

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? It truly boggles the mind

You've probably heard the old saw about the kid who murders his parents and then begs the government to look after him on the basis of the fact he's now an orphan.

Kind of like Premier Kathleen Wynne bragging about the fact she's using your tax dollars ? even more than she has already ? to help fix the skyrocketing electricity prices in Ontario, prices that she and her predecessor Dalton McGuinty are pretty much personally responsible for.

Talk about chutzpah!

For more than a decade now, the Liberals at Queen's Park have been sending out blank cheques in a misguided plan to impose so-called green energy on this province, all the while causing homeowners terrible hardships and chasing business across the border. Faced with ever-shrinking poll numbers because of her own incompetence, Wynne suddenly came upon a plan ? she'll lower your Hydro rates by 25 per cent and pay for it by mortgaging the debt for a longer term.

Wynne, attempting to make it sound as benevolent as possible, likened it to people extending their mortgage term in order to lower the monthly payments. The difference, of course, that in the case of a house mortgage, you still enjoy increased equity as time goes by. In the case of paying for her electrical boondoggles, alas, the only thing you get is a longer and greatly expanded debt.

And she hopes Ontarians are stupid enough to fall for this.

You may recall that in 2015, Auditor General Bonnie Lysk concluded that the Liberals had overpaid \$9.2 billion ? that's ?billion? with a ?b? ? pursuing their ideologically twisted (my description, not Lysk's) green energy plan.

That's two years ago, so today's tab of unbridled waste would be even more. Add to that the extra \$25 billion in debt repayment of her latest scheme, and it truly does boggle the mind. It also leaves a mess for your kids and their kids to be saddled with once Wynne and her crew limp off into the sunset.

We have heard a considerable amount about Ontario residents being forced to chose between paying the rent/mortgage and feeding their kids. At one of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's townhall meetings, a woman asked him about that, but he just brushed it off as a provincial matter. His famous sunny ways, it seems, don't extend beyond Parliament Hill, which may be why the latest public opinion polls show his saintly status sadly slipping. But we digress.

Residents are being asked to take comfort in the government's decree that Hydro can no longer cut off their residential power until the spring. How generous, given the fact that 60,000 Ontario citizens have had their power cut off in a single year already. And ? surprise, surprise ? people actually still need power in the warmer weather too. Duh!

Just to rub it in, these same Liberals are offering grants of up to \$14,000 for people buying electric cars. So if you can afford say to buy a \$100,000 Tesla ? which means you can likely afford to pay your Hydro bill as well ? your premier is only too happy to cut you a cheque and declare what a fine citizen of the world you really are.

Another serious side-effect of this great Liberal folly that we don't hear as much about these days is the dreadful impact it has all had on business. Yes, yes, I know it's fashionable ? particularly in Liberal circles ? to bash business these days, but without it, alas, we'd be in even more trouble than we already are.

A recent survey of Ontario members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) ? whose 42,000 Ontario members employ about 500,000 people ? found that 87 per cent of these business owners saw their electricity costs go up from five to 20 per cent or more during the past three years.

Asked how that impacted their business decisions, 43 per cent said it caused ?delayed investments? ? obviously with fewer job opportunities for Ontarians ? and 56 per cent said it forced them to increase the cost of their products or services ? and guess who is paying for that.

Others said they had to reduce employee hours or the number of employees and 13 per cent considered either closing up shop or moving somewhere else outside of Ontario. And so it goes. Horrible as the direct costs are of this Liberal mismanagement of electricity, the indirect costs make the situation even more dire.

Wynne's cynical and politically inspired re-financing of the debt, while saving you a few bucks now, will continue to cost you even more than it has. And given that these same people are still running things, there's no reason to think it won't get even worse.

Think about it next time you turn on your lights. Unless, of course, you've already been cut off.

