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JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P. - RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE

House Question

April 13, 2006

Hydro Rates

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Premier, in the 2003 election campaign you promised to keep hydro rates capped. However, the reality is that you have jacked up hydro rates by as much as 55%, thus severely breaking yet another of your election promises.

Why should Ontarians believe anything you say about electricity pricing in Ontario anymore?

First Supplementary:

Premier, your broken promises on hydro rates and your broken promises on the coal plant shutdowns are just some of examples of your broken and mismanaged energy policy.

Besides some windmills that are operating around 10% capacity, the truth is you have no real plan for electricity in Ontario. You still want to shutdown almost 25% of the province's cheapest supply and replace it with unreliable and expensive power within an unrealistic timetable.

But there are victims here Premier, the victims of your broken promises and your lack of any real plan are the hardworking people of Ontario. A 55% increase hydro costs is quite different from what you promised to Ontarians during that last election.

Why are you consistently refusing to be straight with Ontarians? Why are Ontarians being forced to pick up the tab for your total incompetence on this file?

Final Supplementary:

Premier, the bottom line here is that Ontarians know that you cannot be trusted to competently manage the electricity system of this great province.

You promised you would cap electricity rates and you broke that promise as soon as you were elected.

You promised to close the coal plants by 2007 and you broke that promise...which was irresponsible to begin with.

You promised to take politics out of the energy sector and you broke that promise as well.

Your plan now (or lack thereof) seems to be to replace almost 25% of the province's energy supply with unaffordable and unreliable power.

IT'S NO WONDER THAT PRICES ARE SKYROCKETING UNDER YOUR WATCH!

Premier, when are you going to start being honest about electricity in Ontario? When are you going to have a responsible plan for electricity in Ontario and not a political one?

Lead Question 2

Mr. Speaker, my question is again to Premier.

The Windsor Star recently quoted Adam White of the Major Power Consumers commenting on your plan or lack thereof.. He said of your plan: "Ontarians will pay more and get less; electricity rates will soar, economic growth will decline and investment will be lost".

The Windsor Star itself, when discussing your electricity plan, was quoted as saying "McGuinty's energy plan will cost electricity consumers more money, do little for the environment while severely damaging the economy and create a climate of protracted uncertainty that will scare off investors and lead to devastating job losses".

Premier, we agree with the Windsor Star...except for the part about you actually having a plan.

Premier, when will you finally be honest with Ontarians and explain that you have made too many ill-conceived election promises on the electricity file and that your own government's incompetence has made Ontarians, once again, pay more and get less?

First Supplementary:

Premier, you have raised hydro rates three times since coming to office. Since the election of 2003, you have raised hydro rates of Ontarians by as much as 55% and instead of apologizing for your broken promises and total lack of a plan, you are engaging in spin that reeks of desperation.

This is about your broken promises (no matter how irresponsible they were in the first place) and total mismanagement of the electricity system. This is an issue of integrity and competence.

You have failed on supply. You have failed on conservation. You have failed on pricing and you have failed to be honest with Ontarians about the promises you made and the price they are now forced to pay as a result.

Premier, how can you justify asking Ontarians to pay more and more for electricity when they are obviously getting less and less in return? Use less power while paying 55% more for power...is that your plan Premier?

Final Supplementary:

Premier, your plan (if there is one) is to apparently make Ontarians pay 55% more for the power while simultaneously eliminating our cheapest and most reliable source of power without having comparable priced power to replace it.

You keep talking about the real price of power. You continue to push a message that Ontarians need to start paying the real price of power, but your plan delivers anything but the real price of power.

Premier, the real cost of power is not truly 'real' if you are irresponsibly shutting down our cheapest form of electricity production before having adequate supply to replace it.

Adequate supply sources are ones that actually perform at capacity (not 10%). Adequate supply sources should not cost 15 times more than what you're shutting down.

Premier, you wouldn't know the real cost of power if it landed in your lap. Your plan has nothing to do with the real cost of power. When will you start admitting that to families now paying 55% more for their power?