

CO Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript for Monday, November 21, 2017

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Please see attached Cabinet Office's Transcript of Provincial Question Period for Tuesday, November 21, 2017.

MCI did not receive any questions of interest.

MSA did not receive any questions of interest.

Official opposition questions were on a number of topics including hydro-rate reduction plan, the college strike and OHIP Plus. NDP Questions today included the college strike, youth mental health services and the Sudbury PET Scanner.

The official Hansard will be available later today by clicking on the link below.

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/house-proceedings/house_proceedings_home.do?locale=en

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Transcript of Provincial Question Period
41st Parliament, 2nd Session
Tuesday, November 21, 2017

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

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MPP Smith to Premier (Thibeault) Re: Electricity Management

>>MPP Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Speaker. My question this morning is for the Premier. Research completed by the Ontario society of professional engineers really shines a light on the mismanagement of Ontario's electricity system. They poured over data issued by the independent electricity system operator and the Ontario energy board, and what was revealed was wildly disappointing, Speaker. It showed the province exported electricity at a net financial loss of up to 1.25 billion with a B dollars, billion, \$1.25 billion. Will the Premier confirm that to the Liberal government –

>>Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the I.S.O. Estimates that electricity exports reduce costs for Ontarians by hundreds of millions of dollars every year, so those are cost savings, Mr. Speaker, and this net benefit to Ontario was \$236 million last year, Mr. Speaker. That's a net benefit to the people of Ontario because of taking part in importing and exporting electricity to the benefit of their ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. On top of regular trade, we also pursued firm agreements wherever it makes sense in the province, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the the Minister of energy will want to speak more to this in the supplementary.

>>MPP Lorne Coe: So Speaker, the government is saying that the experts, the engineers are wrong and they know better. This Liberal spin is ridiculous. It's like costing \$20 to make a pizza, selling eight slices at \$11 a piece and saying you're making money. It's ridiculous. It's absurd. Europe not makingh money. We just wanted the government to come clean here this morning and start to tell the truth on this. Okay, so sure the government found an export partner, but these numbers here are staggering. The numbers from the engineers are staggering. We're subsidizing power for Michigan and New York and other neighbouring jurisdictions and they're poaching our jobs to make matters worse, because they're taking our electricity at a low cost. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit this government lost over \$1 billion exporting power?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it is important to note that today Ontario is a net

exporter of power, and in 2016 the net benefit, Mr. Speaker, of those exports to ratepayers was \$236 million as estimated by the independent system operator. These benefits translate into reduced costs -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so since 2013, the net benefit of our exports has been over \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker, in savings to Ontario ratepayers. Before, Mr. Speaker, back in the early 2000s, Ontario used to be an importer of electricity and what was the result? That was when our system was dependent on unreliable and expensive electricity from neighbouring jurisdictions, often forcing us to overpay for electricity. Now, Mr. Speaker, we're making money, we're making sure we put that back into the system to keep costs --

>>MPP Coe: Mr. Speaker, this political spin is absurd. These numbers don't lie. They come from the engineers here in Ontario. In 2016, the province exported a total of 21.9 terrawatt hours of electricity at a net financial loss of more than \$500 million, and most of this was clean, green energy, spilled over the dams at Niagara Falls and other hydroelectric facilities across the province. The engineers know that over the last few years, the total exports represent nearly enough electricity to power every home in Ontario for the entire year. That's the legacy of the mismanagement on the electricity file from the Liberal government. Mr. Speaker, how can this government continue to gouge electricity customers, at the same time exporting enough electricity at a loss to power every home in the province?

>> So Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite used the word legacy. So let's talk about their legacy when it comes to electricity. In 2002 and 2003, Ontario paid \$900 million to import electricity. From 1996 to 2003 -- From '96-2003 overall installed generation capacity fell 96%, that's like running Niagara Falls dry, at the same time demand grew by 8%, Mr. Speaker. That's their legacy. Our legacy? Rebuilding a system, making it clean, making it reliable, and bringing forward the fair hydro plan that makes it affordable, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to make sure that we serve the best interests of Ontario ratepayers in hand and they'll continue to misinform those ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. - I'll withdraw. I'll withdraw.

MPP Smith to Minister Thibeault Re: Electricity Management

>>MPP Todd Smith: Thanks, Speaker. And again, my question is for the Premier. The bad news story is on the electricity file come as fast as the water flows over Niagara fall, Mr. Speaker. The Ontario P.C.S believe in clean, green, renewable power. What we don't believe in, what we don't believe in is selling it to Michigan and New York at a loss. Let's be a little more specific. We have great made in Ontario power, hydroelectric, but last year the Liberals allowed 4.7 terrawatt hours of hydroelectric power to be wasted in Ontario including the station at Niagara Falls. It's the equivalent of powering nearly 500,000 homes for a year. Mr. Speaker, how does the government mismanage the system so poorly that we're letting green hydroelectric power, made in Ontario, to be shipped across the border at such a significant loss?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about what they're claiming, Mr. Speaker. They like to claim that power is wasted when water is spilled at hydroelectric generating station, Mr. Speaker. This just shows how little they know about the system. Our advantage of our clean, reliable and flexible system that we have built is that we're able to procure energy on an as-needed basis, this mines means we only use the energy that is produced at the cheapest cost at that time, Mr. Speaker. Any time a generator is not producing electricity, it is because there were cheaper options available at that time. This means that a hydro facility will generate power when it can offer into the market at a low price, and it is not used when it offers too expensive power -- Mr. Speaker, which begs the question do the PCs really think we should be running these generators at a higher cost to Ontario ratepayers? Probably so, Mr. Speaker, maybe they'll do that this weekend when they come up with --

>>MPP Smith: Speaker, what we really need to do here is take the cookie jar off that Minister's desk because he's made a mock of our electricity system in Ontario. It's made a complete mess of our Ontario electricity system. To make matters worse, I just want to reiterate that Ontario exported 1.9 Tera watt hours of electricity at a net financial loss of up to 1.25 billion. That number represents more than 2 million homes worth of electricity that Ontario has sold to neighbouring jurisdictions for a price less than what it costs to produce. Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier saying? What is the Minister saying to those 2 million electricity customers in Ontario that have to overpay so you can subsidize power to our neighbouring jurisdictions that are poaching our jobs at the same time.

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What do I say to all of the \$2 million customers that he was talking about, Mr. Speaker. They voted against reducing their rate by 25%, Mr. Speaker. That's what I would say to them. They have no plan on actually helping them, Mr. Speaker. And we do. But when it comes to net benefits of the export system, Mr. Speaker, every jurisdiction imports and exports electricity and we do so, Mr. Speaker at the net benefit of \$260 million in 2016. We did the same in 2015, the same in 2014, the same in 2013, Mr. Speaker. Go back and talk about their legacy, Mr. Speaker, they were imploding power at the cost of \$700 million a year, Mr. Speaker, and doing it at the same time. We increase is 27% on coal, Mr. Speaker. We actually shut down coal, when when it comes to a –

>>MPP Smith: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we have the Minister of energy ignoring the sites of experts in the energy sector for his own political spin. His own political messaging. If any other company or business sold their excess product at a loss of \$1.25 billion we know what would happen to them Mr. Speaker, they'd be fired, they'd be out of a job immediately. There's no way they would keep their job yet this company has the audacity, Mr. Speaker, everybody can see through this. They've made a mockery of their energy sector, too, Mr. Speaker. Signing regular contracts we don't need selling energy at a loss for up to \$1.25 billion at the same time.

>>Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker. Again, let's look at the facts. The facts are, and they still matter in Ontario, 236 million in net benefit to Ontario ratepayers, which, Mr. Speaker, since 2013 have been a net benefits of our export in over \$1 billion in savings to Ontario ratepayers. Let's talk about our trade with our electricity system, Mr. Speaker. It's managed by the experts, by our system experts, Mr. Speaker, our system operators, and it's the market that determines the price of electricity, and we only export electricity when the trade is a benefit to Ontario ratepayers. Our government, Mr. Speaker, will continue to participate in the electricity market, increasing the reliability and the cost effectiveness of our system, Mr. Speaker. It is something that we'll continue to do and something, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with all of our partner, all of our Neighbours, all of our system operators and the experts to make sure that we have the best --

MPP Sattler to Minister Matthews Re: College Strike

>>MPP Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Yesterday this Liberal government said students who decide to withdraw from College because of the strike will receive a full tuition refund. This has created confusion for students about whether they have to withdraw from College completely or just from the semester. Students have lives outside of class. They may work full-time, may have kids. They need to know whether getting a tuition refund and restarting the semester in January is an option. Speaker can this government assure College students that they can withdraw from the semester, get a full tuition refund and be guaranteed a fresh start in January?

>>Minister Deb Matthews: Well, thank you, Speaker, and throughout the strike I have spent time talking to student leaders, talking to students, understanding what issues they were facing and that getting a tuition refund, Speaker was an important priority for students and that's why I was very pleased to announce that students who withdraw as a result of the strike are entitled to a tuition refund, Speaker. I think that's fair, in fact it goes above and beyond what many considered to be fair, Speaker. To answer the member opposite's question, if students -- this applies to students who withdraw. They of course can come back. Not every College programme has a January re-entry, Speaker, so it will depend on the programme and the College.

>>MPP Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. For a student going to College anywhere in Ontario but especially in Toronto, a \$500 hardship rebate doesn't even cover a month's rent. Add rent onto additional child care costs, lost hours of work, text books that may barely be used, penalties for cancelling flights home, and the many other And the many other out-of-pocket expenses that students have incurred in over the last five weeks, and \$500 becomes more of a joke than a solution for some students. Speaker, why is this Premier not offering effective help for Ontario College students?

>>Minister Sattler: Well, Speaker, I have to say, this is a rather bizarre question coming from a party that rejected every opportunity to get students back to school more quickly. In fact, that's the party, Speaker, who said if they had been in power, the strike would go on as long as it took, Speaker, so that's pretty, a pretty bizarre question to now be concerned about students' expenses when last week, Speaker, they

were not concerned about students one little bit.

>>MPP Sattler: Speaker, \$500 is not nearly enough to compensate students for what they have lost during the five week strike, and for some, cramming five weeks of missed content into two weeks is just not possible. Imagine a busy working mom going to College part time to get a better life, balancing kids and a nine to five job. She hardly had enough time for coursework before the five-week strike and now with the holidays approaching, the Premier is asking her to find even more time to cram five weeks worth of learning into two. Instead of creating more confusion and chaos for students, why isn't this Liberal government offering a programme that actually responds to the financial hardships, the personal realities and the emotional stress that students have experienced over the last five weeks?

>>Minister Matthews: Well, speak, I absolutely acknowledge the stress that students have been experiencing during the strike and will continue. We are very happy students are back at work today and we are stepping up to support them as they do complete their semester. So Speaker, we have established -- every College has established a dedicated funds to support students for additional costs that they incur as a result of the strike, Speaker, for many students those courses go into January. There will be additional costs and this fund has been established in certain circumstances. Colleges have discretion to grant more than that, Speaker. In addition, students currently receiving O.S.A.P. Will be extended to help them if the course goes longer, the programme goes longer, Mr. Speaker, and certainly we very much want to support students to complete their semester but those who choose to withdraw will have a full tuition refund.

MPP Sattler to Minister Matthews Re: College Strike

>>MPP Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier, Speaker, despite her Minister's assertions, it is the Premier's inaction that prolonged this strike for five weeks last night she told students who were angry that she did not get involved sooner, that she was acting on advice that she was given. Well, I'm not sure where the Premier gets her advice but section 4 and section 5 of the Colleges of applied arts and technology act gives the Premier every right to involve herself in College business if it's in the public interest. Maybe the Premier can tell us what was it about a five week strike coming to a fair resolution that wasn't in the public interest.

>>Minister Deb Matthews: Well, Speaker, it's interesting that the NDP is continuing to refer to that section of legislation. What they have failed to understand is TRE is another piece of legislation, Speaker, that overrides that, that does not allow government to interfere with the Collective bargaining process.

>> So Speaker, once it became clear that the parties could not reach an agreement, that they were at a deadlock, Speaker, we did commit, used every opportunity to quickly pass legislation that would get students back in the classrooms, but the NDP blocked it every single time they have the opportunity. On Thursday we introduced -- we saw the unanimous consent to introduce legislation that was denied by the NDP. On Friday we introduced legislation. And then required unanimous consent to debate the legislation the same day. Again the NDP blocked the motion over and over, they repeatedly --

>> MPP Sattler: Speaker, the Premier also told students last night that she would be looking into whether or not she had the authority to intervene earlier. Let me spell this out for the Premier. Section 4 of the Colleges of applied arts and technology act allows the Minister to make binding directives to Ontario Colleges as to how they conduct their affairs. Section five of the act allows the Minister to intervene in the affairs of Colleges if it's deemed to be in the public interest. I find this it hard to believe that neither the Premier nor her Minister knew that they had this authority. Why didn't the Premier exercise her legislated authority and direct the Colleges not to force a contract vote that everyone knew they would lose, unnecessarily prolonging this strike for as much as two weeks?

>>Minister Matthews: Well, Speaker, as I said earlier, there is overriding legislation. We have very solid legal advice, Speaker that the order would have been challenged had we moved the back-to-work legislation too early but let's be really clear what this is all about. The NDP are hearing from people that they are not happy that the NDP blocked the legislation and they are. So Speaker, I will finish up by saying that the College Collective bargaining act does not equal the College of applied arts and technology act,

Speaker, there are two pieces of legislation. NDP should be aware of that and they should understand we pushed it as hard as we could.

>>MPP Sattler: Speaker, last night at the Premier's town hall, students were upset. Some were in tears as they described the effect that this five week strike has had on their learning. Instead of comforting these students, the Premier defended her decision not to intervene. She said I had an understanding of what my authority was --She said she had an understanding of what my authority was and I acted in good faith on that. Speaker, these are empty words for a young person in tears trying to figure out how to recover from five weeks of uncertainty. Again, Speaker, I ask, why did the Premier not use her legislative authority to order the Colleges to reduce the number of precariously employed faculty early in negotiations, thereby removing one of the most significant issues that led to the trike in the first place?

>>Minister Matthews: I can tell you no one no Premier ever in the history of this province has cared more --210,000 students to say thank you to this Premier for ensuring they have free tuition, Speaker. We are committed to students, we are committed to equity of access, to post secondary education for people across the province, Speaker. We have 50,000 more students applying for osap this year than last year thanks to this Premier.

MPP Coe to Minister Matthews Re: College Strike

>>MPP Lorne Coe: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. After the Liberal government allowed the College strike to drag on for five weeks, 500,000 community College students are finally returning to their classrooms today. Yesterday I asked the Premier if the Liberal government would commit to matching the College student support fund dollar-for-dollar. As expected, the Premier did not provide an answer. Speaker, because the Premier failed to show leadership for five weeks during a strike, 500,000 College students at the very least deserve a concrete answer. Will the government commit today to matching the College student support fund dollar-for-dollar?

>>Minister Deb Matthews: Well, Speaker, of course we all understand that the PCs protection much Collective bargaining is weak to, say the least, and we'll let the process play out, Speaker. We engaged ourselves as we could to try to find a resolution. One of those things is we're setting up a task force, Speaker, to look at some of the big issues facing the future of our Colleges. But we have really listened to the voice of students and I want to say thank you to the students who took the time to work with government to identify issues that students were facing and to help us develop those solutions, so let me repeat, Speaker, we have got a dedicated fund for hardship and the Colleges have discretion to go above the \$500 cap in exceptional circumstances. Students who choose to withdraw, Speaker, will have their tuitions refunded. If they choose to withdraw as a result of this strike. And in addition, Speaker, students who are on owes SAP will be able to get additional support if the semester goes along.

>>MPP Coe: Speaker, back to the Premier. For five weeks the Premier let the strike drag on. Students weren't in class and were put through unmeasurable financial stress, some, Speaker, forced to sell their personal belongings to make ends meet. It's time, Speaker, it's time Speaker for the Liberal government to finally stand up for students and take tangible action to address their financial hardships. Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing today and commit to matching the \$500 student support fund dollar-for-dollar?!

>>Minister Matthews: Speaker, I'm happy to see that the PCs are standing up for students, but I have to ask the question, where were they when we made the changes to osap? Speaker, where were the PCs when we made the changes to O.S.A.P. That expand access to people from all income groups in this province? Where were they when we found a way to get free tuition to 210,000 students. The sad reality, Speaker is that they voted against it. They voted against it, they weren't there for students, they weren't there for changes to O.S.A.P. That have made Ontario an international leader in student financial assistance, Speaker

MPP Tabuns to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan

>>MPP Peter Tabuns: We're have he a very Seger and pen jet particular group here, Speaker, as you're well-aware. Speaker, to the Premier, yesterday I was listening to the Minister of energy respond to questions about Hydro One to rate increase applications. The Minister praised Hydro One for finding

savings but Hydro One is not passing any savings onto ratepayers by decreasing rates. Instead Hydro One want as 20% distribution rate increase. The Minister said Hydro One is doing a great job as a company, even though Hydro One is currently taking Ontario energy board to court in order to keep 100% of a 2.6 billion tax break than rightly belongs to ratepayers. Why would the Minister think his job is to praise Hydro One and not deaf the interest of ratepayers?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased to bring forward the fair hydro plan which defended ratepayers by reducing their bills by 25% and are that member and be that party voted against it, Mr. Speaker. So it's this party, this party, Mr. Speaker, that is actually defending ratepayers. It's this party that's actually working with companies, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we can continue to reduce bills for ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to Hydro One, they've seen their bills and r2 and r1 designations, Mr. Speaker, drop by 40% to 50% and it had nothing to do with that party, Mr. Speaker. It had nothing to do with that member. It had to do with, Mr. Speaker, the company, the government, and ratepayers all working together to come up with solutions, Mr. Speaker. That's what we have done on this side. On that side, Mr. Speaker, they've done nothing. They have a plan that is pie in the sky that didn't even talk about helping low income individuals Mr. Speaker and that is something we've done. With all organizations to help –

>>MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker, again to the Premier. The Minister of energy cheered when Hydro One applied to buy vista. Even though this \$6.7 billion purchase will do nothing to improve service for Ontario ratepayers. This purchase will divert resources away from I am proving the reliability on the grid towards the cost of building an empire for Hydro One. The Ontario energy board says Hydro One was making poor use of its existing funds for capital improvements and told to reduce its revenue requirements. Hydro One basically refused. Privatized Hydro One is putting private profits ahead of the public interest. Will the Minister stop cheerleading for Hydro One and start protecting the interests of Ontario families and rate payers?

>>Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's this party that actually protected it ratepayers by bringing forth a fair hydro pan plan, that party that voted against ratepayers but making sure they didn't support the plan, Mr. Speaker. When it comes it Hydro One the acquisition of avista benefits customers, employees, shareholders and ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. Rates will not be impacted, it won't even affect local jobs, Mr. Speaker. Similar acquisitions are increasingly common, Mr. Speaker. Ford has purchased Michigan based itc and epcor purchased two water utilities. When it comes to making sure, Mr. Speaker, that the government is on the side self the rate pay, he, it's this Premier, Mr. Speaker, it's this government that will continue to work with our stakeholders, will continue to work with the O.E.B., will continue to work with the I.S.O. To have a clean, reliable and affordable system up like the opposition parties that have no plan to do that, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Rinaldi to Minister Thibeault Re: Nuclear Refurbishment Project

>>MPP Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker, my question is also to the Minister much energy. Minister, in my riding I often hear from constituents on the work of this government on the energy file. But O' constituents in my riding know how critical clean and reliable energy system is in Ontario being a great place to live and work. Refurbishing at the Darlington and Bruce nuclear generating station will assure we have affordable, clean reliable energy for years to come, however my constituents sometimes worry that the projects might go over the set-out budget and will be delayed. Today the financial accountability officer who released a report about the province's refurbishing project, Mr. Speaker, could the Minister please update the House in my constituency how the refurbishing project is going? Thank you.

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the member for that question and of course for the hard work he does each and everyday for his constituents and his riding. I also want to thank the financial accountability office for providing their portant analysis the refurbishment project. The F.A.O. Report confirms that our government has carefully considered the financial risk of nuclear refurbishments and has built in strong protections and oversight measure, Mr. Speaker, to prevent cost overruns. The F.A.O. Report makes it clear that there is no alternative clean generation which could replace nuclear generation at a comparable cost for Ontario ratepayers. It's the most cost effective, low emissioned available to meet Ontario's baseload requirements. Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the

member and his constituents the refurbishment of the nuclear fleet remains on budget and on time.

>>MPP Rinaldi: Thank you, Minister, not only will the refurbishment ensure we have a safe reliable clean energy, where and when we need it will bring our province and communities in mine like Northumberland and quite west significant benefits. When it comes to providing a boost in a growing economy, the refurbishment will recognize the globally recognized supply chain with more than 180 companies in 70,000 jobs across the province. This will have a significant positive riding in quite west being adjacent to darling it ton it a few weeks ago, our government released a 2017 long-term energy plan in which we committed to a major mandate letter objective -- In Ontario and Darlington Bruce. Minister, what measures are we taking to ensure this project remains on time and on budget..

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, in order to prevent costs or schedule overruns our government has implemented strong protections and oversight measure, Mr. Speaker. Bruce power has invested approximately \$13 billion of its own funds and has agreed to take the full risk of cost overruns on refurbishment of their nuclear units. The unit 23 refurbishment at Darlington is progressing very well and is on track to be completed on time and on budget. In any case, the government has established offramps that maybe used in the event of O.P.G. Or Bruce power to adhere to the schedule and budget. We've been clear, Mr. . System we've built here in Ontario.

MPP Yurek to Minister Hoskins Re: OHIP Plus

>> MPP Jeff Yurek: Speaker, yesterday during committee, the member Mr. Kitchener Centre announced that to the drug for system fibrosis would be covered under ohip plus. Even though there haven't been any negotiations for the drug at the pan-canadian pharmaceutical alliance in two years giving many hope for them suffering from rare diseases and cancer. Unfortunately, Speaker, those statements aren't always correct. Speaker, account Minister confirm right now if it would be covered under ohip plus or did the member from Kitchener Centre mislead the committee.

>>Minister Eric Hoskins: I was with the committee, the organization for rare diseases coord Mr. Speaker yesterday as well to talk about the availability for the first time free of charge, cancer drugs for children and drugs for rare disease. Mr. Speaker, this is an incredible advancement in expansion of medicare in this province, one that I think we all should be very proud of

>>MPP Yurek: There is no direct answer to my question when you write policy, this appears to happen. Either the government has no idea what would be covered under their plan, speak, would the Minister stop stringing the people of Ontario along and admit right now the plan will cover nothing new, nothing more than what's covered for the senior, for the trillium patients ever Ontario.

>>Minister Hoskins: I hope what the member is not saying is that he opposes medicare itself. We're working with pharmacist, we've working with pharma companies --We're working with people like the Canadian cancer society with pediatricians across this proven with those specialists in adolescents, 4,400 drugs available, there's no up in front payment, no co-payment, annual deductible, all you need is your prescription and health number and 4,400 drugs will be available. If the member opposite can't support that I'm deeply concerned with how he approaches health care in this province.

MPP Taylor to Minister Coteau Re: Youth Mental Health Services

>>MPP Monique Taylor: A report released LI children's health Ontario outlined serious problems caused by wait lists to 18 months for mental health services in children and youth. The media reported that Shannon Nagy told her mother at five years old told her mother she wanted to die. In grade six, she missed the entire school year. Now 20, Shannon says her struggles to get help throughout childhood did more harm than good. Kid Nora, now the CEO of cmho had to take a four months leave of absence then work part time when her 11-year-old daughter tried to die by suicide while waiting on a year-long list for help. When will the Liberal government finally act to stigly reduce wait lists?

>> Minister Michael Coteau: Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for if the question. Mental health when it comes it young people here in the province of Ontario is a huge priority for this Premier, for this government, and the Minister of health. Mr. Speaker, a few years ago we invested \$100 million into mental health neither province of Ontario and as we made that investment, we also started another process called moving on mental health and what we've been able to accomplish over the last few years is quite remarkable. We're rethinking the entire system here in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker we've set up 31 of the 32 lead agencies across the province of Ontario to better coordinate services on the ground and this is about system transformation. The same thing we've done in education, same thing we've done in health care, the same thing we've done in the energy sector, this is a system transformation and Mr. Speaker, I assure members that I met last week at the conference that we're looking for a massive system change here.

>>MPP Taylor: Because the Minister knows that everything he just talked about did nothing to reduce anything to reduce the wait lists. Children's mental health Ontario has been saying for years the underfunding of services are putting a huge strain on our hospitals because these kids have nothing else, and they reach crisis situations last week's report shows the impact of an 148 month wait list on education and on the ability of families to be able to continue to earn a living. A third of parents have had to miss, have had their children miss school due to anxiety, a quarter have missed work to care for their child. The stress continues to mount up and adds to already very difficult situations. I ask again, when will this government act so that children with mental health problems can get the help they need when they need it?

>>Minister Coteau: The reason we are looking for change to make sure the young children get the help when they need it the member says we're not doing anything to address the issue, I'll let the member know as a province we have invest almost \$4 billion into mental health. Almost half a billion of those dollars goes to help young people here in the province of Ontario. Currently in the province, Mr. Speaker, there's 130,000 young people getting services. The member says we've done nothing. Well here's a few things that we've done in the last few years. We provided funding for mental health leaders in all 72 school boards, providing funding to hire an additional 1770 community mental health workers across the province of Ontario. 144 additional nurses working in as well as to identify students that need help and more than 80 new mental health workers and addiction workers working in indigenous communities. We've also expanded our online mental health directory. Mr. Speaker, bill-89 here in the province of Ontario, the Progressive Conservatives voted against to, do exactly what we're doing. System change.

MPP Martins to Minister Hunter Re: Financial Literacy

>>MPP Cristina Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question's for the Minister of education. November is financial literacy month. Financial literacy is an important part of learning and living in the 21st century. The financially -- being financially literate ensures we know what's happening with the finances in our homes so that we can plan for the future whether any unexpected expenses. During this financial literacy month, our government is taking action to ensure that students in Ontario can develop a solid foundation of financial literacy skills. This means having the knowledge to make informed financial decisions with confidence and care. Through you to the Minister, how was our government revamping the curriculum to further development much financial literacy skills in Ontario's schools.

>>Minister Mitzi Hunter: Thank you Speaker, I'm pleased to welcome in the House today November as financial literacy month. This is a life skill that everyone can benefit from. Our government is committed to preparing students for success in a rapidly changing economy and technology-driven world. Earlier this November I was at Parkdale Collegiate institute in Toronto to announce that we are making financial literacy a mandatory part of the grade ten careers course starting in September of 2018. We know that our young people are better off when they can understand basic money management, budgeting or credit. Our plan for education is reaping Ontario students for the jobs of today and tomorrow. This is an important part of our job to create jobs, grow the economy and our renewed vision for education. We remain committed to achievement equity and well being for all students in Ontario including financialing with being.

>>MPP Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, financial literacy is a skill critical to the success of our students.

However government is doing more to equip students with the skills they need. Just this year we launched 29 pilot projects across the province to inform of the recently announced enhancements to the career studies course. During the pilot project, education partners participated in the process providing important input about new mandatory learning on financial literacy. Minister, can you tell us more about how the new and improved careers studies course will prepare grade ten students with financial literacy skills?

>>Minister Hunter: And thank you, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Davenport for this very timely of question. Students and teachers felt that the pilots were so successful that we will be expanding the new careers course to all schools across the province starting in 2018. We will be refreshing the careers course to include budgeting, so students can map out their pathways plan, and then itemize components to create a personal budget. Credit so students can explore issues related to credit card debt and collaborate on suggested solutions for acceptable use. And osap so student can use the new osap calculator tool to plan for post secondary education. Mr. Speaker, Ontario students are among the top performers worldwide in financial literacy education, but we are not stopping there, Mr. Speaker. We're making this a mandatory part of Ontario's curriculum. We remain committed to investing in our most valuable resource, our students.

MPP Thompson to Premier Wynne Re: TPP Agreement

>>MPP Lisa Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Speaker, this weekend the Premier will be heading to Asia on a trip to China and Vietnam. It was in Vietnam where under two weeks ago the Prime Minister failed to show up at a meeting with ten other world leaders and jeopardize Canada's position and a trans-pacific partnership next. Given how important the tpp will be for Canadian agriculture, including Ontario farmer, has the Premier raised concerns with the Prime Minister over what has been interpreted by other tpp nations as a snub at the APEC summit.

>>Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And on the second part of that question, I would just assure the member opposite that we are in regular communication, we work very closely with our federal counterparts on all of the trade negotiations, Mr. Speaker, as we did on cita, as we are doing on nafta, Mr. Speaker, and as we are doing on the TTC conversation. And as the member opposite know none of those provisions will be finalized and we will continue to work very closely with the federal government and I will say to the member opposite, I'm very pleased to be able to take about 100 companies with us, Mr. Speaker, to China and Vietnam. Companies that want to develop partnerships, Mr. Speaker that will mean more jobs in Ontario, more investment in Ontario Mr. Speaker, which will again continue to help our economy to grow.

>>MPP Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has actually lost the point of my question, and that is that tpp, I agree, presents a great opportunity for Toronto's agriculture sector to break into new markets. The Premier's government website advertises her up coming trade mission directly and references Ontario's and Vietnam's participation in the tpp as a key business tie. So Speaker, I have to ask the Premier, why is she not pushing back at the Prime Minister to get the tpp talks back on track so that Ontario farmers and agri food businesses will not miss out on a tremendous market opportunity?

>>Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the tpp talks are on track, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're very pleased that there was a a agreement in principle, Mr. Speaker, and we will work very closely with the federal government, and you know, Mr. Speaker, as we have done, as we are doing now in the nafta conversations, Mr. Speaker, I'm acutely aware of two things. First of all the opportunities for markets in the expansion of market, that's why I am travelling with companies to China and to Vietnam, Mr. Speaker. It's why I'm so engaged with businesses here to make sure that they understand what the opportunities are abroad, Mr. Speaker, but secondly to make sure that in these trade negotiations, in these conversations we protect our industries, Mr. Speaker, that we protect and stand up for workers here in Ontario and make sure that when there is a next, of a trade deal, Ontario and Ontario's workers benefits

MPP Gelinis to Minister Hoskins Re: Sudbury PET Scanner

>>MPP France Gelinis: Sudbury has waited eight long years for a P.E.T. Scanner. In December 2015, this government promised to change that. Our community raised the money, we did our work, we've done our part. Actually, the first P.E.T. Scan in Sudbury should have been happening right now, but instead

we've learned that this government is holding up the process. It could be 2019 before P.E.T. Scans are done in Sudbury. Why is this Premier letting us down again? Why is this the pet scanner that we should have had eight long years ago?

>>Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the MPP for Sudbury for his strong advocacy for both his community and for northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, it was his hard work that resulted in the government providing two sources of funding for the P.E.T. Scanner. Mr. Speaker, we announced \$1.6 million in annual operating costs for the P.E.T. Scan he were, wasn't fully operational but that wasn't sufficient because we were quite frankly overwhelmed by the level of community support and the fundraising coming forward on the capital side and we wanted to make sure that that capital, those capital improvements necessary for the P.E.T. Scanner were able to proceed and again with the support and hard work from the MPP for Sudbury, we were able to make a substantial capital in the millions of dollars capital investment towards that purchase and towards the necessary capital improvements.

>>MPP Gelinis: Mr. Speaker, the good people of the northeast have been calling for equity of access to P.E.T. Scanning technology since 2009. The San Bruno family, Cheryl, Frank, Laurie, Mary, Sam's mother Rosina, a grieving family, Speaker, that knew nothing about fundraising went on and raised \$4.1 million to purchase the scanner. Health sciences north has done everything that they need to do, but today, my constituents still can't get a P.E.T. Scan done in Sudbury. We still have to drive five, six, seven, eight hours on icy roads to get the health care we need. Frankly, Speaker, we feel like this government never shook problem seriously and now news of more delays just add to the disappointment. Toward this Premier and the government. How can the Premier defend another years of delay for us to get access to pen scanning.

>> Minister Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, again, thanks to the hard work of the local MPP, from the MPP from Sudbury, Mr. Speaker. We have made the multi-million dollar capital investment, the operating funds, as well, the P.E.T. Scan, the people of Sudbury in the surrounding area will not have to wait much longer. We're working with the hospitals, the Bruno family, the community supports that are in place. This project is on track and will open as expected, Mr. Speaker, and provide that important service so that hundreds of individuals from Sudbury and the surrounding region in the north will not have to travel to take advantage much P.E.T. Scan technology, and I want to again congratulate and thank the MPP for Sudbury for his excellent advocacy and hard work --

MPP Potts to Minister Moridi Re: Chief Scientist Role

>>MPP Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker, and my question is to the Minister of research, innovation and science. Just last week, Speaker, I understand the Minister made a very significant announcement at a completely sold-out event. Clearly the people to want hear this ph.d. And physicist speak. That announcement was regarding the chief science file that he was tasked with in his mandate letter from the Premier, and I understand, Speaker, the objective was to create an office and a position that would be responsible for helping coordinate Ontario's significant science and research assets. The officer would advise the Premier and the Minister on key scientific matters and raise the profile of science and government policy. So Speaker, could the Minister please inform the members of this House of his work on the chief science scientist smile.

>>Minister Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to begin by thanking the member for East York and Beaches, not only for his question but for his advocacy for science and research and innovation, a file which I'm particularly proud of, Mr. Speaker. On November 17th, Mr. Speaker, I was at the Canadian club delivering a speech on the role of science and the formation of public policy. A subject I am quite passionate about. I was there, that I was able to be announce the appointment of Dr. Molly Sherkett as Ontario's first chief cyber Monday scientist. Mr. Speaker, the doctor is a professor at the University of Toronto and an internationally respected award-winning expert in the study of polymers for drug delivery and tissue regeneration. Mr. Speaker, over the next month, the doctor will help Ontario develop a strategic scientific research -- Thank you.

>>MPP Potts: Well, thank you, Speaker, and I thank the Minister of research and science. His mandate was very clear and he very clearly has fulfilled his mandate and I, too, would like to ask my personal

congratulations of the doctor and I am extremely pleased and delighted with this bit of news, because, Speaker, our government will now be placing much greater emphasis on science and the formations of all of its policy decision, and I know it gives the residents of my riding of Beaches- East York great peace of mind to know that this government will make responsible and well-reasoned decisions based on the advice of experts in their field. So to the Minister, Speaker, could he tell the members of the legislature what the responsibility of a chief scientist will be? Thank you.

>>Minister Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you to the member from East York and the Beaches. Mr. Speaker, part of the chief of science responsibilities will be providing experts as well as the government to help decision makers tackle some of the greatest times our society is facing. Challenges like climate change, aging population fighting Dez deadly diseases. It is my pleasure to for congratulate the doctor for becoming Ontario's first chief scientist. She will help us continue a proud tradition of science and research excellence to do evidence-based decision making. To all my Colleagues in the House, please reach out to the doctor and wish her well on her appointment. Thank you, Mr. Speak Esche.

MPP Walker to Minister Hoskins Re: Access to Primary Care Doctors

>>MPP Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Life is getting harder for Ontario patients as they're waiting longer and longer for the care they need. The number of patients without you a doctor continues to rides in my riding. Today over 2100 people are wait listed for a doctor in Bruce- Grey- Owen Sound, a 62% increase in last year. Not only is this a break of your election promise when Kathleen Wynne guaranteed it all access to doctors by 2018 but it is actually a deplorable record. Minister, I want to know, is matching insurance with a doctor going to be another Liberal stretch goal or yet another hollow promises?

>>Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that 9 the 56% Ontarians have access to a primary of care provider, be a that a family doctor or nurse practitioner in one of our 235 nurse practitioner-led clinics and in fact Mr. Speaker, since we came into office, well over -- I wish I had the exact number but well over 6,000 new physicians are practicing in this province. In fact I believe we average between 600 and 800 net new doctors entering practice each year in this province. That being said, there's no question that there are parts of the province where we do not have an adequate supply of the relevant health care providers, including our front line primary care providers and physicians and we're working hard on that. We're working on that in a variety ways with local municipality, we're providing incentives and --To open in the various types of family health organizations and other modalities to increase --

>>MPP Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to the Minister of health. With all due respect, Minister, you should be not be proud, 100% health care is relevant to everybody. Patricia Kaplan is among 2100 constituents only an ever-growing wait list for primary care physicians in my riding. Patricia suffers from a.l.s, so her access to a doctor is absolutely critical. I don't know how many years you would feel comfortable waiting if you were facing a similar predicament. I ask through you, Mr. Speaker s what is fair about als patients like Patricia going two years without a doctor while you waste \$4 billion on a hydro accounting scheme.

>>Minister Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's rich coming from a party that closed 10,000 hospital beds, closed two dozen hospital, referred to our nurses as hoola hoops going out of fashion, out of style, Mr. Speaker, but we have increased in this province the ratio of physicians for every 10,000 Ontarians, it's increased from 17.5 positions to 20.5 positions for 10,000 Ontarians and we have dramatically creased the percentage of Ontarians that have access to a family, doctor, primary care provider, nurse practitioner, and we're not done yet. We agree, 95% is sufficient. We're going to reach that point where every single Ontarian who want as primary care provider, be that a doctor, a nurse practitioner, will have access to that individual. And even more so, our patients first act spoke directly to make sure that we would attain that goal.

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