reelection gimmick. So when will the Premier actually show us the hydro plan with hydro rates going down?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very pleased to rise to show the official opposition leader a plan on how to reduce rates. If passed, Mr. Speaker, by 25%. And I know he doesn't have a plan, Mr. Speaker. So what they want to do is stand up and complain. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? We made sure that we looked after families, farms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We looked after families, farms, 500,000 small businesses right across the province, Mr. Speaker. And again it just shows that the party opposite has no idea what to do on the energy file, has no plan, because all they have to do, Mr. Speaker, to look at the 2010 long-term energy plan, the 2013 long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker. You know what? We have a plan coming forward in 2017 that will continue to show. That prices will continue to be lower, unlike that party. No idea. No idea on how to work for electricity for the people of Ontario.

PC Leader Brown to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The government has a fictional 25% band-aid solution. Their hydro scheme, Mr. Speaker, doesn't help struggling families. It's all about helping a party with struggling polling numbers. Now the reality, Mr. Speaker, is -- Leaked Cabinet document, it says very clearly that because of their hydro plan, there will be a temporary 25% decrease but it will be matched -- now this is as reported in the cbc as from the Liberal Cabinet document -- it will be matched by a 61% increase after the next election. So temporary borrow, get a temporary decrease then skyrocket 61%. People can't afford their hydro buys right now in Ontario and they put forward a plan that's going to have hydro rates go up 61%? Mr. Speaker, it's unbelievable. When will this Premier actually -- Solve structural problems at hydro?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, and it is not to be believed because the leader of the opposition is using a document, Mr. Speaker, that was given to the cbc but is out of date, was not the document on which the plan was built, Mr. Speaker. So let's just deal in the facts. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that the document that the leader of the opposition is referencing is not the document on which our plan was built. Our plan will reduce people's bills across the province by 25%. We were very, very clear, Mr. Speaker, that we were asking right now, this generation, to pay costs of the investments that have been made in our electricity system to upgrade it because it had been neglected and that those costs needed to be spread over a longer period of time. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. That's how people will receive a reduction. And Mr. Speaker -- We came up with it and it will reduce people's bills by 25%.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The government simply can't come clean. There is a recent Liberal Cabinet document -- I realize they're frustrated that there's now whistle-blowers exposing this government, but their numbers do not add up. Their plan doesn't help Ontarians. It's a temporary decrease for a massive increase. Even the Minister of energy said the fair hydro plan will cost more and it will take us longer to pay off. Thank you for that assessment. But the reality is how much more is it going to cost Ontarians? Because every time this government touches hydro, they make it worse. And with projections of it going up 61%, that gives Ontarians a heart attack. And so they say this document is outdated because it is a few weeks or a few months old. My question, Mr. Speaker, is this. If they're saying that graph is not accurate, will you release the most recent graph. Show Ontarians that you don't have a plan to skyrocket hydro rates.

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: I not leader of the official opposition is having a very hard time understanding how a plan works and how a plan evolves because they don't build plans, Mr. Speaker. They wait for a magic weekend in November to actually devise plans for the entire province. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we've been working hard for the last six months on making sure that we can deliver real relief for families in this province and in short, Mr. Speaker, they will see a 25% reduction if this bill passes, Mr. Speaker, on average. As we move past, Mr. Speaker, for the next four years, we are holding these costs to inflation, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that families have predictability -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I was saying we're holding it to the cost of inflation for the next four years and then after that, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to find ways to pull costs out of the system to ensure that we can keep rates as low as possible. I know they're waiting for their magic weekend to make things magically appear. We're acting now, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: Once again, people deserve to know the truth. If the document is not precise, what are the real figures? Mr. Speaker, how will we know that the tariffs will not increase and how will families pay?

>> Minister Thibeault: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government here works very hard to reduce costs for Ontarians by 25%.

For us, for the government, Mr. Speaker, it's very important to change it, because the party opposite of us has not changed anything.

[End of Translation] Making sure we're acting and we're bringing forward legislation. If passed, we'll make sure that we see a 25% reduction.

[Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: But the opposition forgets people in the rural province.

[End of Translation] See reductions between 40 to 50%, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely no idea on how to deal with that on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We're acting -- Mr. Speaker.

NDP Leader Horwath to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question's for the Premier. Thanks to documents leaked by a whistle-blower last week, we now know for sure that hydro rates will soar as a result of the Liberal government's hydro scheme. And what's worse is that these documents prove that the Premier knows it too. So can the Premier explain, Speaker, why she is so clearly putting her desire to get reelected ahead of the well-being of Ontarians?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well again, Mr. Speaker, the document to which the leader of the third party refers is a document that -- The document that was not used to establish our plan, Mr. Speaker, and in the development of a plan, there are many options that are put forward, Mr. Speaker. There's modelling that is done. Our plan was built to reduce people's bills by 25% across the province, Mr. Speaker, and keep those bills down in the immediate term and in the midterm and the long term, Mr. Speaker, we will develop a long-term energy plan that will continue to take costs out of the system. Mr. Speaker, our fair hydro plan was designed to meet the needs of residents across this province. Already seeing those initial reductions, and by summer they will see a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this is a height of arrogance. Ontario families who are struggling under the crushing weight, the crushing weight of the damage that this Premier has done to our hydro system are frustrated. And rightfully so. The Premier bragged, Speaker, for two months the Premier bragged about her hydro plan, not once telling Ontarians that it will actually make their bills go up. How can this Premier, how can this Premier justify this disgusting betrayal of Ontarians?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been saying all along that you know, Mr. Speaker, we had to clean up our electricity system. You know one of the things that we did, Mr. Speaker, was we removed coal and we talked to many families, and one family in particular, T Y young man was namedvernment made by eliminating coal, he hasn't had to visit the hospital in one year, Mr. Speaker. That is a very positive thing. When you think about the investments that we've made. We know, Mr. Speaker, that that came with a cost. So what we've done is we've brought forward a plan. We

worked with stakeholders. We worked with the community. We worked with everyone involved in this sector, Mr. Speaker, to come up with plan to reduce bills on average by 25%. If we can get this legislation passed, Mr. Speaker. We want to see this relief for families as soon as possible. We want to ensure that we help families –

>> Andrea Horwath: The Premier has prioritized her party and her high-powered friend at every opportunity, Speaker. At every opportunity. She has sold the majority stake in Hydro One, against the wishes of 80% of Ontario families, and her borrowing scheme will end up costing these same families more on their already skyrocketing hydro bills. But you know who benefits, Speaker ? Bay street bankers and Liberal insiders. That's who benefits from 14 years of Liberal government in the province of Ontario. When will this Premier do her job and look out for regular Ontario families instead of those who are already at the top?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because of the Ontario fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, if it passes, 25% on average will be the reduction for every family in this province, Mr. Speaker. 800,000 families in rural Ontario and in northern Ontario. They will see a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. Low-income individuals. First nations individuals will see significant relief if this legislation passes, Mr. Speaker. And I know they can only add a very small line on the last page of their 13-page document, Mr. Speaker, but we're making sure that we're bringing an additional 50% on the Ontario electricity support program for the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that they don't like seeing infrastructure and jobs being created in this province but that's what we're doing. When we make \$2.8 billion, Mr. Speaker, on the sale of Hydro One, surpassing the goal of \$9 million, we're creating jobs. We're making sure that we're building our province up and at the same time reducing electricity rates.

NDP Leader Horwath to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's also for the Premier. The leaked documents show that hydro bills in Ontario will rise by over 50%. If the Premier's borrowing scheme is passed into law. Given that this plan will actually increase people's hydro bills, Speaker, and given that the Premier is not disclosing all the facts, we have called on an independent review of the legislation by the financial accountability officer for the province of Ontario. So will this Premier co-operate with the F.A.O. So that the public has the full truth, the unbiased facts about her \$40 billion borrowing scheme?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have and we always will work with the financial accountability officer, Mr. Speaker. And in fact we have a very good working relationship and expanded his authority recently, Mr. Speaker. So we will of course work with the financial accountability officer. But, Mr. Speaker, the plan that we brought forward, which is not based on the document that the leader of the third party is talking about. That document was part of the development of the plan, Mr. Speaker, but it was not used in the final analysis of the plan that we brought forward, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is designed to reduce people's electricity bills because, Mr. Speaker, we had to make investments in the electricity system in this province. The fact is that the shutting down of the coal-fired plants, the rebuilding of

lines across the province -- The development of clean renewable -- Electricity in this province, Mr. Speaker, has meant that there was a cost associated with that. We are spreading that cost over a longer period of time. Making structural changes to reduce people's electricity.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, we asked the Premier months ago, in fact two months ago today we asked the Premier not to ram this bill through the House. Bringing this bill in at the last minute, Speaker, especially now that we know how much damage it's going to do to Ontario families, is absolutely undemocratic. Shutting down the public's right to review this bill is not -- How a government with integrity would work. Will this Premier at least, at least allow the F.A.O. To conduct its assessment on the long-term impact of this borrowing scheme and direct her Minister to release all documents, r sing - - every single document that they relied on to put this scheme together to the F.A.O. And do it immediately?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as the Premier said, we welcome and encourage the F.A.O. To review our fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker. You know the F.A.O. Has already received a full technical briefing last month and we've responded to all follow-up requests for information, Mr. Speaker. So remember, though, Mr. Speaker ,, that it was this government that the created the F.A.O. And we expanded its authority and oversight again last fall. But what's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP Know all this and yet they try to distract from the legislation we have tabled. We've been clear all along. Our plan is spreading out the costs over time, Mr. Speaker, and over our system. But it will reduce the burden on ratepayers today and it will share costs more evenly with future generations who will also benefit from our investment. But the NDP, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to seem to want to provide relief to ratepayers or reduce bills by 25% if passed and they have no credible ideas to replace it, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: This is nothing more, Speaker, than a new gas plant scandal. Except that this time, this time it's going to cost families 40 times more than the \$1 billion it cost them for the Liberals to buy that election. Everything seems to go up under the Liberals, Speaker. Withdraw, Speaker. Everything seems to go up under this Liberal government, including the cost of an election. How can the Premier ram this legislation through this House without sufficient time for debate, public input and without an assessment from the F.A.O.?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about what's been going up. Highways and bridges have been being built and being created. Creating jobs thanks to the Minister of economic development and work by this Premier, going up, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that schools are going up, Mr. Speaker, hospitals, programs that go in those hospitals going up. Thanks to the leadership of this Premier and this government, Mr. Speaker, our province is being built up right across this province. You know what's going down, Mr. Speaker ? If we get this legislation passed? 25% of everyone's hydro bills across this province. 800,000 families will see a 40 to 50% reduction in their hydro bills and for our low-income individuals, 50% reduction when

they actually get on to the oesp program, Mr. Speaker. And let's not forget. That our first nations individuals, they're going to see their delivery charge eliminated, Mr. Speaker, but it's quite upsetting that either opposition party don't think it's important enough to vote on, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Smith to Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

MPP Todd Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this morning is for the Minister of energy. To the Minister. Speaker, at what point was the Minister going to inform the people of Ontario that he was bringing back the debt retirement charge, at four times the cost that it was when it was removed from bills last time?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So I believe the opposition member knows that the debt retirement charge comes from when the original Ontario hydro corporation was dismantled and hidden debt, Mr. Speaker, that they actually -- we had to find a way to pay for that, Mr. Speaker. I know that's something that his party was involved in and I know that's something that he probably is well aware of. But when it comes to making sure that he's look teg fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, I hope he can get an understanding of how to do a plan because I know they have this magic weekend planned in November where they think they can come up with a plan. So one of the things that will happen -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about the weekend. When you do a plan, Mr. Speaker, you just don't go with the first one that you get. What you should be doing, Mr. Speaker, is reviewing and making it better and better. Hopefully they can use that advice --

>> MPP Smith: Speaker, the Minister didn't answer the question yet again. But what he's doing is bringing back the debt retirement charge. It's going to be \$22 a month, which is four to five times larger than the old debt retirement charge. Only he's calling it something else. He can call it whatever he wants but it's going to be a big hit on the pocketbooks of the people of Ontario, particularly electricity customers. The fact is it's not just going to pay for energy costs though, Speaker. The Minister gets pretty wide latitude in his bill to include whatever he deems necessary in this new charge. How much is the new debt retirement charge will be going to pay interest or fees and commissions to bankers and bond traders as part of the government's latest debt retirement charge on steroids?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I know that they can actually project without actually doing any work or have any plan into that, Mr. Speaker. We've been working with the system operator, with the Ontario energy board wall of our utilities right across the province, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about the 2017 long-term energy plan that actually projects where our costs are going to go. The 2010 long-term energy plan predicted that costs today should be \$178. We took costs out of the system, Mr. Speaker, \$3.5 billion from renewing the Samsung agreement. Then the 2013 long-term energy plan, its average was \$170 today, Mr. Speaker. Pull more costs out of the system, the average today, 156 bucks. When we get this plan pass through this House, Mr. Speaker, if we can pass it with their support. We will see an additional

25% reduction coming, making sure that costs are low for the next four years and continue moving forward into the future.

MPP Tabuns to Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

MPP Peter Tabuns: Speaker, thank you. To the Premier. Thanks to the Premier and her privatization of hydro, people's hydro bills are already sky high. Now we learn that the Premier plans to ram through legislation that will drive it even higher. Families are struggling. Businesses are struggling. Why doesn't the Premier get that people can't take any more of her hydro hikes?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know I've talked about this in the past but, you know, the criticism of the NDP's obsession with Hydro One doesn't just, you know, seem to revolve around, you know, that side, Mr. Speaker. Phil of the "Globe and mail" calls the belief ownership of utilities in Ontario affects rates one of the biggest misconceptions about electricity. Martin redcode agrees Hydro One can only charge what the O.E.B. Deems reasonable, Mr. Speaker. Obviously they don't get how rates work, Mr. Speaker. The Ontario energy board will set the rates, not Hydro One. When we're looking at a plan that is reducing rates by 25%, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that they had when talking about a 5% reduction, Mr. Speaker, was a -- excuse me. A conversation with the federal government. I believe, Mr. Speaker. The member from Bramalea- Gore- Malton to actually have that conversation there tonight. Maybe he can start having that and add something to their plan.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the Premier. What the Minister was talking about, this borrowing scheme, is a \$40 billion plan to avoid the Liberals losing the next election. That's where that \$40 billion is being spent. It will make life harder for families and businesses who are suffering under already sky-high hydro rates. Is the Premier so desperate to win that she plans to pass this bill at the last minute, knowing that it will end up costing Ontarians more on their hydro bills?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I know the Honourable member is talking about our plan and the costs that are projected out in 2027. Well, that means that we'll be in government by then, Mr. Speaker, for 24 years making sure that we can continue to find ways to pull costs out of the system. We've done that over and over again, Mr. Speaker, on a consistent basis. We have found ways to pull out \$3.5 billion by renegotiating the Samsung agreement, taking \$1 billion out of the fixed price contract, Mr. Speaker. We also suspended the L.R.T. 2 contract which also reduced billions of dollars from the system, Mr. Speaker. So when looking at what we're doing as a government, we continue to find ways to reduce costs out of the system, and if passed, Mr. Speaker, a 25% reduction coming for all families, small businesses and farms in this province, Mr. Speaker. Once we can get this legislation passed through this House, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Fedeli to Naqvi (Ontario Budget)

MPP Victor Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Just before noon today, the government will call for a vote on the budget bill. Even though most of the members on our side haven't spoken to this bill yet. In fact only three of us have given a speech on it. If this bill passes, it will be sent to committee at 1:00 today. There will be less than one hour notice to the public to scramble here to Queen's Park and make a presentation on this budget. They can't come tomorrow, Speaker. It's all over at 7:00 tonight. That's what this government calls being open and transparent: One hour notice, in and out in the same day. I ask the Premier why, why is this debate about your budget 24 days shorter than Normal budgets?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. And I -- you know, I appreciate the question the member is asking, given the fact that it's his party and his caucus who have been delaying the work of this assembly in dealing with a very important bill, Speaker. Speaker, this is -- this is a piece of legislation that will, if passed, will provide historic investment, Speaker, in our health care system and create the OHIP Plus program -- Speaker, this bill if passed will create the OHIP Plus program providing children and youth with free access to over 4,400 prescription medications, Speaker. I have not yet once heard from members opposite as to what their plan is going to be when it comes to providing for universal pharmacare for our children and youth. Speaker, the party opposite is only interested in one thing and one thing only and that is to delay the passage --

>> MPP Fedeli: Back to the Premier. The government doesn't want the people of Ontario to have a chance to discuss this budget. This fits right in with what the financial accountability officer said. He told us there's, quote, a broader pattern of secrecy and it's all because of political direction. He went so far as to say, quote, it is highly disappointing that instead of looking to maximize the information provided, the government is focusing on how it can restrict disclosure of information. He finishes with, quote, they are impeding the ability of MPPs to perform their constitutional duties of holding the government to account. So, Speaker, I ask the Premier why the rush? Why don't you want us to see what's in this budget? What are you hiding?

>> Minister Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be really, really clear as to what's going on here. We are -- the financial accountability officer. He's been given much more powers to initiate his recommendations. We work closely with him contrary to what the member's saying. And contrary to what the member's saying, they are now providing delay tactics to provide one of the most Progressive balanced budgets in history, one that provides for the people of Ontario -- One that provides support for our young people, Mr. Speaker. Free did you wigs coming this fall and enabling our economy to grow. They're opposing the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Sattler to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

MPP Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Last month more than 100 people attended a hydro town hall in my riding of London West. They

shared the anxiety they felt every time they opened their hydro bill. They shared their fears for the future of their children and grandchildren because of the \$40 billion hydro debt the Liberals are passing along. Many at the town hall, like Steve Everett and his wife, were seniors living on fixed incomes, who have been hit hard by soaring hydro bills. Since the Everetts' rent doesn't include electricity they are doing everything they possibly can to cut back their usage. They do their laundry off peak and only turn the lights on when absolutely necessary. Over the winter, they even shut off their electric heat, using blankets and a ceramic heater instead and dressing in layers to keep warm. But still they -- \$200 a month on top of their \$800 monthly rent. Speaker, why is the Premier planning to implement a scheme that will Jack up. Hydro rates even higher than they are now?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the member in her town hall had the opportunity to tell this family particularly about the fact that they will see their electricity bill come down an average of 25%, Mr. Speaker, if the legislation passes. I hope that she also had the opportunity to make sure that they are signed up for the Ontario electricity support program, Mr. Speaker, so that they would be able to benefit from a further reduction, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the -- I hope that the member also, also made it clear that we were moving to put rent control in place. I don't know when the building they live in was built, Mr. Speaker, but I hope she assures the group we are moving to put rent control in place for all buildings, all private rentals across the province. I hope she made sure they got all of that information at the town hall, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Sattler: Again to the Premier, Speaker. It's not only renters who are being affected by the Liberal government's hydro fiasco. London homeowners are also starting to worry that they will lose their homes. Kurt and Phyllis Gopaul from London are seniors who live on fixed monthly incomes of \$1,475. Their hydro and gas bills are eating up more than \$400 a month, almost one third of their monthly income. They applied for the OESP but they were told they don't qualify. They are worried that skyrocketing energy bills will make it impossible for them to afford their bills and force them to have to give up -- Speaker, instead of a \$40 billion borrowing scheme that will cost hydro bills to soar, will the Premier listen to the concerns raised by Londoners? Will she reverse the privatization of Hydro One and bring down hydro rates once and for all?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So a few things in relation to the Honourable member's question. If passed the Ontario fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, will reduce that seniors couple bill by 25%, Mr. Speaker. One of the other things that the Ontario fair hydro plan does, Mr. Speaker, is it enhanced the Ontario electricity support program so more people can qualify for that program. Right now, Mr. Speaker, 192,000 families qualify for this program. We want more families on this, specifically seniors. They can see another \$580 reduced, Mr. Speaker, on top of their bill when it comes to the 25%. That's significant, Mr. Speaker, when you butt those -- put those two together. When you're making sure this relief is sustainable for the next four years that relief is staying at the comfort of inflation. We will ensure it stays as low as possible moving forward.

MPP Vernile to Flynn (Changing Workplaces Review)

MPP Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of labour. Speaker, we continue to hear more and more about precarious work and the nature of changing jobs in Ontario. In today's workplace, people are no longer working nine to five Monday through Friday with weekends off. It's common for people to be self-employed or have part-time work or temporary work. As a government, we need to make certain that we're doing all that we can to provide support for these changing conditions. I can tell you that in my riding of Kitchener centre, I heard that kind of feedback at a recent forum where we gathered to discuss the issue of poverty. Businesses and workers want our laws to reflect the reality of our modern economy. When the Minister announced the changing workplaces review, it was very encouraging to hear that we're taking this issue very seriously. So, Speaker, could the Minister please tell us more on the changing workplaces review?

>> Minister Kevin Flynn: Speaker, thank you and thank you to the member for the question. Really happy to stand in the House today to speak on this really important issue, because we all know that the world of work is changing and we're facing the challenges that it presents head on by doing the changing workplaces review. Speaker, we started this important conversation over two years ago. We've talked to poverty advocates, organized labour, business. We've talked to hardworking people in Ontario. And what we found, Speaker, is that precarious work is on the rise and we need to address t.fundamental changes are needed. We want to reward those employers, those successful employers in Ontario, that are committed to fair, productive and productive workplaces by levelling the playing field, Speaker, so that certain employers can no longer get ahead simply by taking advantage of vulnerable workers, Speaker. The advisors have submitted their final report. And recommendations. I'm considering them. I look forward to sharing them very, very soon, Speaker.

>> MPP Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for his answer. I know that we're all looking forward to that report. As the Minister said before, the changing workplaces review is a very important opportunity to make certain we provide protection for workers and that we help businesses in our province to prosper. When you look at the overarching stats there's lots to be proud of. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada. Our growth here in Ontario is outstripping all g-7 nations but not everyone is sharing in the benefits of our current strong economy. Action is needed to see that no one is left behind. In my riding of Kitchener centre, people are working hard each and every day and we're looking forward to how the changing workplaces review is going to make everyday lives that much better. Speaker, could the Minister please tell us more on what we can expect to see in the release of this report?

>> Minister Flynn: Speaker, thank you to the member for that question again. I also want to thank her for her own involvement in this and the interest in this important review that she's shown. What's clear to me, Speaker, and to the government is that after reading the report is that responsible change, we make the right decisions here, we can ensure that every hard working Ontarian has a chance to reach their full potential, Speaker. And that's what we need. The majority of employers in Ontario, Speaker, are excellent employees. They treat their employees well but still a growing number, Speaker, of hard working Ontarians whose rights are being violated. That tradition of decency that's been the hallmark of Ontario workplaces, Speaker, I think is being eroded at the expense of those good Ontario employers who play by the rules and understand the value of respect and dignity, Speaker. That needs to change. No person in Ontario. Should be made to feel unappreciated or undervalued. No one should ever feel like they can't get ahead. We aim to change that, Speaker .

MPP Vanthof to Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

MPP John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Premier. The upcoming may 24 weekend otherwise known as the may run weekend is a rite of passage in northern Ontario. And camping is a big part of our culture in the north. And one of the most beautiful places, there's many beautiful place -- places but one of the most beautiful places is the river valley park, close to river valley. Tony gabor and his family have owned and operated this park for years. But they are being squeezed by hydro costs. Last year, for the same amount of power, their costs went up by \$2,400. The same amount of power. Why is this government -- has this government ignored the plight of struggling small businesses like Tony in river --

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not knowing the specifics of the business, the small business that the Honourable member is talking about, but one good news, Mr. Speaker, that I can say to him to tell to those constituents is that the Ontario fair hydro plan, if passed, will bring forward 25% reduction for all 500,000 small businesses right across our province, Mr. Speaker. And then of course there's, you know, folks that live in the rural and remote parts of northern Ontario. And he is right, Mr. Speaker, that the red river area and throughout parts of northeastern Ontario is the beautiful part of our province. These families are going to see a 40 to 50% reduction on their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. And that's all thanks to us bringing forward the triple R.P., the rural remote rate protection plan, Mr. Speaker ,. We've increased that from \$20. To \$60 to \$135 on average for a Hydro One r2 customer, Mr. Speaker. That is significant relief on top of the 25% reduction.

>> MPP Vanthof: Again to the Premier. River valley park is a place where northern families have come for years to relax and enjoy nature. They're also struggling to pay their own hydro bills. I guess the question they all want to ask is so how much is their power going to go up after the quote-unquote fix for the next election? How much is it going to go up after the four years? How much is their power going up? You should know, Minister. How much is their power going up?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's going down by 25% if we actually can get the opposition to actually vote in favour of this, Mr. Speaker. And those families that are in his area when I know the Minister of agriculture was just up there, Mr. Speaker, talking about some great work that we're doing and talk about agriculture, Mr. Speaker, in that part of our great province. They were talking about the 40 to 50% reduction that they're going to see on top of that. Mr. Speaker, we've got the 2017 long-term energy plan that is going to come out in the very near future, projecting where energy costs and electricity costs are going to go, Mr. Speaker. But rest assured, we are going to do everything we continue to do, Mr. Speaker, to pull costs out of the system. We've got market renewal happening. We've got market reform. We've got a capacity option, Mr. Speaker. All of these things, all of these items will continue to take costs out of the system. Because we have a plan, Mr. Speaker, a plan that will work for all families no matter where they live in our great province.

MPP Milczyn to Del Duca (GTA Transit Projects)

MPP Peter Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of transportation. Mr. Speaker, in June 2014 when Ontarians elected our government, they gave us the clear mandate to deliver on infrastructure projects that Ontarians are both depending on and deserve. From hospitals to transit, we're fully committed to doing just that. As our balanced 2017 budget demonstrates, we're reinforcing that commitment. Speaker, I know that many of our infrastructure projects are complex and often require solutions that are both creative and prudent to get the job done. And to that effect I'm aware the Minister made an announcement recently about how to ensure critical projects are going to be delivered on time. Would the Minister please elaborate on what exactly that plan is and why it's so important?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I want to begin by thanking the member from Etobicoke- Lakeshore for his question. As Minister of course Speaker I take my job to create an integrated transit network for this region very seriously, because I understand that the people of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area rely on a transportation network that works for them and for their families. So, Speaker, projects like the leg in -- Eglinton cross town, \$5.3 billion project, single largest public transit project in effect Toronto's history will transform the way people move themselves and loved ones. I announced metrolinx's strong plan to ensure we deliver successfully on the Eglinton crosstown as Prime Minister ed boy 2021. Our plan, Speaker, means purchasing 61 light rail vehicles from alstom Canada, a company that is already making and delivers quality 100% flow floor vehicles for the Ottawa L.R.T.. 17 of the vehicles will be used on the finch west L.R.T., another critical transit project which will be in service December of 2021. I look forward to providing more details in the follow-up.

>> MPP Milczyn: Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for that answer. I'm pleased to hear metrolinx has a strong plan in place to make sure we deliver on our transit commitments. I know that in my riding of Etobicoke-lakeshore, the Kipling

mobility hub, which the Minister announced just last month, is one example of age equity that's moving forward and will transform my community. And it's absolutely critical that this project and others open on time. But, Mr. Speaker, I've heard some questions since the Minister made his announcement on Friday and those questions are why now? And why Alston? They want to make sure Ontarians are getting the best deal for these vehicles and they can depend on alstom to deliver. Speaker, through you to the Minister. Can the Minister please provide some clarity on why metrolinx is taking this step now. And how they will ensure alstom delivers?

>> Minister Del Duca: I thank the member for the follow-up question. They are valid concerns and I'm happy to have the opportunity to follow up. Regardless of the outcome known as the resolution process, a process we know could take up to one year, our agreement with alstom will help to ensure we have vehicles ready in time for the cross town which will enter into service in 2021. If bombardier is found not to be in default of the contract and can successfully deliver, Speaker, these vehicles, the vehicles that we purchased from alstom will still be used. However, Speaker, they'll be used on the Hurontario L.R.T. In Mississauga and southern brampton. Speaker, this is both a responsible and creative solution that puts Ontarians first, both commuters and taxpayers. As I said in my previous answer, we already know that alstom can deliver a quality vehicle on time because it's exactly what they're doing for the Ottawa L.R.T. We truly believe this is a path forward that provides both metrolinx and people of this region with the assurance critical transit will be delivered on time as our Premier and province have promised.

MPP Yurek to MacCharles (Health Card Privacy Breach)

MPP Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, I received information about additional breaches of confidential health information this time from the Markham region. Concerned father reached out to my office to inform me that, upon receiving his children's health care renewal forms, noticed something terribly wrong. The father of twins, a boy and a girl, received a health card renewals. The girl's informations right. The boy's information contained the wrong name, address, date of birth and health card number obviously from another child in this province. Speaker, this problem is widespread and serious. When frontline workers break confidentiality of private records, they'll face either fines or loss of employment. Would the Minister tell the House how many people have lost their jobs over this confidentiality breach?

>> Minister Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I was deeply concerned to learn about this privacy breach because I take privacy of Ontarians' information very, very seriously. And unfortunately some Ontario residents may have received notices containing information about another person's privacy information. It is very important to note, Speaker, though that the health card version code was not provided on the form that was sent out, and that information, the health card version code is essential to accessing ohip services. So I've been working very actively with service Ontario to get to the bottom of this, and actions are being taken to fix this issue and resume mailing of renewal notices as soon as possible. Of course the privacy commissioner was informed. Letters have been sent out to -- Families and many corrected forms have since been returned, and I will add more in the supplementary.

>> MPP Yurek: Mr. Speaker, back to the Minister. This breach of confidential health information seems to not be a priority for this government. Obviously when the Minister of health won't even respond to the question. This government has brought forth bill 119, bill 41 and now bill 89 87, to give this government more access to Ontarians' personal health information. How can Ontarians trust this government to keep this information confidential when it can't even get the basics right? Speaker, Ontarians have lost confidence that this government has the ability to protect private information. Will the Minister himself take personal responsibility for this breach of privacy?

>> Minister MacCharles: Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite that both the Minister of health and I take this very seriously. It's important to note this is a printing error that occurred. A printing error in a batch of 50,000 renewal notices at that go out every week in the context of over 51 million transactions that go out from service Ontario every year. I do take it seriously. We have set up a 1-800 line for families who wish to get more information, and it's important to note again that the health card version code was not included in these mail-outs the member's asking about. And that is critical to getting health care services. And we've had some inquiries back, and I shared information with members opposite. Who have had qu Eries from constituents and we're here to provide information to any MPP That requires further information in this regard. Thank you.

MPP Gates to Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

MPP Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier. Recently I met with a group of seniors about outrageously high hydro bills. They work hard to conserve energy but their bills keep going up. They are worried that further privatization will drive up their bills even further, like 80% of Ontarians, they want the government to immediately stop the sell-off of Hydro One. However, however this game will mean skyrocketing hydro bills after the next election. Maybe someone will leave the P.C. Party plan for hydro alone. We know they promised to privatize it last time. So my question is to the Premier. Why has she ignored these seniors and millions of Ontarians and sold off the public majority ownership of Hydro One?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I once again thank the Honourable member for his question. Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. The broadening of ownership of Hydro One will not reduce one single cent off of anyone's bills in this province, Mr. Speaker. But you know what will reduce people's bills by 25%? If we can get this passed, Mr. Speaker, the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker. And he is right. I do agree with the member from the third party. They have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We disagree with it. We don't think it actually does anything near what we should be doing for families across the province. But it makes you wonder why, Mr. Speaker, that the official opposition can't come up with a plan to talk about what they would do to help Ontarians. They've got to wait for a magic weekend in November. Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario can't wait for the P.C.S to come up with a plan. That's why we're acting now for Ontario families by bringing forward a plan that will reduce rates by 25% if passed.

May 11, 2017

MPP Tabuns to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the acting Premier. Ontario families, businesses and municipalities are struggling under the weight of soaring hydro bills. Those bills have gone up 300% since the Conservatives first started to privatized hydro system, continues under Liberal rule. In fact 50% increase since this Premier came to power alone. We've told Ontarians stories in this House for almost two years now. We've told this Premier the family who have to choose between buying food and keeping the heat on in winter, who have to make the heartbreaking decisions not to contribute to their children's education fund rather than pay their hydro bills. The Premier's response this week was to move ahead with the disastrous sell-off of a majority stake in Hydro One move that will guarantee that these families will continue --To see their hydro bills rise. Does the Premier not listen to these stories or care about the people who are struggling to get by?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to rise to talk about the 17% reduction that families, small businesses and farms have received so far, Mr.

Speaker, thanks to this government's fair hydro plan. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, 800,000 families across the province that live in rural or remote parts of our province, they'll see between 40 and 50% reduction. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, many of those families are Hydro One customers. And when you're talking about the branding of ownership of Hydro One, yes, Mr. Speaker, our final ranch was done this week and with that sale we made \$2.8 billion that we can invest in things like the gtha, go rail regional express, Mr. Speaker. I know that's obviously something that the opposition party doesn't support. What about the \$5.3 billion in the Eglinton crosstown. Or the 1 billion in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker ? That's all great news for this province.

>> MPP Tabuns: Again to the acting Premier. We've told the Premier about businesses eager to expand and create more jobs. If only, if only they could get some relief on their hydro bills. No response for four years under her watch. We've told her about municipalities across Ontario, which are worried about having to close valued community centres and arenas because they can't afford to keep the lights on. No response. The people of Ontario said loud and clear, stop the wrong-headed sell-off of Hydro One, which the Premier knows will only cause more chaos and damage to our already fragile hydro system. No response. Why?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we go back just even a few years, we can start talking about how this government pulled costs out of the system, Mr. Speaker. \$3.5 billion in the renegotiation of the Samsung agreement saving ratepayers money. We cancelled the Irt2 project, Mr. Speaker, saving ratepayers money. We can go back further and further, Mr. Speaker, to talk about ways that this government continued to find ways to save ratepayers money on their electricity bills. But one thing that we had to do, Mr. Speaker, was rebuild the system. The system was a mess. And it was left a mess by those two governments when they were in power. We stepped in in 2003 and had to rebuild the system at a cost of \$50 billion. And, Mr. Speaker, when we rebuilt that system we made it clean and we've made it reliable and we no longer use coal in our electricity grid, something that is seen as a leadership role, Mr. Speaker, around the world.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again the acting Premier. The Premier ignores 80% of Ontarians opposed to the sell-off of Hydro One. She looks away when she hears about the Rea and devastating impact that her mismanagement of the hydro system has had on families, businesses and local governments. She doesn't have a credible plan to fix any of the mess that she and her government have helped create. Maybe bury it in a mound of buried money. That seems to be what they're thinking b.without a mandate and just a year shy of being booted out of office she's decided to complete the sell-off of a majority share of one of the most profitable public utilities in this province.

Does the Premier listen to anyone but bay street bankers, high-powered investors and an energy Minister who just doesn't seem to understand this file? Thank you.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased to stand and talk about the significant reductions that families are already receiving, the 17% reduction that they are receiving today. When talking about not understanding the file, Mr. Speaker, outside experts and observers agree that the NDP's pamphlet on what they would do with energy won't even help Ontarians. Thomas Watkin from the "Toronto star" called their proposal thin gruel and said it consisted of wishful thinking, Mr. Speaker, and puts off tough decisions. This government is making tough decisions to make sure we're bringing lasting relief right now for families, small businesses and farms. So we take no lessons from a party that has no plan that, has no idea and won't do anything to help people now. We are acting. We are bringing forward legislation that is bringing forth 25% reduction. That is something we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Smith to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the Minister of energy. Speaker, yesterday I received an order paper response from the Minister but it really wasn't much of a response. He said he couldn't answer my question and that I should submit a freedom of information request. What I wanted was documents and correspondence from January and February, from the ministry, I.e. S.o.and O.P.G. To use word like fees, commissions, broker, lender and refinancing. Now the Minister knows that this House is going to have to vote on legislation that he brings forward. So why is he trying to get members to pay for information that they should have before we vote on legislation?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and of course I always like to stand and, you know, address the questions that are brought forward by the opposition. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario fair hydro plan and the relief that is coming is an important issue and it's a position, you know, where we stand in this House on this topic is very well known, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, what's the position of the official opposition when it comes to their plan, Mr. Speaker ? It makes you wonder. It's been almost 70 days now in which the leader of the opposition stood and said that they have a plan forthcoming. It went from a three-point plan, Mr. Speaker. To five-point plan to a zero-point plan, Mr. Speaker. You know part of the role of the opposition. Should be putting forward a credible alternative and, Mr. Speaker, we're still waiting for anything credible coming from that party.

>> MPP Smith: Speaker, if the Minister would like us to do his job for him, we would gladly do it but our job is to scrutinize the plan that they are putting forward, and the people of Ontario deserve to know if the government's hydro plan involves millions or billions paid out in fees to brokers or bankers. It may as well be brought to you by Goldman Sachs at this point. The people of Ontario deserve to know. Because by the government's own admission, those fees will be recoverable on their hydro rates. So will the Minister turn over exactly the documents I asked for in my order paper question or will this be yet another Liberal scheme done in the back rooms by a Liberal Minister who's got his hand in the pocket of ratepayers?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important that I do remind the critic from the opposition party, as the critic for the energy file, that he did attend a technical briefing where officials gave him all the details of our plan. So, you know, we're more than happy to share more information with him. And I know we offered an additional technical briefing, and I do agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is the role of the official opposition to make sure that, you know, they question what the government is doing. I understand that role. And you know what? It also takes courage, Mr. Speaker, to bring forward a plan, to talk about what they would do differently. And who thinks that, Mr. Speaker? Let me read a quote. I think the challenge for anyone who aspires to be Premier, any party that aspires to serve in government is to say what we would do. Do you know who said that, Mr. Speaker? The leader of the official opposition. It's just too bad when it comes to energy, or Ontario, they have no plan at all.

MPP DiNovo to Minister Del Duca (Toronto Transit Funding)

>> MPP DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the acting Premier. Prior to the 2014 election, the Premier told Torontonians that the relief line subway was one of her top transit priorities. But since the election, she has refused to commit to funding the construction of the relief line. Mayor of Toronto and the TTC say that the relief line must be built before the Yonge line extension, or else there will be transit chaos. But the Premier seems to be more interested in saving Liberal seats north of Toronto than funding a subway project that transit experts say must come first. Why is the Premier once again putting her own political interests ahead of what's best for Toronto transit riders?

>> Minister Del Duca: Thank you very much, Speaker. I thank the member from Parkdale for her question this morning. That member and every member in the chamber will know that we are the provincial government that is investing more in public transit, in the city of Toronto and in communities in every corner of Ontario, more so than any other government in history. Speaker, our investments in transit in Toronto -- Are in fact unprecedented. Now interestingly, Speaker, just a couple of days ago at the city of

Toronto there was a staff report that came out that said, among other things, that over the next up to two years, the city of Toronto's staff will continue to refine and provide the public with a finalized budget for some of the projects that the member opposite's talking about like the relief line, Speaker. We look forward to seeing that information flow out of the city of Toronto, and I've said repeatedly the conversation will continue with Toronto. But in the meantime, we are the only level of government that's provided \$150 million in planning money. To help advance the relief line, 55 million for Yonge north, Speaker. At the same time we're investing literally billions in Toronto and in the 99 communities across Ontario that have transit systems that deserve our support.

>> MPP DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back again to the acting Premier. What Toronto wants is pretty clear on this file, Mr. Speaker. They have declared the relief line to be the top transit priority. Nothing new in that. And prior to the 2014 election, the Premier said the relief line was her transit priority, too. But so far, the Premier has committed exactly zero dollars to the construction of the relief line. It's impossible for the city of Toronto to plan the construction of major infrastructure projects when it doesn't know if the provincial government will be a funding partner. So I'm asking again, and it's clear, will the Premier commit today to funding the relief line or will she keep letting down Toronto transit riders?

>> Minister Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I -- you know, I do appreciate the passion that members on all sides of this House bring to the transit discussion and transit debate. I sincerely hope that Andrea Horwath -- sorry the leader of Ontario's NDP And the third party and members of her caucus, I sincerely hope they're not suggesting that it would be pruned for any level of government to confirm contribution for a project for which there is not yet a confirmed budget, Speaker. That doesn't make a lot of sense to me. In the meantime I will say again we are the only level of government that has provided \$150 million to prepare or to help advance the planning to make sure that the relief line is shovel ready. Speaker, one of the other problems that I have with the line of questions coming from that member and from that party is that they seem to suggest that we should favour one community over all of the others. Speaker, that's not how this side of the House views transit in the gtha. We know gridlock is not a uniquely Toronto problem or 905 problem. It doesn't respect municipal boundaries. We need to keep investing in Toronto and in every other community that needs our support and do so in the way that makes the most sense, Speaker. That's what we have done. That's what we are doing and will continue to do. Thanks very much.

MPP Clark to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Clark: My question's for the Minister of energy. Mr. Speaker, has Cabinet ever been briefed or received a document detailing the expected cost of hydro through the year 2024, yes or no?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very pleased to talk about our fair hydro plan because as we talk about it, we are talking about how we are moving forward in refinancing, like remortgaging our home, Mr. Speaker. A portion of the global adjustment. With that, Mr. Speaker, we have said that this will take up to 20 years longer, Mr. Speaker, and we've always acknowledged that this will cost us a little bit more, Mr. Speaker. In terms of what we want to do, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that the folks -- the families right across the province that are investing in our energy system will see that, Mr. Speaker, and utilize that system for the duration of its lastful life. So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what we're doing, we're making sure. That we're lowering rates for families, farms and small businesses right across the province.

>> MPP Clark: Speaker, back to the Minister. That didn't answer the question. So let me ask you this. What is the expected cost of hydro in 2024?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a crystal ball. I'm sure maybe he does. Maybe he can look into it -- in it and see their plans. Maybe they can find what they were -- they would do in terms of what they would do to lower rates now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know their policy's going to come up in the magic weekend in November, but on this side, we're worrying a&bout families now, Mr. Speaker. We're worrying about small businesses now. And that's why we're bringing forward Ontario's fair hydro plan with on average will reduce rates by 25% on average. But right now, Mr. Speaker, rates are lower by 17%. That is something that families, small businesses and farms right across this province are applauding, Mr. Speaker.

May 10, 2017

MPP Tabuns to Premier (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. To the Premier. Yesterday in a self-congratulatory press conference, Minister of energy touted the Liberal government's shortsighted decision to sell off yet another batch of Hydro One shares. What he neglected to mention, though, was that the further privatization of our hydro system will ensure that hydro bills for everyday Ontario families will continue to climb. Why are the Premier and her Minister of energy so excited that families, who are already struggling, will be left further behind?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member of the third party understands that building infrastructure in this province is important. He lives in an urban riding, Mr. Speaker. He represents an urban riding that needs those investments, Mr. Speaker. And in fact we continue to make investments in transit, in -- Mr. Speaker, that the net proceeds will be reinvested in new infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. I know he

supports investing in infrastructure. So, Mr. Speaker, we made a decision to maximize the value of our assets in order to make those critical new infrastructure investments. We are going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you. Again to the Premier. The loss of the province's majority stake in Hydro One will cost Ontarians dearly. People's hydro bills will keep going up. And they will lose out on the service ses that revenue from Hydro One used to pay for. Our hospitals, schools, long-term care homes are already at a tipping point because of Liberal cuts. The sell-off will make the situation even worse. How can the Premier justify this boondoggle for bay street investors at the expense of the people of Ontario?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again pleased to rise to talk about what we're doing to continue to make rates affordable for all Ontarians across the province, Mr. Speaker. The Ontario fair hydro plan has already reduced rates by 17%. They've seen that by -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'll repeat rates have dropped down as of may 1st down by 17% compared to last year and by July 1st of this year, Mr. Speaker, if passed through the legislation, we will see an additional 8%, bringing that total on average to 25%. But now, Mr. Speaker, the media know. I know the opposition know. The official opposition know rates are set by the O.E.B.. It's too bad that the third party doesn't understand that component.

>> MPP Tabuns: Clearly the Minister doesn't know how energy works in this province. Speaker, the Premier has no mandate to sell off Hydro One. It will hurt everyday families. It will put further strain on our public services. She knows that 80% of Ontarians oppose the sell-off and yet she insists on moving forward. Why is the Premier allowing already wealthy bay street investors to get filthy rich off the backs of ordinary Ontario families?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not just this party that, you know, understands how the electricity system works, Mr. Speaker. We've been working hard with stakeholders throughout the province to come forward with a fair hydro plan that's going to reduce rates by 25%. And I know the opposition the third party, Mr. Speaker, can't understand how the O.E.B. Applies the rates. They can go to their website. It's explained there very clearly, Mr. Speaker. But the criticism what's interesting, Mr. Speaker, with their obsession with Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, is even more harsh from Tim killdack of the "Globe and mail" calls the belief that ownership of utilities in Ontario affecting rates one of the biggest misconceptions about electricity. Even Brady yanch, economist of the consumer policy institute and frequent government critic calls the idea of privatization increases rates as a straw man, Mr. Speaker. You know what? When it comes to doing right for the people of Ontario. We're building infrastructure. We're

building the hospitals. We're building the schools because we have a plan to build Ontario up. Unlike the opposition parties, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Forster to Thibeault (Seniors and Hydro Rates)

>> MPP Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Premier. Jack o'neill is a friend, a longtime community senior activist and president of friend over 55 seniors centre in port colborne. It is the oldest in -- independent nonprofit seniors recreation centre in the niagara region and the services are dependent on membership fees and donations. Last year the centre's hydro bill was just over \$150 for the month of April. This year their hydro bill, I have it here, is almost \$600. If this government doesn't put a stop to the sell-off of Hydro One, it's going to be impossible for Jack to afford to pay these bills while still keeping his centre open. What is the Premier going to do today for Jack and for seniors in my community who risk losing programming and svices because of skyrocketing hydro bills?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I not Minister of seniors will want to answer in the supplementary as well. But when it comes to hydro bills, Mr. Speaker, cost for electricity, all of those bills in this province will be going down by summer on average 25%, Mr. Speaker. And I know the Honourable member mentioned Hydro One. Hydro One customers with designations of r1 and r2, Mr. Speaker, will see a 40 to 50% reduction on their bills as well. So, Mr. Speaker, we are addressing many of the concerns that people have when it comes to hydro bills. When it comes to seniors, Mr. Speaker, we are ensuring that the Ontario electricity support program is being enhanced by an additional 50%. So on top of the 25% and the 40 to 50%. When you add in another \$540 a year, Mr. Speaker, rates for seniors in this province are coming down significantly and long lasting, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Forster: Speaker, we've seen the commercials but we haven't seen the legislation. So we heard yesterday that the Premier's going to sell off more shares of Hydro One. This comes days after the Premier actually defended Hydro One's executive pay increases of 500%. Meanwhile seniors in my community could lose programming and services, and Jack and the seniors at the seniors centre are seeing these skyrocketing hydro bills that are going through the roof. Speaker, will the government put a stop today for further sell-off of Hydro One and put vulnerable seniors ahead of shareholders?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to vulnerable seniors, we've acted with a fair hydro plan where they're going to see a 25% reduction on their bills. There's also the Ontario electricity support program where they're going to see a

50% increase to that rebate so they can see another \$540 off their bills. So when it comes to vulnerable seniors, when it comes to vulnerable people in this province, it makes you wonder why that they would put them on the last page of their plan, Mr. Speaker. We have made sure that we are acting. We are acting as quickly as we can to bring forward a comprehensive piece of legislation that will ensure 25% reduction by summer. So much so, Mr. Speaker, that the O.E.B. And -- in anticipation of our plan, have brought forward an additional 9%. Bringing the reduction right now to 17%. Whether it comes to the sale of Hydro One, we will make sure we invest that money in infrastructure across this province.

May 9, 2017

PC Leader Brown to Minister Naqvi (Government Accountability)

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House lead. Since he did not resign and would not take responsibility, let me ask him this: a few of Mr. Speaker, it comes as no surprise to the Liberals that some people over the last 14 years have questioned the integrity of this government. You know, gas plant scandal, e-health, orange spending scandal and now Canada Goose. Mr. Speaker, that is why I ask, will the Liberals help cleaning up Queen's Park and the government of Ontario?

>> Minister Naqvi: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm very glad to respond to the question that the member opposite has raised. Speaker, we are very proud of the work we have done in strengthening accountability when it comes to government and government of Ontario. Speaker, you may recall when we came into office in 2003, that party, the opposition party, left almost a \$6 billion deficit. That was hidden. That was hidden from the eyes of Ontarians. They told everybody the books are balanced. When we came in office and we -- Speaker, when we came in office in 2003 and asked the auditor general at that time to look at the books, what we found was a huge billion dollar deficit that the Conservative party under Mike Harris and this leader left behind.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the government House leader, I asked a serious question about ethics and accountability and the government is talking about 2003. This is a government that faced five Opp investigations and they are proud of their record on ethics and accountability. It's unbelievable. They're that out to lunch. Now, Mr. Speaker. There are loopholes out there. New rules stop Minister s and staff from attending fundraisers, there are no rules that Minister s and their staff can't elicit personal donations. There's still cash for access in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, will the Liberals commit today -- Will the government House leader commit that this Liberal government will ensure that there will be no more soliciting donations from their own Minister ial stakeholders, yes or no? It's a very clear question.

>> Minister Naqvi: Well, Speaker, it is important to remember what happened in 2003 when the opposition were in government hit a \$6 billion deficit. As a result of that,

Speaker, we made sure that we brought in very specific important accountable measures in place so that that type of behaviour never takes place. As a result, Speaker, one of the things we did was to require the auditor general to look at -- As a result of that, Speaker, we changed the law and we required the auditor general to ensure that before any election, the public books are audited by the auditor general so that the numbers are provided in clarity in full rights to all parties, Mr. Speaker. That was a very important step. Not to mention, Mr. Speaker -- And, Speaker, as a result, we also brought in regulation on government advertising in which the opposition, the Conservatives voted against.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the government House leader, once again, I ask a serious question about ethics and accountability ensuring that Minister s do not fundraise off their own stakeholders. And I got an answer that was completely irrelevant. The government should be ashamed of the record on ethics and kbility. Accountability. Five open investigations. We talk about criminal investigations. We have to ask, which one? Mr. Speaker, I will ask again, right now, there are big loopholes in this cash for access reform. Minister s had fundraising targets to raise off jtheir stakeholders. And so if I can't get a commitment from the government House leader to stop fundraising off stakeholders, will he work with us to make sure that having these fundraising targets for Minister s becomes illegal in the province of Ontario, yes or no? Please answer the question for the first time today.

>> Minister Naqvi: Well, Mr. Speaker, this feels like the member opposite, the leader of the opposition is making things as he's going along because I think he's totally forgotten bill 2, the extensive work we did in reforming fundraising in the province of Ontario, making it one of the most accountable and stringent rules around fundraising. I think he's forgotten that we have banned corporate and union donations, that we have required all MPP s and other candidates from attending fundraising events, Speaker. We have limited donations, donation limits significantly by 90%, Speaker, and then we are opposed to third party advertising. Somehow he's forgotten. He's choosing to forget. He's trying to distract. He's trying to distract from a very positive budget that we have put forward that's going to build a strong and healthy Ontario. Mr. Speaker, he's trying to distract from the fact he has no policy.

NDP Leader Horwath to Minister Thibeault (Sale of another portion of Hydro One)

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question is for the acting **Premier**. Yesterday we learned the **Premier** is selling off another batch of shares from Hydro One. They're still refusing to listen to the majority of Ontarians who say no to privatization of our electricity system. When will the **Premier** actually start listening to the people that she's supposed to be serving, Speaker ?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise to say that yesterday's ranch of broadening the ownership of Hydro One brought in an additional \$2.8 billion for the province, Mr. Speaker. That \$2.8 billion exceeds, Mr. Speaker, the \$9 billion target that we had, 5 billion to pay down debt, 4 billion to go into infrastructure. Well, guess what, Mr. Speaker ? That number is now \$9.6 billion, Mr. Speaker, with more money going into infrastructure. And where is that infrastructure going, Mr. Speaker ? Well, let me talk about this. Right across our province, we're going to have infrastructure built. And I can start off and look at the one here. Hamilton Lrt, the Hamilton go bus facility on Wentworth, Mr. Speaker, that's in the leader of the third party's own riding, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that we're going to invest billions of dollars right now, Mr. Speaker, across the province building Ontario up.

>> Andrea Horwath: Nobody buys that nonsense for a minute, Speaker. 80% of Ontarians oppose the privatization of Hydro One. And it's really sad that this is the only government in the history of Ontario that can't figure out how to build infrastructure without selling off a treasured revenue generating public asset when the vast majority of Ontarians don't want it sold off. Families, business owners, municipalities, ngos, they have all told the **Premier** loud and clear to stop this wrong headed selloff. People need relief from their soaring energy bills, not to hear that the **Premier** is going to do even more damage to our already broken system. Why does the **Premier** insist on moving ahead with this ridiculous selloff when what the people of Ontario need is for her to finally admit that she is wrong and abandon this scheme once and for all? Thank you.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the people of Ontario need is infrastructure investment, Mr. Speaker. That's what this party is doing. That's what this government is doing, Mr. Speaker, investing in infrastructure right across the province. In Kitchener- Waterloo, the ion regional Lrt, in welland the niagara health region is actually getting significant investments, in Oshawa, and, of course, Mr. Speaker the list continues to go on and on with investments. And that's what we can do, Mr. Speaker, when we actually make \$2.8 billion, a total of \$9.6 billion, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, Mr. Speaker, this was a difficult decision. But doing the right thing for the province, Mr. Speaker, takes difficult decisions. Mr. Speaker, we're very happy to make sure that we're investing in infrastructure from Kenora to Ottawa to Sudbury to Toronto and Windsor and everywhere else in between, Mr. Speaker, unlike that party.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, you know, the people of Ontario know numbers better than the people that are sitting across the aisle here. \$9 billion doesn't come close to the \$190 billion that they claim that they're going to be spending on infrastructure. The bottom line is the figures don't match, Speaker. They didn't need to sell off Hydro One to build infrastructure in the province and they darn well know it. And you know what, Speaker ? Ontarians did not vote for this. The **Premier** has no mandate to sell off our public hydro utility. Ontarians have been very, very clear that they don't want this selloff to continue. Why does this **Premier** think that her opinion matters more than the opinion of millions and millions of Ontarians?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the billions and billions of dollars that we're investing in infrastructure, paying down debt, Mr. Speaker, is actually going to have a benefit for this province for decades to come, Mr. Speaker, unlike that party over there, Mr. Speaker, that once again has no understanding of how this system works or even the energy system, Mr. Speaker. A firm commitment offering means, Mr. Speaker, that we get that money from the investors right away and we're able to take that money, Mr. Speaker, and invest that in Irt in Hamilton. And I know she doesn't like the Irt investment in Hamilton, Mr. Speaker, which makes you scratch your head, Mr. Speaker. What kind of investment in infrastructure do they like? Obviously none, Mr. Speaker, because all they do is stand up and complain, Mr. Speaker. They have no plan on any of this. As I said, I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that this was a tough decision. I recognize it was the right decision, Mr. Speaker. And when you make the right decision, you invest that in the people of Ontario and that's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. We're building Ontario up.

MPP Clark to Minister Naqvi (House Leader) (Ministerial Staff and Lobbying

>> MPP Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the government House leader. There's a one-year cooling off period for Ministerial staffers [who](#) leave government that doesn't go far enough. Staffers should not be permitted to lobby for any companies or organizations [that they have](#) had direct dealings with while in government. That's regardless of whichever ministry the lobbying is directed at. We saw what happened in the Minister of Environment's chief of staff went motoring over to Tesla. In the same month, the government announced lucrative subsidies for buyers. Mr. Speaker, will the government House leader help us close that loophole. Does he want the Liberal revolving door to continue?

>> Minister Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Speaker, we have very strict rules when it comes to the requirements for lobbyists. Speaker will know under the lobby registration, we have enhanced those rules to ensure that any staff that works here, when they go in private sector, the restriction that's placed upon them to lobby the same ministry, Speaker, those rules remain. And if there is any opportunity for us to ensure that there are stricter rules in place, we always look at them. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is we have done a tremendous amount of work in making sure that our government is transparent and our government is accountable. In fact, Speaker, what we have seen most of those times, the opposition has opposed those initiatives. -- Initiatives. They have not supported those initiatives. Where your focus remains on serving the people of Ontario. We're not interested in the partisan game they continue to play.

>> MPP Clark: The saddest thing about the Liberal lobbyist revolving door is a lack of accountability. Integrity commissioner investigations involving Ministerial staff are

publicly unavailable. These investigations which review cases such as conflicts of interest should be transparent and made public. It's unacceptable that the commissioner's report currently can be stuffed away on a Minister's desk. Ministers shouldn't decide if the information is made public. It should be a legislative requirement. So, Mr. Speaker, will the government House leader commit to ending the secrecy by making the results of those investigations public, yes or no? Thank you.

>> Minister Naqvi: I think our integrity commissioner does a very good and thorough job when it comes to investigating matters. Tiff opportunity to sit on the board of internal economy. I have had the chance to meet with the integrity commissioner as members from all parties on that board as well. And he continues to talk about how he is investing more resources in ensuring that lobbyist register extradition and all the accountability associated within the legislation is fully met. Clearly, Speaker, you know, this line of questioning is nothing but a distraction tactic from the opposition because they don't want to talk about a very good budget that is going to build a stronger and healthier Ontario. They don't want to talk about -- Speaker, the Conservatives do not want to talk about -- How we're making medicine free for children under 25 years old and under, we're lowering the electricity bill by 5%, we have a fair housing plan that is going to make housing more affordable.

May 8, 2017

MPP Jones to Minister Sandals and Minister Coteau (C&YS) –re: purchase of expensive parkas

>> MPP Jones: My question is to the president of treasury board. Friday your government was forced to defend the indefensible. Spending almost \$54,000 to purchase luxury Canada goose Jackets for ministry of children and youth services staff. At the same time the ministry was cutting funding to children with autism treatments. Speaker, does this government still support the purchase of thousand-dollar luxury winter Jackets?

>> Minister Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First I want to talk a little bit about the statement that the member made opposite in regards to autism funding. Number one, the member knows clearly that this is the largest single investment into autism in the history of this country. Half a billion dollars. So when she goes around making -- when she goes around making comments that we've actually made cuts, that's not factual, number one. Number two, the member opposite knows that we run youth correctional facilities right across this province and we have youth facilities in northern Ontario, and it gets cold up there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I was saying, it

gets cold in northern Ontario. The members opposite would understand –

>> MPP Jones: Back to the president of treasury board, because the Minister 's just digging himself a bigger hole. Children with autism were looking for your government for help. Children in child protection look to the government to protect them from predators. Some of our province's most vulnerable needed our government to step up, and what did you do instead? They learned that you're buying high-end luxury Canada goose Jackets while they sit on waiting lists. Speaker, will the president of treasury put a stop to the purchasing of high-end luxury goods for their staff? Yes or no?

>> Minister Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, as I was saying, in northern Ontario, it sometimes dips below 40°, and -- 40 below. So, Mr. Speaker, there's uniforms that are required for our staff in these facilities. We have a simple procurement process here in the province of Ontario that not only this government has used but other governments have used. So what we do, if the members don't know how the process works, we put out a request. We ask for supplies and the quotes come in. We have a process that is arm's length that allows for nonpolitical interference, and we take the best offer made. And in this case it happened to be the best offer made. These are coats that have a 10-year guarantee. They're used as members and staff work within those facilities. They're transferred from staff to staff. The government of Ontario owns these.

>> MPP Jones: You know, if you were so proud of this purchase, why did it take almost six months and a freeze in information request, which by the way you blocked? If you're so willing to defend this, then why did it take six months? You were suggesting the only vendor who had any ability to provide these coats. Canada goose. Through the Speaker. Then table the tendering documents and prove to the families in Ontario that the money was well spent, because at this point, nobody believes you, Minister .

>> Minister Coteau: Mr. Speaker, first of all we get the best possible price based on the process we have in place. And in this case these coats were heavily discounted, the coats that we received. It's interesting that the leadoff question by the Progressive Conservative party around coats that are keeping staff warm. While we're focusing on -- Mr. Speaker, we put in place processes in government to ensure that there are no political interference when it comes to purchasing products. This process, this process is a government process that's put in place where bids come in, and there was a substantial discount. The member knows clearly opposite that, if you release all the tendering prices in any type of competitive process, then it puts the supplier at a disadvantage in the future. And you claim to be the party that knows business well? If

you can't figure out a procurement process, how could you figure out what's best for this province?

MPP Tabuns to Minister Matthews (Hydro Rate Reduction Plan)

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the acting Premier. It's been 6 days since the Liberals announced they would refinance an increasingly privatized hydro system, adding billions of dollars in new debt for customers and leaving fat profits for already profitable multinational energy companies. New Democrats said it then and we'll say it now. The government can't expect to table legislation that will make massive changes to the hydro system that are bad for people and businesses and expect to ram it through this legislature with little or no opportunity for public input. With just 12 sitting days left, why haven't we seen a bill?

>> Minister Matthews: I will pass the supplementary onto the Minister of energy but I do want to take this opportunity to acknowledge that on Friday the Speaker announced he will not be seeking reelection in 2018, and I want to just say to you, Speaker, that I want to say thank you for the work you have done in this legislature and in your community. You've been a real inspiration for all of us.

>> MPP Tabuns: Speaker, again to the acting Premier. People deserve to see the Liberal plan in black and white so they can debate it and so legislature can debate it too. Don't hide the details. Don't delay. Don't come to the legislature just before it rises this summer with a last-minute bill, ultimatum and no time for committees, experts and the people of Ontario to take the time they need to examine the bill. That was NDP Leader Andrea Horwath almost two months ago. There is still no plan, no legislation, and the House is scheduled to rise in 12 sitting days. This is exactly what we warned about. Is the government going to try and ram through a hydro bill and shut out the politics with no time to hear from the people of Ontario?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to rise and talk about the fair hydro plan that we've been talking about for the last two months, Mr. Speaker, and letting people know that they're going to be saving, Mr. Speaker, up to on average 25% on their bills. Some will be higher, Mr. Speaker, and especially for those that live in the rural or remote parts of our province, northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker. They can see up to 40 and 50% coming off their bills. And, Mr. Speaker, the O.E.B., the Ontario energy board, recognized that in anticipation of us bringing forward this legislation, they brought forward on May 1st an additional 9% reduction, meaning we're seeing a 17% reduction on our bills compared to last year, Mr. Speaker, right now. And I know that's hard for the opposition to understand, Mr. Speaker, because one of them has no plan. And the other

plan that they have doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. This is something that's active and working, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Tabuns: Speaker, the Liberal plan will add \$40 billion in debt. It will double down on private contracts. This is a big deal. And Ontarians want their voices to be heard. This bill should be debated. It should have committee hearings. The committee should travel, and people should get their say. Is the government -- Is the government getting ready to ram through their hydro bill without real debate, real examination and real public input?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about real. 25% reduction is a real relief for families across the province, Mr. Speaker. 40 to 50% reduction on rural or remote rate protection plans. That's real relief coming to families in the rural parts of our province, Mr. Speaker. 500,000 businesses. That's 500,000 real small businesses and farms. They will also see the 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. But let's talk about unreal, Mr. Speaker, not realistic, Mr. Speaker. That's their plan, Mr. Speaker, that they don't even talk about anymore. They forgot that they brought forward a plan. Probably, Mr. Speaker, because it's not a plan that will bring any real relief to families across this province. Our Ontario fair hydro plan. Will bring real relief for families.

MPP Fedeli (PC) to Minister Sousa (Home Capital and a particular Liberal Party "insider")

>> MPP Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of finance. All last week we asked this government what they knew about the troubled mortgage lender home capital. We asked what the government's involvement was, what their intentions were, and quite frankly who was asleep at the switch. The government provided no answers, choosing instead to ramble all about the federal regulator. Well, it seems the government did know more than they admitted, and in fact they have inserted one of their own, Alan Hixon, into home capital. Last week we asked the government home captain passed the smell test. What's the Liberal solution? Put another Liberal insider in there and stir the pot. I ask the Minister, does this pass his party's standards for accountability and ethics?

>> Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I find the line of questioning rather insulting given the fact that we have taken great pains to be transparent. These are operations and activities of independent agencies of government. They are not reported to the government in any way possible. And Mr. Hixon, to his credit, had sought advice to ensure the integrity commissioner that he act appropriate, given the fact he did advise our government and other matters. So it's appropriate that individual took that step. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, he's a man of great integrity and excellent credentials

and I can appreciate now why an independent private organization is seeking his input as well. It is not a decision made by government, and the member opposite knows that full well and I frankly suggest, again, that he's being totally inappropriate in this questioning.

>> MPP Fedeli: Thank you very much. Back to the Minister, who I also think is very inappropriate in his answers, Speaker, because we're not getting any answers. We've got a very troubling situation in Ontario with home capital under siege, while the government denied any connection last week, we now learned that they've placed their own Liberal insider into this deal. Alan Hibbon, a key player in the **Premier's** Hydro One sell-off scheme, has been put on home capital's board. He is also one of the **Premier's** five appointees on O.P. Trust, which is the Ontario public service employee pension plan. With this insider now in there, does the government plan on joining this game of I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine? Speaker, why is the **Premier's** inside guy now inside home capital?

>> Minister Sousa: So, Mr. Speaker, it's very troubling indeed that this individual, this member from the Progressive Conservative party suggests that the government should intervene on the practices of private businesses, Mr. Speaker? The member opposite believes private businesses should reveal and governments should not interfere. But we are protecting the interests of investors and consumers. That is why the role of fsco, the financial regulatory authority of Ontario, has intervened and provided enforcement. That is why the Ontario securities commission has acted accordingly and why osfi is involved, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is making accusations and he's also presuming some form of conflict and Al Hibbon has taken the appropriate steps to insure that he's not doing so.

May 4, 2017

MPP Fedeli to Minister Sousa (Home Capital Group)

>>MPP Fedeli: Good morning and thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Premier. We've been asking questions all week long about the troubled mortgage lender home capital and their chairman Kevin Smith. They received a \$2 billion bailout from the health care Ontario pension plan or hoop, where the same Kevin Smith is also on their board. Jim Kohane is HOOPP's C.E.O. And he was also on the board of Home Capital. You see, Speaker, both guys are with both company -- companies, the borrower and the lender. So after the \$2 billion deal -- 2 billion deal was done, they resigned from each other's boards, all within 24 hours. Does anybody believe this passes the smell test? Where is the oversight? I asked the Premier for a definitive answer. Is an investigation into this perceived conflict of interest under way?

>>Minister Sousa: I appreciate the question yet again. We have made it clear ofsi, which is regulated federally overseeing home capital is involved. We have the Ontario securities commission, which is the regularity, also involved and which predicated some of what's happening now because they're doing their job, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the activities of home capital. Furthermore we have fsco, which is the provincial regularity, who has also been involved throughout the process and has already taken action against two individuals. Mr. Speaker, the member's making accusations with regards to some of the directors on the board. He's rightly stated they have resigned to avoid conflicts of interest but the matter is before the regulators. We're allowing them to do their job, Mr. Mpeaker. Even the federal Minister of finance has referenced that as well.

>>MPP Fedeli: Back to the Premier, please. As chair of Home Capital, Kevin Smith earns \$357,000 a year for a total of \$1.5 million in stock. This is a big job. He attended 31 meetings last year. The company is troubled. They're under O.S.C. Investigation. Their depositors are leaving. Their stock is tumbling. This is all hands on deck time. But Smith is also the \$720,000-a-year C.E.O. Of St. Joseph health system and niagara health system. He earns \$14,000 a week and took six weeks just to attend home capital's meetings. His hospital contract states, quote -- the employee shall devote of his whole of his working time and attention to the business and affairs of the system. If the government is paying that kind of money, you would expect full-time service. Well, the Premier has been cutting and gutting St. Joe's and other hospitals, where was Kevin Smith? ? Thank you. Minister ? Thank you. Minister ?

>>Minister Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the member opposite I think rightly understands and knows that both home capital and hoop are independent of government and they're private organizations and the directors themselves share duties primarily to support and protect the interests of their respective companies. And, Mr. Speaker, that is what we regulate. That is what is being done as we speak. Thank you.

MPP Hardeman to Minister Sousa (Housing Costs)

>>MPP Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of finance. The Minister of finance claims their plan is going to stabilize the real estate market and stop the out-of-control price increases of housing so can he explain why his budget documents predicts an increase of almost 500 million in land transfer taxes next year. Does the Minister still expect the price of homes to increase that much or is that number wrong?

>>Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, transactions real estate activity will continue, and in fact economists and independent individuals predict that even greater activity throughout the years and we covered that amount just to be prudent, Mr. Speaker, and that's how it's

proceeding. And in regards to the market itself and the measures that we've taken to address and cool demand at the same time increase supply to the mix, our appropriate measures to provide predictability and stability. But market force will prevail, Mr. Speaker. No doubt of that. We want to make certain we provide certain measures while we proceed forward in the marketplace.

>>MPP Hardeman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears the government has no idea what they're doing when it comes to housing. One day Minister of finance says foreign home buyers are 8% of the market. The next day he says they're only 5% of the market. Now the Toronto real estate board says it's less than 1% of the market. He claims the foreign home buyers tax will stabilize that market. But the budget documents show the government is expecting housing prices to keep rising and result in another -- and other \$500 million in land transfer tax. Either the government's housing measures are going to fail and prices will keep going up or the government has almost a \$500 million hole in their budget. Can the Minister tell us which it is?

>>Minister Sousa: I can tell this House obviously have no plan yet again on this file because they've offered no solutions and no ideas. We put forward a 16-point plan, a comprehensive measures to address many things, one of which is speculation. Trying to ensure that if you're a nonresident Canadian and you're speculating on someone's home and crowding out -- out families that want to live here, put up roots here, start a family here, build up equity here, they're going to have to pay a little bit more, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we've done in this measure. We've also done that with domestic speculators and that they too should pay their fair share. One of 16 measures that we're doing to increase supply, address demand and ensure the people of Ontario have a better opportunity at home ownership, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Natyshak to Minister Lalonde (Segregation in our Jails)

>>MPP Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker. My question's to the Minister of corrections and community safety. I along with other Ontarians would like to first thank and acknowledge the province's correctional staff for the vital work that they do each and every day on our behalf. Speaker, new Democrats have long called for a new approach to corrections, away from the overcrowded and thereby dangerous facilities in Ontario that have become warehouses. We don't forget Adam Capay was held in administrative isolation in Thunder Bay jail for four years before staff and the human rights commissioner, not the Minister, first sounded the alarm about his condition. Speaker, when will the Liberal Minister provide the resources that have been missing to implement and enable the recommendations of the Ombudsman, Mr. Sapers and others to use administrative segregation as a last resort and when will you end indefinite segregation?

>>Minister Lalonde: Well, thank you. I would like to thank the member for his question

and certainly reiterate the great work that our correction officers are doing every single day in Ontario. Our parole and probation officers, Mr. Speaker. I also want to say thank you to Mr. Sapers for his report today. You know, I think both Mr. Sapers and the Ombudsman are deeply -- the concerns that they're raising are deeply concerning and completely inaccessible. I acknowledge we must do better. We must do better. Mr. Sapers has recognized the important initiatives in action that our ministry has already taken. He points out that this government's commitment to transform our correctional system. He also clearly points out where we have challenges in this system and that there's much more to be done. Mr. Speaker, as I announce today some key initiatives that we are taking in Ontario.

>>MPP Natyshak: The use of administrative segregation and isolation has only increased after 14 years of Liberal government. Now they can't wait to fix it. Yes, more beds are needed but **correctional staff**, inmates and the public don't need another poorly **privately** built Toronto south facility with its broken locks and windows and unused nursing stations. Speaker, Ontarians want to know, will this late-to-the-game money be another Liberal make-their-friends -- **friends rich scheme with correctional staff left to pick up the pieces?**

>>Minister Lalonde: So I will just -- I want to, Speaker, clearly in this House, Mr. Speaker, that segregation will only be used as the absolute last resort. And certainly I want to point out that the extremely difficult conditions our correctional officers and our staff are working every day and determine this work that they actually do. Mr. Speaker, I touch upon a number of reforms as I alluded this morning. I want to talk to you about some of the designs that, you know, our current facilities have. Called warehousing inmates. When we talk about transformation within our correctional system, I think it's important that we look at everything. And that's why this morning we talked about introducing a new legislation you know looking at the definition of segregation, improving the condition of confinement. We talked about the act to ensure that health care is better delivered in our facilities. So again Mr. Speaker -- Transforming our correctional system.

May 3, 2017

MPP Brown to Minister Sousa (Provincial Debt)

>> Patrick Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of finance. I want to read you some lines from economic expert Ben isen's recent op-ed on the provincial budget. I quote -- over the past three years, Ontario's net debt has increased by 34.8 billion. Over the next three years, the province expects to add \$34 billion in debt, almost exactly the same amount. In this context, the government's rhetoric that a balanced operating budget has dawned a new fiscal day and the province can

now afford to spend freely, rings hollow. So instead of a new fiscal day, what we have is more being spent on interest payments. \$10 billion more in debt this year, and the crowding out of frontline services. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of finance -- Tell this legislature what did he have to cut to pay for these higher interest payments?

>>Minister Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member opposite, who by the way voted in the largest deficit in our country's history of \$55 billion. It's the same member who by the way had accumulated deficits throughout their time. More than due Canada's overall debt and never once, Mr. Speaker, did they ever pay down debt. Furthermore interest on debt which he refers to now, today in Ontario, is the lowest it's ever been, especially when compared to the Conservatives at 16%. Today it's 8.4% of our overall budget and, Mr. Speaker, it's locked in for 30 and 40 years on many respects. So going forward we are addressing debt, and the first, the first way to address debt, Mr. Speaker, is to balance the books, and we're balancing the books this year, next year and the year after. And, Mr. Speaker, we're investing heavily. On a number of programs and services for the people of Ontario. I ask that member what will he cut going forward?

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of finance. You'll notice he did not answer the question about the skyrocketing debt in Ontario. He chooses to attack rather than defend a budget that is struggling in debt. Those shell games Ontarians can see through. And reality is when they're adding so much debt, it means there's no ability to help. And a good example of that is the city of Toronto. The conclusion from the city manager of Toronto, Peter Wallace, and his words were -- there are no new investments for Toronto. So despite the Liberals telling mayor Tory they were going to invest in the city of Toronto, Toronto is receiving nothing from this government. So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister come clean? Are the Liberals So, Mr. Speaker, are the Liberals simply attacking mayor Tory because they're embarrassed of their own budget, which is suffocating high debt. And does nothing for the city of Toronto?

>>Minister Sousa: So, Mr. Speaker, I'll answer the first part of the question. We're investing \$11.5 billion more in health care. We're investing another \$6.5 billion more in education, and we're making record investments in infrastructure and transit for the people of Ontario, all of which a good part is going to be supported by increased debt to the extent of those capital improvements and capital investments. What will he cut as we move forward on those very issues that are important to the people of Ontario? Mr. Speaker, we are investing in Toronto, heavily in fact. Toronto set its priorities. We said we will match and support ongoing investments in social housing as well. As in infrastructure. The member opposite has opposed the revenue request. The member opposite has not even agreed to Toronto's conditions. We have.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of finance. And for a third time. For a second time the Minister of finance refuses to acknowledge that we have \$34 billion in new debt over the next three years. Debt is still skyrocketing in Ontario. What it means, we have so much debt and so much interest payments. No ability to invest in. And frankly despite what the Minister of finance says, when the mayor and the entire city council are saying this government does nothing for Toronto, it speaks loudly. And the reality is they have made choices. You know, an example of the lack of support for Toronto, the Liberals cut \$1.4 million from the Toronto public library. Where is this government's priorities? How can this Minister justify \$1 billion to pay for their gas plant scandal but \$1.4 million for the library in Toronto is too much? It's not right, Mr. Speaker

>>Minister Sousa: So here are the priorities of this budget. Pharmacare, free for every child under 25, Mr. Speaker. Tuition for our children, 210,000 going to school this year, free for them as well, Mr. Speaker. We're continuing to provide for junior kindergarten and we're making investment and working with business to provide for more economic growth. What will he cut? Will he cut pharmacare going forward? Will he cut free tuition for our students? Will he cut the supports we're making for business? And, Mr. Speaker, we are the largest contributor to the city of Toronto by far and he has never once supported their initiatives, for that matter any municipality in Ontario, because they --

MPP Fedeli to Minister Sousa (Homecapital Group Investigation)

>>MPP Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the finance Minister. We've been asking you questions about home capital, the troubled mortgage lender, also under security commission investigation. Depositors left and the share price tumbled. Then they received a \$2 billion bailout from the health care of Ontario pension plan or hoop. Kevin Smith, the board chair of home capital, was a member of hoop's board and Jim cohane, hoop C.E.O., was also on the board of home capital. So after the \$2 billion deal was done, they then resigned from each other's board within 24 hours. All this happened right under the Minister 's nose. We want answers from the Minister. Is an investigation into this perceived conflict of interest under way? Or does the Minister agree that what went down in that 24-hour period somehow passes the smell test?

>>Minister Sousa: I appreciate the question, Mr. Speaker. In fact as I replied already on occasion, investigations are under way. The Ontario securities commission is doing its job and has already made public as to some of the allegations being put forward. Osfi, which is a federal regulator, oversees home capital, is also taking the appropriate steps

to protect the interests of consumers and investors, and fsco, which is a regulator for here in Ontario, has already performed and laid some of the charges in regards to fraud. So the member opposite is now making allegations in regards to some of the executives and share ownership and the chair as well as the trustees and the resignation so we get all that. But our primary concern is to ensure consumers and investors are protected and that we take the appropriate steps, through the regulators, which is in fact doing their job to that extent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>MPP Fedeli: To the Minister. Kevin Smith is also the \$720,000-a-year C.E.O. Of St. Joseph health centre in Hamilton. But while he's at his \$357,000 a year job at home capital, here's what's happening back at his hospital. 600 cataract surg Eries stopped, 58 registered nursing jobs cut, mental health treatment unit closed, 136 more positions cut including 61 R.N.S. Where was Kevin Smith through all this? Not in Hamilton but in Toronto attending 31 board meetings earning \$1.5 million in stock. You have to ask how could he possibly run St. Joseph's while heading up a multibillion-dollar company? I ask the Minister, is it right that a hospital C.E.O., who should be focused on health care, have another full-time job. Where he earned over \$1.5 million?

>>Minister Sousa: So, Mr. Speaker, again, we've made investments in the hospitals. We're investing more in operating and in capital and supporting the well-being of Ontarians as we proceed forward on those matters. And the member -- They have fiduciary duties, Mr. Speaker. In fact home capital as well as hoop, act independently of government and they take the decisions as they see appropriate. We through the Ontario securities commission at fsco, make sure they're operating to the extent they protect consumers and investors, including the members and the beneficiaries of the pension plan. So it's their discretion, Mr. Speaker. They don't report to the government. They're separate of government. But we will take the appropriate steps to insure that they're protected and the member opposite has very clearly stated that they have resigned now as directors and as chair of their respective operation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Smith to Minister Thibeault (Hydro Executive Salaries)

>>MPP Smith: My question this morning to the Minister of energy. Speaker, the chief financial officer -- At Hydro One is leaving. After receiving almost \$1 million increase in salary last year alone. Now \$1.7 million for this position. Speaker, now that there's another opening with Hydro One, will the Minister, who still controls 70% of that company or at least 70% of the shares of that company -- will he make an effort? Will he try to get executive compensation under control -- Start to get the millionaires out of the ratepayers' trough. Afford the hydro.

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once gone I'm pleased to rise to talk

about what our government is doing on this side of the House to ensure that we get our energy and our look trusty rates, Mr. Speaker, as affordable as possible unlike the other side of the House where they have no plan, Mr. Speaker. They have no idea on what to do with energy, let alone anything to do with the province, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to being a shareholder within Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the government, like any other shareholder, will of course support a plan that balances attracting the best talent to run these companies, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time getting top value for money, Mr. Speaker. We want to continue to attract top talent to Hydro One, to O.P.G., who can deliver value for ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. I know that's something on that side of the House. That they don't understand. So over the past year, Mr. Speaker, Hydro One has become a much better company, and its customers are beginning to see just that.

>>MPP Smith: Sounds like the Minister 's ready to continue opening up the bank vault and allowing them to come in and take whatever they want at Hydro One. It's unbelievable to me really, Speaker, because this government continues to put up these expensive renewables across the province that are causing chaos on our grid. They haven't stopped the green energy act. They haven't stopped the sell-off of hood rode one shares. Every time they stand up in this legislature, Speaker, to use Hydro One for a photo op, they remember they still own 70% of it. But whenever they can actually do something about compensation there, they throw their hands in the air and just say here. Come on in. Take what you want. Speaker, Hydro One executives are eligible for hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars of bonuses every year. The Minister once again going to take the side of the people that are sending the hydro bills or side with the people who are getting exorbitant hydro bills in their home every month that they can't afford? Do the right thing, Minister.

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House we're actually siding with this the people of Ontario, providing them with a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. I know, I know the opposition and I know the member opposite talked about having their plan in the policy department, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's been 62 days since we've announced the fair hydro plan. What's their plan, Mr. Speaker ? They have no plan for hydro. They have no plan for the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to helping families, Mr. Speaker, we actually listen to what they have to say and we acted, Mr. Speaker. We put together a plan that's going to reduce the rates by 25%. What did they do, Mr. Speaker ? They heard and did nothing.

May 2, 2017

MPP Milczyn to Minister Del Duca (TTC Spending)

>>MPP Peter Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of transportation. Speaker, as a former city councillor, I know how important it is to have strong partnerships between municipal governments and provincial and federal levels. One of the main reasons I ran as an MPP Under the leadership of Premier Wynne is because I saw firsthand how committed this government is to investing in municipalities, including my own of Toronto. Speaker, our government has always and continues to be a strong partner, and in fact the strongest partner for the city of Toronto on many fronts.

But especially when it comes to transit. That's why yesterday I was proud to join the Minister of transportation city hall to talk about that. Could the Minister please provide members of the House with more information on how we're investing in Toronto transit?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. Of course I want to begin by thanking the member from Etobicoke- Lakeshore for his advocacy for his community and for the entire city of Toronto, Speaker. This member has been working hard for a number of years. We know the Speaker both as the municipal councillor and as the MPP For Etobicoke-lakeshore. Just last month I was delighted to be with that member to provide an update on the Kipling mobility hub, Speaker, a critical project that he has long been advocating for both in his time here and his time at city council. Speaker, our government has proven time and too many again that we are fundamentally committed to investing in transit and transportation projects across Ontario and here in Toronto. That's why our government is already contributing over 70% of the funding for Toronto transit projects. This includes projects like the Eglinton cross town and finch west L.R.T.S, the union Pearson express and go regional express rail. Investments that have already been completed are under construction or will soon start constructions. These are not investments of the distant past or even recent past. We are and continue to be a strong partner for Toronto and our record demonstrate that is.

>> MPP Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that answer. I was very pleased to welcome the Minister to Etobicoke- Lakeshore last month to discuss the Kipling mobility hub, which will help to transform the Etobicoke city centre. Mr. Speaker, having served as both a councillor and now as an MPP For the great riding of Etobicoke-lakeshore, I know that the transit projects we're investing in often is the sole capital funders, are transforming communities across the city. But, Speaker, there's been a lot of misinformation being reported about our commitment to the city's transit, both for today's need and tomorrow. Particularly in regards for funding projects like the new downtown relief line. Last week the Minister of finance revealed their 2017 budget, which contains some important updates on infrastructure investments. Speaker, would the Minister please provide the members of the House with more information on the commitment we announced in budget 2017 and what we're going to do to advance future transit projects?

>> Minister Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I thank the member for the follow-up. Not only was budget 17 balanced. It also contains \$30 billion worth of new infrastructure funding for projects across Ontario including Toronto. This is on top of the over \$12 billion we have already invested in Toronto transit alone. Speaker, we've already provided critical planning money for projects like the relief line and the Yonge north subway extension. These are projects which our other partners have not yet allocated capital funding form. Speaker, when the member from Etobicoke- Lakeshore and I with at city hall yesterday, to clear up some of this misinformation about our commitment to Toronto, one thing became abundantly clear to me. Number one, Speaker, the leader of the official opposition and the P.C. Party still do not have a plan to invest in transit in Toronto let alone across the province, Speaker. The P.C.S can

keep holding press conferences. We'll continue to deliver transit the people of Toronto and this region desperately need.

May 1, 2017

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Debt 2017 Budget)

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The government still claims they balanced the books. Cyclical Liberal mess. Mr. Speaker, something doesn't -- Patrick Brown: All the typical Liberal math, something doesn't add up. What do you get when you add in \$1.8 billion from double counted cap and trade money? You get 500 million in pension assets despite the auditor general's advice not to count it. \$1.5 billion in double counted federal transfer fund. \$450 million in land transfer taxes and lastly \$1 billion from the fire sale of Hydro One. What do you get, Mr. Speaker, when you add that all together? It's a \$5 billion operational deficit funded through cash grabs -- Mr. Speaker, it is a \$5 billion operational deficit through cash grabs, pension assets and onetime and unusual revenue. Will the Premier come clean and admit to the House. The budget is not balanced?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that this is the first balanced budget in Ontario for nearly a decade, Mr. Speaker. And we worked very hard to eliminate the deficit, Mr. Speaker. We knew that that was critical, and our economy is in a very strong position in Ontario. We are leading the country, Mr. Speaker, in economic growth. But the reality is that people are still anxious, and so the foundation of a balanced budget actually gives us the opportunity to make investments that are needed in the province. So, Mr. Speaker, a prime example of that is ohip plus, which allows us to invest in the people of this province and allows children and youth in this province as of January 2018 to have free medication, Mr. Speaker, because we know -- we know that if we can make that investment and kids -- answer. And young people can get access to the medication they need, will be healthier in the long term, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. You know what else doesn't add up? The fact that the Wynne Liberals are adding another \$10 billion of debt. They say they have a balanced budget. But another reason the Liberals claim they have a balanced budget because they're simply hiding debt elsewhere. If this budget was -- Truly balanced, we wouldn't be adding debt left, right and centre. But the Wynne Liberals are adding \$10 billion worth of debt to the most indebted province in the world. We owe more than any province or state and it's about to get worse. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why we're adding so much debt this year, \$10 billion, if it's actually a balanced budget?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, well, I absolutely understand that the leader of the opposition has no interest and no plan to make capital investment in this province, Mr. Speaker. No interest in it and no apparent understanding that, without investment in capital, without investment in transit, Mr. Speaker, in roads and bridges across the province, you know, he was at the city of Toronto today, Mr. Speaker, talking about the city of Toronto. One commitment to invest one cent in transit in the city of Toronto, Mr.

Speaker. We have billions of dollars that's being invested in Toronto, in Ottawa, in Kitchener- Waterloo, Mr. Speaker, in Hamilton around the province, because we know, we know that those investments are critical to the economic viability and growth of those communities and the province overall. We are proud of our balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. First one in a decade in Ontario, and it allows us. To have a foundation upon which to invest –

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. You know, this myth of a balanced budget didn't trick everyone, didn't confuse everyone. Just look what Kelly income Mcfarland had to say nat "National post." I quote, in this article the budget claims to be balanced even though debt will rise another \$26.4 billion this fiscal year. Debt servicing costs will again eat up 1 billion a month. He added, I quote -- billions of dollars for capital projects are kept off book. Billions more in borrowing shoved into the future. Onetime asset sales like Hydro One sell-offs are used to make the numbers look better than they are. That's from the "National post.", Mr. Speaker, clearly this budget is not balanced. And my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is playing with the numbers, is fudging the numbers really worth hurting the –

>>Minister Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, we balanced the budget this year, next year and the year after that. This is coming from a party who increased debt by 53% when they were in power as a province during the good times, and this member himself, he voted in the largest deficit in our country's history, \$55 billion, Mr. Speaker. And he doubled that during the time that he was there. Mr. Speaker, I'll read a quote from an independent source, a rating agency that says the following -- the government has, to its credit, outperformed its targets each year. Efforts to con train wages and limit spending growth in key program areas kept the plan on track initially while the province was benefitting from strong economic growth and more recently one-off measures. That's the dbars. It goes on to say the next debt-to-g.d.p. Ratio is seen falling for the third straight at 37.5% in –

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (TTC Funding)

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Premier. Toronto set out some clear and reasonable priorities for the Ontario budget. People living in Toronto community housing need help and the mayor asked that the province join with the city to provide that help. People relying on the TTC Need an improved transit system and the mayor asked the province to join the city to help provide that system. Now I understand what the mayor's talking about and when we met I was clear. An NDP Government will be there for Toronto. The more ignored the people of Toronto in last week's budget. As the mayor told people living in community housing, quote -- the Ontario government is not helping to get your housing fixed, end quote. Why isn't the Premier doing what's needed to fix affordable housing in onto and communities around the province?

>> Premier Wynne: So, Mr. Speaker, let me just say once again that, you know, we are making billions of dollars of investments in Toronto. We have uploaded literally billions of dollars of costs from municipalities, including Toronto around the province. But let me just talk specifically, because I am concerned about social housing around the province. I am concerned about social housing in the city of Toronto, as a Toronto member, Mr. Speaker. I know firsthand the challenges of Toronto community housing. But those challenges are found in other parts of the province as well, Mr. Speaker. For Toronto, what this budget does is it provides \$130 million for social housing repair, Mr. Speaker, \$340 million for prevention of homelessness. Another \$130 million for affordable housing, Mr. Speaker, and a specific ask that the mayor had which was. Land. We have acquired provincial land worth up to \$100 million to build 2,000 new affordable rental housing units. Those are all supports for housing in the city of Toronto, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the mayor told Torontonians the city got a big goose egg when it came to housing -- social housing repairs. Social housing stock is crumbling and concern doesn't fix it, Speaker. Funding fixes it. But that wasn't all. To quote the mayor, the most crucial needs. People of the city of Toronto were not met by this budget. The Premier and her government had a chance to stand up for Toronto on transit. Instead they turned their backs. When I went with mayor Tory, we talked about the importance of the province supporting 50% of the TTC's operating costs. Why is the Premier saying no to immediate improvements to Toronto's transit -- Why is the Premier saying no to immediate improvements to Toronto's transit and transit systems across the province?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, the chatter that you might have heard behind me, Mr. Speaker, is from members who are not from the city of Toronto, who have watched the funding that has flowed to the city of Toronto and to Hamilton, Mr. Speaker, and to Kitchener- Waterloo and to Ottawa. Let me just talk about the money that is going into the city of Toronto. \$5.3 billion for the Eglinton crosstown. \$1.2 billion for the finch west L.R.T. 3.7 billion for go R.E.R. Within Toronto. 870 million for the Toronto-york- Spadina subway. 1.48 billion for the Scarborough subway. And, Mr. Speaker, on future projects, which as I know what the mayor's been talking about, \$150 million for planning and design work on the Toronto relief line, a line and a project, Mr. Speaker, for which there is no committed city money at this point, Mr. Speaker, And 55 million for the same work on the Yonge north subway. No government has put more money into transit in the city of Toronto.

MPP Qaadri to Minister Sousa (Funding Toronto)

>>MPP Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. On behalf of my constituents of Etobicoke north, Speaker, -my question is to the Minister of finance, the Honourable Charles Sousa. Speaker I can tell you that all of my Colleagues on this side of the House are in fact quite proud of Premier Wynne and Minister of finance Sousa for the Ontario 2017/2018 budget. In fact our growth has outpaced Canada's and all other G-7 countries for the last three years. On the ground, that means, Speaker, the greatest expense for prescription health care in a generation, \$1 billion for transit just in my own riding. 400 million for

Etobicoke general hospital. 700,000 new jobs created since the recession and our unemployment -- unemployment rate has been below the national average for two straight years. When the global economic recession hit, we made a deliberate choice to invest in Ontarians and things that matter to them most. Will the finance Minister please itemize more of what we're doing for yans in the 2017/2018 Ontario budget?

>>Minister Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member from Etobicoke North for the question and his advocacy in this regard. I'm happy to reaffirm that the 2017 budget is a balanced budget and it's the first one since the global recession. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add again that not only have we balanced this year but we're on track to do so again next year and the year after that. A balanced budget means that the government will not be borrowing to pay for operating costs because all of it now goes directly to invest in capital. Long-term capital assets. The result is more money and more available for things that matter to the people of Ontario, like free prescriptions for children under 24 and under or free tuition. When the global recession hit, Mr. Speaker, we set out a realistic and responsible approach to return to balance in 17/18&last week we delivered on that commitment.

>>MPP Qaadri: Speaker, ohip plus, new schools, new hospitals or hospital expansions, free tuition for modest-income Ontarians, 25% cut in hydro rates. More child care. Eight stops at the finch L.R.T. In my riding alone. Minister, on behalf of the people of Etobicoke North -- mucho obrigado. Families in Toronto will benefit from these important investments. Speaker, we are already making our largest infrastructure investment in our province's history and that Toronto is in fact receiving a very significant funding support not only for the items that I've listed but of course for affordable housing as well as transit. Speaker, could the Minister of finance please comment on how we continue to build up the city of Toronto?

>>Minister Sousa: Again I would like to thank the member from Etobicoke North for his question and his language skills. Mr. Speaker, it's important to remember that no provincial government in Ontario's history has invested more in the city of Toronto. We've increased provincial uploads the city of Toronto will save \$530 million this year alone. In fact since 2003 we contributed over \$10 billion in transit projects like Eglinton crosstown and the downtown relief line that we're supporting. And this year, this year's budget includes another \$130 million for social housing repair, \$340 million for homelessness prevention and 130 million for affordable housing. We're using provincial land to put up to 100 million to build 2,000 new affordable housing units. The city has asked us for new revenue tools and we've responded, Mr. Speaker. Our budget will give the city -- In fact no -- to ensure the people of Toronto benefit from predictable ongoing funding, we've also doubled the share of gas revenue to the city. On this side of the House we support Toronto and --