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Subject: Hansard: Tabuns to Thibeault -- Hydro Rates

INSTANT HANSARD

>>MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the **Premier**. Last year the Minister of energy denied that there was a crisis with soaring hydro bills. Then the government ignored the NDP's demands for moratorium on disconnections of hydro through the winter. Only when a crisis had pushed her government into a political corner did the **Premier** act. Well, a new crisis is upon us. Starting May 1st, Ontario families will start losing their hydro on May 1st?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and, you know, talk about what Hydro One is doing, Mr. Speaker. Hydro One, which has millions of customers in this province, are extending their winter moratorium until the end of May, Mr. Speaker. That is great news, Mr. Speaker. It just shows that Hydro One is working closely with their customers who have fallen behind on their bills, Mr. Speaker. The extra time will allow customers to take advantage of some of the early savings from Ontario's fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, in which all families, small businesses and farms in this province will get a 25%, up to, Mr. Speaker, on average a 25% reduction. And for those families, Mr. Speaker, that in rural or in their northern parts of our province, Mr. Speaker. That rate will be between 40 and 50%. They will see significant savings, Mr. Speaker, unlike nothing in their plan, Mr. Speaker.

>>MPP Tabuns: I guess the rest don't really count. They really aren't a factor anymore. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. If a family heats with natural gas, they have access to up to \$1,000 in emergency relief to help pay their hydro and gas bill if they can't meet their payments. But many rural families don't have access to natural gas, and they must heat with hydro. Not only is hydro more expensive. The government only offers these struggling families \$600 in emergency relief, not \$1,000. Why does the **Premier** think it's fair that rural Ontario families paying some of the highest hydro rates in Canada don't have access to relief the way everyone else does?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, when it comes to the west, the east, the north and the south, this government is acting, Mr. Speaker. I don't know where that member is coming from with the west. But also, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to rural, when it comes to remote and when it comes to northern, Mr. Speaker, I just said in the last supplementary and I know he hasn't been listening to the last month and a half in terms of what our plan is doing and I know he probably didn't pay attention during the technical briefing but let me remind him, that's 40 to 50% off through rural and remote families, Mr. Speaker. And on top of that, and on -- on top of that, Mr. Speaker, if these families qualify for the Ontario electricity support program, they can get an additional 50% off of their bills as well, Mr. Speaker. So we're making sure that those in the rural and remote parts of our province are seeing significant relief on their energy bills, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan. It's your working, Mr. Speaker, by example with the O.E.B.. Too bad they don't have a plan that fathoms to work

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