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

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HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: It looks like the Premier and the energy minister's defence of this hydro rate hike is scaring half of the caucus members out of this place.

My question is for the Premier. A Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters report added up the cost of your hydro rate increases. Since today, since the increases already, it said that Ottawa families will face a further 42% rate hike by 2015. Data from the same report says that your hydro increases will make families in North Bay pay 43% more, families in Peterborough will pay 44% more, and you're making families in Barrie, Markham and Richmond Hill pay 45.5% more. Just how much more will families have to pay for your hydro policies after 2015?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm delighted that the member has asked this question because it gives me an opportunity to talk about a very important initiative that our government moved forward to over the course of the break, an initiative that, frankly, we moved forward to in consultation with many of the big industries in this province to ensure that we gave those industries the opportunity to engage in conservation measures, to shift their use from peak use and lower their energy costs as a result. The result of this initiative—and this is not just according to the Minister of Energy; this is according to those industries—is, they will be able to increase their production, increase the amount of jobs that they're creating in this province, lower their energy costs and lower the costs to the entire system. It's a smart thing to do, and I'm very glad the member brought this question up because it gave me an opportunity to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: People won't be able to afford those products they're producing because they can't afford their hydro bill. Dalton McGuinty doesn't have a plan—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member of the statement that I made earlier: that we refer to positions, ministries or ridings.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Premier doesn't have a plan, but don't take my word for it; take the word of the energy minister, who recently confessed in a media interview that, "We're in the process now of putting together our long-term energy plan." Seven years in office. There used to be a plan but George Smitherman ripped it up four years ago.

The McGuinty Liberals are making families pay hundreds of dollars more for their hydro rate increases, Samsung deals, windmills, back-door energy tax and an HST on top of it all. How could you, Premier, have taken families down this path without a plan?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That is almost laughable coming from the other side of the House. What we've been talking about over the last number of years is our plan to build a stronger, more stable and cleaner energy system. Maybe the member hasn't heard of the Green Energy Act, which is creating thousands of megawatts of clean energy in this province. Maybe the member hasn't heard about our plan to get off coal by the year 2014, which is going to be cleaning our air and improving our health. Maybe the member hasn't heard about the 8,000 megawatts of power that we have brought on—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The same comment I made in regard to the leader of the third party—I think the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke would like to hear the answer as well.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind all members, again, to have that respect for the discourse of the question and the answer. Please continue.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I find it hard to believe, after all this effort on behalf of Ontarians, on behalf of our government to transform the weak, unreliable and dirty system of energy that we inherited to a strong, reliable and clean system, that the member would not have recognized this plan that we have had for a very long time in place—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.