



A MESSAGE FROM QUEEN'S PARK • A MONTHLY COLUMN BY  
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I must concede that many of my residents have indicated that they're not nearly as upset with their recent electricity bills. And I too have seen my bills go down. It is natural to be pleased when one is paying less. But everyone should also be informed as to the 'how' and 'why'.

We will start with the 'why'. Clearly we in the Opposition forced the government to do something about electricity bills that have skyrocketed under their watch. With an election looming they had to do something, because they were not going to go into a campaign defending a 400 percent increase in hydro bills.

The 'how' is a little more complicated, but I will try to be as clear as possible. What they have done is charge you less for electricity than its actual cost. They are doing this by borrowing the money to make-up the difference. According to the Financial Accountability Officer, that could cost anywhere between 45 to 93 billion dollars. But it is also clear that in order to pay back the money borrowed, from 2028 onwards ratepayers will be charged a lot more than the cost of the power being produced.

The Liberals did one more sleight of hand to confuse the ratepayers: in order to prevent the true cost of their scheme from being shown on the balance sheet, the government is borrowing the money through Ontario Power Generation and keeping it off their own books. This will prevent them from showing a deficit next year. The Auditor General (a non-partisan officer of the Legislature) has condemned this practice and is essentially saying that the government is creating its own accounting rules. What it means to you is this: you will end up paying an extra four billion dollars in interest charges alone because Ontario Power Generation borrows money at a much higher rate than the province does.

The result is simply this. In order to hide the facts from the people, the Liberals are quite willing to have those same people end up paying an extra four billion dollars. It is not a stretch to say that in order to get re-elected, they are willing to spend billions of dollars in an unnecessary and questionable scheme that amounts to nothing more than a shell game.

As I write this column, November 1st, we are just about to enter a very special period of the year—Remembrance Week. As the son of a World War II veteran, it is a time of great significance to me, as I am sure it is to you as well. This year we celebrated Canada's coming-of-age with the 100th Anniversary of our triumph at Vimy Ridge; it is impossible not to think back to the suffering and the horrors experienced by those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending the freedom and liberty that we enjoy today.

Each and every year there are fewer veterans remaining from the Second World War and the Korean War, and the time is approaching when there will be none. It goes without saying that we are grateful for all of those who have served. Whether it be peacekeeping, the Gulf War, Afghanistan, or other missions throughout the world. I would encourage everyone to take in a Remembrance Day service this year, and with their numbers dwindling—if you have the opportunity to meet a veteran of the Second World War or the Korean War—let them know how grateful you are for the sacrifices they made so many years ago. To those who never returned, our gratitude is eternal.

Lest We Forget.