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Subject: Hansard: Tabuns to Thibeault -- Hydro-Rate Reduction

INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. My question to the Minister of energy. In March, the privatized Hydro One filed its distribution rate applications for 2018 to 2022. Instead of reducing its rates, as the government promised would happen, the privatized Hydro One is seeking a 20% increase. But there's more. On page 2038 of the application, we learned that Hydro One wants to install tree payment meters which require the customer to pay first before they get any electricity. Anywhere prepayment meters have been used, they have hurt struggling families. Will the government direct the Ontario energy board to prohibit Hydro One's use of prepayment meters?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the O.E.B. is the quasi-judicial organization and our regularity in the province, their mandate is to have the ratepayers' best interests in mind and so we leave the decisions, when it comes to rate applications, to the O.E.B., Mr. Speaker. You know, when it comes to Hydro One and their rate application, it is also important, Mr. Speaker, to talk about that the O.E.B. is reviewing this, and again, Mr. Speaker, there will be no increase more than the cost of inflation for the next four years, Mr. Speaker. That was part of the fair hydro plan that that member and that party voted against, making sure that ratepayers actually had that 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. Talking about Hydro One customers, they can see anywhere between a 40 to a 50% reduction because of the action that this government took to make sure that we protect ratepayers, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the Minister. After Margaret Thatcher privatized the U.K.'s water system, utilities began installing these prepayment meters. They hurt struggling families and they created a public health crisis. The **Premier** has hurt families in Ontario by privatizing Hydro One. Hydro One's installation of prepayment hydro meters would bypass Ontario's rules for disconnections. Hydro One won't have to disconnect anyone. The power will be cut off automatically if the customer doesn't feed the meter. The U.K. finally banned prepayment meters. Will the government do the same thing and stop Hydro One from installing prepayment meters?

>> Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, this is an application that is before the O.E.B. And the O.E.B. As the quasi-judicial regularity of our electricity system, of our energy system, Mr. Speaker, they're reviewing every application with the ratepayers' best interests in mind, Mr. Speaker. I know the member opposite mentioned the importance of protecting the interests of the people of Ontario and that's what this government has done by bringing forward the fair hydro plan and reducing rates by 25%. But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, with the broadening of ownership of Hydro One not only have we seen, Mr. Speaker, reductions of anywhere between

40 and 50% but we're actually seeing a \$13.5 billion investment in the gtha go regional express rail. It's going to quadruple the number of weekly trips to 6,000. 5.3 billion. In the Eglinton crosstown L.R.T. \$1 billion in auto Ottawa L.R.T. Waterloo regional transit -- the list goes on.

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