

CO: Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript for Monday, May 7, 2018

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Please see attached Cabinet Office's Transcript of Provincial Question Period for Monday, May 7, 2018.

MCI did not receive any questions of interest.

MSA did not receive any questions of interest.

Official opposition questions were about Hydro One and Evista, the SEIU PSW agency, the York University Strike, children and youth mental health services, Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan and services for people with disabilities. NDP Questions concerned the regional express rail project, affordable housing, children and youth mental health services, and a labour shortage of registered nurses.

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

Transcript of Provincial Question Period
41st Parliament, 3rd Session
Monday, May 7, 2018

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MPP Fedeli to Minister Thibeault Re: Evista

>> MPP Victor Fedeli: Well, thank you and good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Deputy Premier. We now know that Hydro One has signed a deal to make \$50 million worth of payouts to US Energy executives. The Liberals are once again missing in action as the latest hydro rip-off occurs. People are struggling to pay their bills. Families are decide wlg to heat or eat. Mr. Speaker, how account Liberals be prepared to spend \$50 million worth of payouts to US Energy executives?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everything in that question, Mr. Speaker, is not accurate. Hydro One customers have not paid one penny, not one penny to US Hydro executives at evista, nor will they in the future, Mr. Speaker. Doug Ford doesn't seem to know what he's talking about when it comes to this issue, Mr. Speaker, or any issue which is troubling from a self described sound businessman, Mr. Speaker. Either that or he is deliberately trying to talk to something that is not accurate for the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Regardless, Mr. Speaker, that is not true. In 2017 alone, a US Company that the Hydro One is purchasing, evista, turned a profit of over \$150 million US, Mr. Speaker. Salaries and severance payments do not come from Hydro One customers. As the opposition should well know, this acquisition of avista will not cost Ontario customers a dime. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this acquisition will benefit Ontario customers, employees. And shareholders and rates in Ontario will not be impacted.

>>Vic Fedeli: Thank you very much. Back to the Deputy Premier. You know, Speaker, they can say all they want, but the Liberals read the same documents we read, where the evista executives said they will now be able to spread their costs over their new Ontario partners. That's the Ontario rent payers, Speaker. Deep and buried in the document is a s Eries of US Securities filings where the evidence is absolutely clear. The secret millionaires' club at Hydro One would be making \$50 million worth of payouts to their US Energy executive counterparts. First Hydro One changes their own severances, adding in a \$10 million poison pill, and now secondly they agree to pay out \$50 million

to their US Coal company. Mr. Speaker, are these US Energy executives --Really worth another \$50 million?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the question isn't accurate, Mr. Speaker. Hydro One customers have not paid one penny to actually US Hydro executives at evista, Mr. Speaker, nor will they in the future. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this acquisition will benefit Ontario customers, employees and shareholders and rates in Ontario will not be impacted by this purchase, Mr. Speaker. Similar acquisitions are increasingly common practice for Canadian owned utilities, Mr. Speaker. This includes for example both Newfoundland and Labrador based fortis, purchase of Michigan based I.T.C. And edmonton-based f4 utilities' purchase of two US Water utilities, Mr. Speaker. Sadly one of the things that Mr. Ford admitted last week but unreported by his personal media team was that his headline-grabbing plan to fire the C.E.O. And board of Hydro One doesn't affect hydro rates directly, Mr. Speaker, and that was said at the Thunder Bay rally, Mr. Speaker .

>>Vic Fedeli: Well, thank you. Back to the Deputy Premier. As usual, Speaker, the Liberals say one thing, but in this case the US Securities tell us the real truth, Speaker. Their filings reveal that the Hydro One management and board have authorized more than 36 million in payouts to the top five managers of their US Energy company, and an additional \$14 million in payouts were authorized to another eight evista executives. This is all parliament of an arrangement that is explicitly referred to as a golden parachute. Speaker, this is literally a golden parachute. The worst part about this is that at the same time this government is mailing out disconnection notices, they are agreeing to a \$50 million payout. Mr. Speaker, does the Liberal government -- Support this golden parachute?

>>Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, he's making it up as he goes along. Hydro One is actually extending the actual disconnection ban, Mr. Speaker, until further into June, Mr. Speaker. So they don't even know what to talk about when it comes to Hydro One, Mr. Speaker. What they're talking about with evista as well, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely not true. As I've said of this I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker, Hydro One customers have not paid one penny to US Hydro executives. O add to this, Mr. Speaker, nor will they in the future. This is common practice when similar acquisitions that have been done with Canadian owned utilities. This includes for example, Mr. Speaker, when Newfoundland and Labrador faced fortis, when they purchased michigan-based I.T.C., and when edmonton-based f4 utilities purchased two US Water utilities, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to advocate. And work on behalf of the people of Ontario. They can continue to make things up as they go along, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Fedeli to Minister Jaczek Re: PSW Union

>> MPP Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Deputy Premier. Service employees international unions working Ontario women have started running ads attacking the opposition. Mr. Speaker, is this their thank-you to the Liberals for handing over control of Ontario's home care agency?

>>Minister Helena Jaczek: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to speak to our new agency, our plans for a new agency, to look after those small number of home-care patients with chronic and complex situations, that require one-on-one care with a really trusted P.S.W.. This is a model that has been very successful in number of jurisdictions, and I certainly believe that it's going to add to our spectrum of services for people who do require home care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker .

>>Vic Fedeli: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to the Deputy Premier. Looking at the seiu-backed model used in the US Revealed some staggering results. The media stories were extensive. Currently there are lawsuits in each of the states where this model has been adopted. In the end the seiu was also charged for concealing political contributions. Mr. Speaker, for the wow add seiu way of concealing donations to the Liberal party

>>Minister Jaczek: So, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to this type of self-directed care, we know that Ontarians want more control and choice over their home care services, and that's why we're

introducing two new innovative self-directed care models that patients could opt into. Of course this will be entirely voluntary for both clients and for P.S.W.S. One will provide home care clients with the funding to purchase services in their care plan or to choose the people who will provide these services. So, again, there's opportunity for people to have a choice I think is something that the vast majority of people would be very much in favour of and I really find it very difficult to understand the opposition's reluctance in this regard. We're piloting these programs in some three local health integration networks. I'll have more to say in the final –

>> Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the Deputy Premier. Well, the Liberals didn't listen to the people yet again. This seiu-backed home care agency doesn't make any real sense. Providers are against this. Patients are against this. The workers are against this but the seiu is in favour of this. So, Mr. Speaker, will the government order the Minister of health to cancel this seiu-backed agency as her final job as Minister ?

>>Minister Jaczek: Mr. Speaker, we are certainly committed to piloting ts particular type of program as part of the roster of services for home care patients, where they require particularly close relationship with their personal support worker. And so we did result widely, and after careful consideration and feedback from the sector, we made sure that there would be no disruption to the existing system. It will northbound parallel to our existing home care system and it will serve a small targeted client population compared to the more generally available services. So these new initiatives will be evaluated for cost effectiveness, meeting patient need and patient outcomes to ensure the programs work for our clients and for P.S.W.S. Thank you, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Tabuns to Minister Del Duca Re: Public Transit

>>MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the acting Premier. A few weeks ago the government issued a request for qualifications for the regional express rail project. Once again the government is using costly private financing. The auditor general said private financing and procurement is vastly more expensive than traditional procurement, with no evidence of value for money. But we also learned that the Premier plans to sign a long-term operations contract. When did the people of Ontario vote to hand over the go rail system to a private investor for 30 years? years?

>>Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I know this particular member from the NDP Asked a transit question last week, and perhaps he's decided to come back with a follow-up because -- well, yes, in some respects because perhaps there's sudden interest, but also, Speaker, perhaps he didn't like the answer he received last week with respect to the unprecedented announcement our government investing in transit, Speaker. All of my time here in this legislature, including a stint for three and a half years as the Minister of transportation, it never fails to amaze me that Ontario's NDP, who purport to want to see more transit expansion take place in Toronto and elsewhere, would consistently vote against moves by our government to make those infrom -- unprecedented announcements. Regional express rail is a \$13.5 billion transit expansion the likes of which this province has never seen before I would have thought for a party that suggests it is Progressive from time to time, I would have thought they would want to support this initiative, Mr. Speaker. It's really clear for me. That they don't based on the kind of questions they've been asking on this topic just here in the last couple of weeks. I'm looking forward to the next two rounds of this –

>>MPP Tabuns: Speaker, I'm not surprised the Minister doesn't want to address the question of privatization. The Liberal government privatized the hydro system and sold off Hydro One without a public mandate. This helps the Premier's bay street friends and Liberal campaign donors but it has hurt Ontario ratepayers and the public. So why is the Premier doing the exact same thing with public transit?

>>Minister Del Duca: Well, Speaker, I can certainly understand why the NDP Member from Toronto-Danforth wouldn't want to talk about the unprecedented amount that we rin vesting in public transit. Speaker you know I've got to tell you just a few days ago the Premier of our province signed

an M.O.U. With city of Toronto. In budget 2018, there was a significant amount of money that was contained in the budget to help deliver on projects that I know constituents in Toronto- Danforth want to see built. So for example funding in our budget for the Toronto relief line, Speaker, funding in our budget for the Yonge street north subway extension. Funding in our budget, Speaker, for more transit options in Scarborough. But he asked a question about regional express rail, Mr. Speaker, and also waterfront L.R.T. That's the other project I should mention as well. He talked about go regional express rail. Why in the world would Ontario's NDP. Not want to see two-way all-day go service with trains running every 15 minutes, Mr. Speaker, is beyond me. I would have thought they'd want. This initiative.

>>MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I think it's entirely clear why the Minister doesn't want to touch the word privatization because he knows what impact it has. He avoids the question profoundly. Liberals could have modernized Ontario's hydro system without selling it off. Instead they signed in flex -- inflexible long-term contracts with private financiers locking Ontario ratepayers into decades of high prices. Now the Premier's doing the same thing with public transit, locking Ontario riders into a long-term private contract for the go rail network. She's already pulled off Hydro One -- sold off Hydro One. Added billions of private profits on Ontario hydro bills to help her Liberal friends and main street. Why would she make the exact same mistake with public transit?

>>Minister Del Duca: Well, Speaker, after four years of opposing every single initiative designed she taken by our government designed to expand public transit it's not at all shocking to me to see that member from the Toronto area from the NDP Caucus on the eve of an election campaign trying to make up for lost time. Unfortunately, Speaker, I know people who live in Toronto- Danforth and I know they want to see the Toronto relief line built. Our govent's helping to build T.I know people who live in Scarborough want to see more transit options, Speaker. Our government is UND funding the initiatives that will help provide that transit for them. I know people who live in Willowdale and Richmond hill and they want to seat Yonge north subway extension get built, Speaker. In addition to that on go regional express rail two-way all-day go service. 15 minutes. Trains will be election tri fide expanding to niagara and to bowmanville. Making fares cheaper. Running uon express at overcapacity. Our government's opening a subway in Vaughan last December, Speaker. Our government has built, expanded and plans to do more in transit than any other government in history. I would have thought the NDP --

MPP Hatfield to Minister Milczyn Re: Affordable Housing

>>MPP Percy Hatfield: Speaker, my question's to the acting Premier. Good morning. The lack of affordable housing, Speaker, is squeezing young people out of the neighbourhoods where they want to live. Major cities are becoming segregated by income divided into rich and poor. Ontario needs more affordable housing. The co-operative housing federation of Canada says that even after signing onto the national housing strategy, Ontario will still need to build an additional 45,000 affordable housing units over ten years. So why has the Premier committed exactly zero additional dollars to new affordable housing investments for their current fist ral year?

>>.Minister Peter Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. And I appreciate his long advocacy for affordable housing and that's why I'm puzzled why he isn't congratulating our government on all the steps we've taken to enhance affordable housing over a number of years. Our investments in affordable housing focusing on those who are hronically homeless and those who are in -- where we've prevented thousands of people from falling into homelessness and we've brought many homeless people into permanent homes with supportive housing. Our commitments to establishing an inclusionary zoning regime in this province and our delivering on that and giving broad based inclusionary zoning powers to every municipality in this province so they will be able to. Partner with the private sector and build more affor housing, Mr. Speaker .

>>MPP Hatfield: Maybe the Minister wasn't listening to the question. Even after signing on to the national housing strategy, there will still be a massive gap between the supply of new affordable

housing and what is needed. We still need to build an additional 45,000 new affordable homes over ten years. But the Premier has provided no additional funding this year for the construction of new affordable housing. And if and when money eventually starts flowing under the national housing strategy, it will still not be enough. Why has the Premier failed to provide a plan to fill this remaining gap?

>>Minister Milczyn: Well, Mr. Speaker, indeed I did listen to the question. Any member should listen to his own question. The NDP Platform speaks to 65,000 units of affordable housing but does not speak to how they're going to pay for it, Mr. Speaker. So our plan does include additional funds through the national housing strategy, \$250 million in additional funding in early years. We've secured hundreds of millions of dollars of renewable funding through the end of agreements with the federal government to ensure that our existing stock continues to be well maintained. And, Mr. Speaker, through our cap and invest program we're providing \$647 million to social housing providers across this province to retrofit existing housing and ensure it stays open for those families who need it. Mr. Speaker, we are putting our money where our mouth is. We are funding it. The NDP Platform is silent on how they will fund their promises.

>>MPP Hatfield: Speaker, the Minister should read the platform. The NDP Believes that people have the right to a home that is safe and affordable. That's why we have committed to building 65,000 new affordable housing units over ten years. Why won't the Premier make the same commitment?

>> Minister Milczyn:Mr. Speaker, I'll say once again I -- the MPP It's unfortunate they wouldn't support our budgets that supported funding for it. I have reviewed their platform and they do not speak to how they will fund their promise. Mr. Speaker, we not Conservatives have no position on affordable housing other than perhaps whatever secret, secret deals that Doug Ford has done with the development industry. Mr. Speaker, we're committed to building affordable housing. We've spent over \$1 billion on affordable housing each and every year, and we will continue to do so and we'll work with our partners and municipalities and federal government. To deliver on more affordable housing, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Coe to Minister Hunter Re: York Strike

>> MPP Lorne Coe:Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of advanced education and skills development. Speaker, the York university strike is now entering its third month. Impacting more than 51,000 students' careers and many parents supporting them. Speaker, over 7,000 students were expecting to graduate in June. Speaker, this strike has now gone on for over two months. Why?

>>Minister Mitzi Hunter: Well, Mr. Speaker, this situation is very much at the top of our priority list, Mr. Speaker. We know that the students at York university have been impacted by this strike, and the both parties, Mr. Speaker, have been asked to consider consensual arbitration, Mr. Speaker. Bill Kaplan introduced his report last Friday. Spoke with both representatives of each side, Mr. Speaker, to recommend that they follow the commissioner's report. A neutral party, a very experienced mediator arbitrator in this province and in this country has examined the situation millimetre and has concluded that there are at an impasse and that the way forward is through consensual arbitration and that is exactly what we are encouraging them to do and that we are asking them to do, Mr. Speaker. To bring this to a close.

>>MPP Coe: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the Minister of advanced education and skills development. Speaker, in a matter of hours, hours the writ will be dropped and there will be an election. More than 51,000 students' careers have been on hold by this strike and by this government. Why didn't the Liberal government take two months to finally act?

>>Minister Hunter: Mr. Speaker, you can see the question that has been asked by the P.C. Party, Mr. Speaker, that there's no respect for Collective bargaining process on that side of the House. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we respect the Collective bargaining process. We respect the

opportunity and the rights of each side to come to an agreement that is the best deal that is had

>> Mr. Speaker, you can see the question that has been asked by the P.C. Party, Mr. Speaker, that there's no respect for Collective bargaining process on that side of the House. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we respect the Collective bargaining process. We respect the opportunity and the rights of each side to come to an agreement that is the best deal that is had It require as compromise on both sides, because if you're thinking about the interests of the students, if you're thinking about the impact that this strike has had on the students, it requires a compromise on both sides. And that's why we are calling on both parties. To enter consensual interest arbitration to bring this dispute to a close and get students back into the classroom where they belong.

MPP Taylor to Minister Coteau Re: Youth Mental Health Services

>>MPP Monique Taylor: Thanks, Speaker. My question is to the acting Premier. In Ontario, we are facing a crisis in child and youth mental health services due to a lack of funding by this government over the past 12 years. We know that 70% of adult mental illness begins in childhood. By the age of 40, half of all Ontarians will struggle with a mental health problem. Yet today in Ontario, kids have to wait up to 18 months for treatment. Will the acting Premier take immediate action to ensure kids will no longer have to wait for services?

>>Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for the question. The member knows that, over the last several years, we've committed to a process called moving on mental health where we've gone out across the province and talked to many different agencies and we've built a whole new system with lead agencies in different regions across the province. There's 33 lead agencies that will exist. I think currently we're 32. And we're going to move forward. In Toronto metro youth services. And what they're doing is really coordinating the services so there's a single point of entry, and young people get the services that they need and that they deserve.

>>MPP Taylor: Thank you, Speaker. Just this morning the Canadian institute for health information released its latest data on children and youth with mental health. The numbers are absolutely shocking. Between 2006 and 2017, there has been a 72% increase in the number of kids seeking help in hospital E.R.S and a 79% increase in the number of kids being hospitalized. This is happening because they have nowhere else to turn for help due to this government's failure to properly fund community-based mental health services. When will this government finally provide children with community-based mental health services when and where they need it?

MPP Qaadri to Minister Gravelle (Des Rosiers) Re: Resource Revenue Sharing

>>MPP Shafiq Qaadri: Our government's committed to working with indigenous communities as they embark toward the journey of reconciliation. The report from the truth and reconciliation commission was to ensure that revenues province receives from natural resources are shared with local indigenous communities from lands and resources Taken. Speaker last week the government took an enormous step forward on that journey and announce add resource revenue sharing arrangement with several first nation communities throughout northern Ontario. Speaker, my question is this. Can the Minister please give us details about how these arrangements were arrived at and how resource revenue sharing will benefit first nation communities across the province of Ontario?

>>Minister Michael Gravelle: Thanks so much, Speaker. I want to thank the member for Etobicoke north. Very, very important question. And he's absolutely right. Our government has worked tirelessly for months with communities represented by Brant counsel till treaty 3. Tribal council, 40% of mining tax and Royalties earned from active mines in the tradition Al territories of our partners. Speaker, the committees involved certainly couldn't be more excited to begin sharing in the

prosperity and wealth that will now be available to them and have been in the past and we look forward to more people joining. If I can give an example, og chida said the anishinabe nation has long awaited to receive and become partners in resource revenue sharing and moving towards acknowledging the treaty, forestry and mining resource sharing agreement with the province of Ontario is an important step towards more meaningful discussions on reconciliation, economic prosperity and Conti improvement in relationship building between the anishinabe nation ant province.

>>MPP Qaadri: I think all Ontarians appreciate the Minister 's leadership on this journey toward recollect sill yation. For example learning about how the waban tribal council believes this is a culmination of decades worth of work on behalf of the province and their own leadership. As parliament therriens we know major agreements like these do not happen overnight. In the past reconciliation isn't begun on a podium or on a bumper sticker and you can't fire your way to reconciliation. Speaker, on this side of the House we know that it takes thoughtful deliberation and respectful co-operation on behalf of all parties involved and willing partners of course. Speaker my question is this. Can the Minister please elaborate on the negotiated process and share further how these historic agreements will benefit all Ontarians and particularly our first nation communities?

>>Minister Nathalie Des Rosiers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my Colleague for this very good question. Thank the Minister Gravelle and all his team to continue to dot good work of reconciliation and negotiating these agreements. I think the teams of both ministries worked really hard with our partners on the indigenous side to come up with these agreements, which are truly the right step on the path to reconciliation. Indeed if I want to quote Jason Gauthier who's the chief of the anishinabe first nation council. I'm going to use his words because they are quite telling -- resource revenue sharing is a step in the right direction toward reconciliation. Our communities are continuing to take steps toward the long-term goal of achieving financial Independence and sovereign wealth. We as communities can be ambitious in achieving our goals while retaining our position as the stewards of the land ant first people of turtle island. So I think I want to recognize how important this engagement with our first nations communities was in achieving this process. Indeed John batise also was calling this announcement a step in the right direction and I'm very proud that, on this side of the House, we are committed to reconciliation.

MPP Yurek to Minister Coteau Re: Youth Mental Health Services

>>MPP Jeff Yurek: Speaker, my question's to the Minister of children and youth services. The emotional and financial costs to Ontario families and businesses has skyrocketed due to the lack of funding and support for children and youth mental health services by this government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, according to ipsos data, 25% of Ontario parents are missing work because they are concerned with their child's mental health. When will this Minister take immediate action to help children in Ontario and address the growing crisis in children and youth mental illness in this province?

>> Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned with the earlier question, when you compare the Progressive Conservatives' approach, platform to finding solutions and supporting families when it comes to mental health, their actual investment is much lower than what we're currently investing and far below what we're proposing to invest in the future. Mr. Speaker, \$1.9 billion is actually a cut to the system. Over a 10-year period, based on inflation and other factors, it would actually and cut to the system and those cuts will result in a lot of people losing their employment and providing services for people. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, this is a party opposite that is proposing to cut \$6 billion from the budget, and we know where that's going to come from. Mr. Speaker, my ministry alone is a \$5 billion ministry. What are you going to do? Just get rid of children and youth services?

>>MPP YureK: Thank you, Speaker. That response was an insult not only to the children and families of this province but Kim Morin who's here in the House today, advocate for children's mental health for years upon years. 15tyears, you've done nothing with children's mental health and the statistics

are showing it. Mr. Speaker, the data released today, it's been a 72% increase, the number of young people going to E.R.S for mental health concerns. That's up from last year 69%. Mr. Speaker, it's 79% increase in the number of young people being hospitalized when all the other data for youth are going down, mental health is going up because this government has ignored it and it's only because of an election they're deciding to maybe announce to do something about it. It's pathetic. How account people of this province trust this government any further? It's time for a change. Will the Minister commit, commit to actually following through on their plan today?

>>Minister Coteau: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this government, we've always stood up for children and families here in the province of Ontario. And do you know what's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, what's unacceptable is the track record of the party opposite. This is a party when it comes to children and youth services that made massive cuts to the system. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we know when it comes to children and our efforts that we put forward for example to put forward Free medicine for children. That party voted against it. When that party was in power Mr. Speaker, when it comes to supporting children we know it's that party and their leader who clearly said, when speaking about children with autism, they can go to hell. I don't care.

MPP Forster to Minister Coteau (Flynn) Re: Hamilton Youth Justice Workers

>>MPP Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the facing Premier. 60 youth justice workers in Hamilton, some who are joined us here today, are out on the street, locked out by their employer. Despite the fact that arrow youth detention centre House s 16 young offenders, is not the ministry of community corrections community services because the previous Conservative government partially privatized the youth justice system ant Liberal government has continued to do so. The issues are a demand for concessions in their benefits and a 20% premium on their benefits. These front-line workers average \$10,000 a year less than their ministry counterparts. Despite the fact C.E.O. On the sunshine list 150,000 in 2017. We're not talking about widgets. But vulnerable youth who have been displaced by this lockout. What is this government going to do to right this ship?

>> Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take a moment to recognize the member and -- men and women who work in the youth just sis sector for the extraordinary work they do every single day. Mr. Speaker, in the supplemental the Minister of labour will weigh in on a couple of points. But I just want to say that, you know, when we're talking about the success within that sector in regards to, you know, supporting young people, we've seen a 75% decline in any type of interaction with youth facilities. We've seen a 43% drop in youth charges in the province of Ontario I believe over the la last ten years so we're seeing some drastic changes and those changes come because we have men and women who are dedicated to making sure that young people have opportunities. So, again just on -- Behalf of the government of Ontario I want to thank every single one of them for the hard work they do every single year.

>>MPP Forster: Speaker, these workers are not looking for acknowledgement. They're looking for fairness. These justice workers housing provincial young offenders, they don't even have workers safety insurance. That is like shameful. Despite the fact that banyan C.E.O. Is on the sunshine list. These youth justice workers are willing to bargain, ready to go. Seeing as this employer's privatized contractor providing services on behalf of the ministry of community safety and corrections, on behalf of this Liberal government, Speaker, what is the acting Premier, the former Minister of community safety and corrections, after 15 years in power, going to do to improve the situation for these workers?

>>Minister Kevin Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, Ontario as I've said, I've risen in this House on a number of occasions. Ontario's got an excellent track record when it comes to labour relations, Speaker. The Collective bargaining process is one that we respect. It results in a settlement 9% of the time, Speaker. 98% of Collective agreements are reached by the parties at the table, Speaker. From time to time, Speaker, groups need assistance. They need arbitration. They need things like mediation in order to overcome some hurdles to reach that settlement. Ontario's got some of the

best arbitrators, some of the best mediators in the world, Speaker, and they've got an excellent track record, too. I know that the -- we have mediated with the parties speaking as I speak and they're involved. What I would urge is proposed parties get back to thble. Let's get an agreement reached with the assistance of the M.O.L. Mediator, Speaker, and let's get these people back to work.

MPP Hoggarth to Minister Coteau Re: Youth Mental Health

>>MPP Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of children and youth services. Minister, child and youth mental health is so important. We know that many young adults with mental health problems report that their symptoms began in childhood and I can tell you as an elementary teacher I have seen it in the schools. This is why it is so important that services are available to children and youth when they need it and where they need it. As the Minister knows with our government's support the Royal Victoria regional health centre in my riding of Barrie opened their child and mental health wing back in December, which will help over 300 inpatients and 3,000 outpatients every year. Minister, could you share with us what else our government is doing to S the child and youth mental health sector?

>> Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for the question and for the great work that she's doing in her community to support families. Again I'd also like to just take a moment to thank chmo, who are here today. Our government and this party's committed to historic investments when it comes to mental health, and your advocacy has played an incredible role in getting us to this point so again thank you so much. Mr. Speaker, we're going to invest \$2.1 billion over the next four years to mental health and addiction. Our goal is to ensure no matter where someone goes for the first time, that they exp Erience a mental health -- when they exp Erience a mental health issue, we want to make sure that they get the care that they need and the care that they deserve. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the ministry of children and youth services we're investing an additional \$570 million over the next four years. It's an incredible amount. Mr. Speaker, just that investment is more than what the Conservatives have put forward over a 10-year period.

>>MPP Hoggarth: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the Minister. This commitment will truly improve access to mental health services, go a long way in helping identify and treating mental illness as early as possible. This is what we need to be doing, investing in care, not cuts. This is a commitment that is not being matched by the parties opposite. Minister, can you talk more about why this investment in care is so important to the people of Ontario?

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

>>MPP Todd Smith: Thank you. My question this morning is for the acting Premier. Speaker, the Ontario Liberals failed and destructive energy policy means that almost 600 people in Sudbury could be on the verge of having their power cut off, shut off. They may have banned winter disconnections, Speaker, but years of disastrous electricity policy has caused hydro bills to go up by 300% means, for many Ontarians, for thousands of Ontarians, bills keep piling up. Speaker, why is the Premier continually making the millionaires' club at Hydro One bigger when people in Sudbury and other communities across the province are having to choose between paying their grocery bill or paying their electricity bill?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government that brought forward last winter our legislation that bans winter disconnections, Mr. Speaker, and we've worked with all utilities to make sure that that happened. And now, Mr. Speaker, that that ban is ending for many of these utilities, not all but for some, Mr. Speaker, that they're continuing to work with individuals to let them know that the programs that are there, Mr. Speaker, the ones that we put in place, the ones that they vetted against, Mr. Speaker, that the help low-income individuals, that help first nations individuals, Mr. Speaker, that make sure seniors actually can save more money on their

electricity bills. Those are the things, Mr. Speaker, we did to actually help. We rebuilt the system. We made it affordable. We made it clean, Mr. Speaker, and it is reliable. It is something that they actually, Mr. Speaker, voted against continuously and we will continue to advocate for and work on on behalf of the people of Ontario.

>>MPP Smith: Speaker the Minister gets you and he bellows about all the plans that are in place. Do you know why those plans are necessary, Mr. Speaker ? It's because of the disastrous energy policies of this -- And this government over the last 15 years. We have amongst the highest hydro prices in all of north America. That's why they've got to put in this unfair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker. Speaker, the price of electricity under the Ontario Liberal government has increased by 300% in parts of -- Speaker, if it's so fair, if it's so fair --How come thousands of Ontarians can't afford to pay their electricity bills and are about to get cut off? Mr. Speaker, what is the government going to do for those people?

>>Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, we've made sure that we brought forward the fair hydro plan, which I know that they're actually using, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that -- they had no plan, Mr. Speaker. So our plan is so good that they're keeping it, Mr. Speaker, and I understand that. So you know, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to find programs that will work to help people, Mr. Speaker, because under this government we've never had a blackout that lasted three days. Under that government, Mr. Speaker, they did. You know what, Mr. Speaker ? We've made sure we've invested in a system that is now reliable, clean and affordable, Mr. Speaker. There is no more coal being used in our electricity grid. We are 96% G.H.G. Free, Mr. Speaker. And I know they want to change that. I know they want to change that, Mr. Speaker, because you know what, Mr. Speaker ? They have no plan. They have no ideas. All they do, Mr. Speaker, is meet with developers in the back room and talk about paving things over rather than thinking about the people of Ontario

MPP Gelinas to Minister Jaczek Re: Nurse Labour Shortage

>>MPP France Gelinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the acting Premier] The registered nurses' association of Ontario and Ontario nurses' association held a joint press conference this morning on the first day of nursing week. Happy nursing week to my Colleagues. O.N.A. And R.N.A.O. Came together to draw attention, the public's attention to a critical issue facing Ontarians. Ontario hospitals have 10,000 -- yes, 10,000 -- vacant R.N. Positions. Not because they cannot recruit more R.N.S but because our hospitals don't have the money to fill the vacant R.N. Positions. Their message is clear. Patients are not receiving the care they need. Hospitals are on average short-staffed by 17%, with occupancy rates well over 100%.Will the Premier admit that it is her government who created this crisis in our hospital system?

>>Minister Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And our government is really proud to have stood alongside nurses since we took office in 2003. And of course we want to recognize the contributions of all our nurses in the system, and happy nurses week to the member for Scarborough- Agincourt and the Minister of transportation. Obviously we're very aware of the incredibly important work that nurses do in our hospitals and in all sorts of different settings across the province. So we have, since we took office in 2003, more than 30,000 more nurses that have begun work in Ontario. Just over the last year, 1,200 more nurses employed in Ontario compared to last year. And we truly recognize how crucial they are to our health care system and we're continuing to support nurses in many different ways. Including supporting education for nurses by committing \$4.9 million towards critical care training for our nurses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker .

>>MPP Gelinas: Speaker, Ontario has the lowest r.n.-to-population ratio in the entire country and the trend is getting worse, not better. The government has had 15 years to improve this situation, but instead they have made things worse, this after the Conservative government laid off 60,000nurses, closed 28 hospitals, 28,000 beds when they were in power. R.N.A.O. And O.N.A. State that the research is clear. R.N. Care reduces the incidence of patient complications like pressure ulcers, pneumonia, cardiac arrest, falls, sepsis, infection, medical errors and the list goes on. Yes, the Wynne government decided to give zero base budget increases to our hospital for four years in a

row. The first step in solving the problem, Speaker, is to admit that you have a problem. Does the Minister agree that this is her government that has created those problems in our hospitals?

>>Minister Jaczek: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have increased hospital operating budgets year over year. In particular in this budget which I hope the member opposition sit will join us on this side of the House in supporting. We're making an investment of \$822 million for Ontario hospitals that will help our nurses, their patients even better. And so of course we've made an additional investment through our budget of \$300 million over three years so that every long-term-care home in the province will benefit from an additional registered nurse. We've expanded the scope of practices of nurses as well and we now have 27 new nurse practitioner-led clinics which means faster access to family health care for more than 60,000 patients in communities across the province. We truly value the contribution of our nurses and we will continue to support them through our budget. And I hope the member opposite will vote with us on our budget.

MPP Kiwala to Minister Naidoo-Harris Re: Childcare

>>MPP Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for early years and child care. Minister, I know that our government is committed to making sure families have access to high-quality inclusive and affordable child care. Under Doug Ford's plan, families will receive a rebate of just \$34 per month. This proves how out of touch he is with the needs of families on the ground. In my riding of Kingston and the islands, I have heard from families that they face challenges when it comes to the affordability of child care, and I want to know what our government is doing to address this. Minister, please tell us what supports will be provided to help families struggling to access affordable, licensed child care

>>Minister Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands for this very important question. Mr. Speaker, Doug Ford's child care plan actually wind up to be nothing more than a scheme to cut \$1.3 billion out of our child care plan for Ontario families. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. Ontario families have told us they need help when it comes to child care. Instead Ford's massive cut to our child care commitment will leave families with little support. In fact just slightly more than \$1 a day. Our plan is for free child care for preschoolers up until kindergarten. This major commitment will save Ontario families an estimated \$1,000 per child. That's in addition to the 6,500 they will save in kindergarten. Instead Doug Ford's tax rebate will save families just \$34 a month and they'll have to wait a full year to apply to try to -- Speaker, we're building a solid foundation for the work force, spaces for families. Doug Ford's plan will not reduce fees, not build spaces and not make child care more affordable.

>>MPP Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much to the Minister for that answer, and I have to say what a pleasure it has been to work with you over the course of this past session. Our commitment, our commitment to free child care for preschool-aged children is a historic step in transforming the way child care works in Ontario. I am proud to be part of a government that cares and is committed to providing support for families that need it. Can the Minister please expand how our government will be able to introduce such historic change to the child care sector?

>>Minister Naidoo-Harris: Speaker, I'm pleased to answer the member's question. Speaker, work is already under way to build more spaces and grow the work force for this massive commitment, and we have the track record to do it. To offer free preschool child care, there must be enough spaces available for children to access that care. So we are already building 100,000 quality licensed child care spaces over 5 years. In fact we're creating more than 34,000 of those spaces right now. But we're not only building spaces, Mr. Speaker. We're also ensuring we have the tens of thousands of early childhood educators we'll need to look after our kids. And beginning in 2020 a wage grid will improve compensation for all E.C.E.S and program staff. This will align wages with those working in full-day kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, it's about fairness and equity. Speaker, by building the spaces, investing in the work force and providing families with free preschool child care. We're transforming the system. Our plan delivers care, not cuts, to child care.

MPP Walker to Minister Coteau Re: Disability Services

>>MPP Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question's to the acting Premier. Your Minister of community and social services cut off support for a 3-year-old woman with down syndrome when she left Ontario to spend time visiting her brother who is in the Royal Canadian air force but your government delivered an even bigger disappointment to the family when they returned home Bruce- Grey Owen Sound. Sherry found herself sadlywait listed for passport funding. No one knows when sherry's funding will arrive. She could be on the way -- wait list for three years or even longer. Acting Premier, is wait listing the best level of care you can give a severely disabled Ontarian?

>>Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite can let his constituent know that help is on the way. In our recent budget proposal, we put forward an increase amount to passport. That means every single person on the wait list will receive passport funding at a minimum of \$5,000. This is a pretty significant step for people in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, you know, coming from the Conservatives, who when they were in power, they cut developmental services by 22%. You know, how can the member stand up and defend a record or an approach by a Conservative government that attacks the most vulnerable people in our community? Mr. Speaker, they should rethink their strategy when it comes to supporting people with developmental disabilities, because on this side of the House. We believe every single person should have the opportunity to have some type of funding.

>>MPP Walker: Minister, sherry east parents are very distraught by your government's axles. First you pin -- punish the daughter for spending time with her brother by cutting off her support then you wait-list her for passport funding. On March 28, your Minister of children and youth wrote the family to say we tabled the 2018 budget. For the first time in the province's history every eligible adult would get at least \$5,000 a year. Immediate question was and this is their words, is this a trick? They called the regional D.S. O. Office who knew nothing about your \$5,000 token ladder which they received so they could only draw one conclusion. This is the words of patients of a child. Is your government seriously bribing the people on wait lists with \$5,000 --

>>Minister Coteau: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. The member brings up one of our budget's pies, which is I think an important piece. And that's \$ -- and that \$5,000 is something that we're proposing in our budget. I would just say to the member opposite he has a choice to make when he votes on the budget. Mr. Speaker, again I just want to mention that this is the same party that cut 22% out of developmental disabilities and cut over 20% for people on social work, social Ontario works, sorry. Can you imagine political party in this country cutting over 20% to our most vulnerable people? Should be ashamed of them self. On this side of the house we believe in investing in people in Ontario and let your constituents know that help is on the way.

MPP Tabuns to Minister Naidoo-Harris Re: French Language Schools

>>MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the Minister of education. Yr after year, francophone children in the east end of Toronto are assimilated in local English schools because their community lack as French language high school. Anglophones in the east end of Toronto have high schools with sports fields, auditoriums and many amenities. No such high school facility is available to francophone children. Article 23 of the carl ter of -- charter of rights and freedoms gives francophones in Ontario the right to schools that are equivalent to those of the local English majority. Will the Minister uphold the charter rights to equivalence and ensure the francophone kids in the east end of Toronto are not treated as second-class citizens?

>>Minister Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize the tremendous advantage students have when they speak more than one language, and that's why we are supporting vitality and sustainability of the francophone community. So, Mr. Speaker, we have

increased annual funding for French language boards by 25% since 2013, which is more than \$340 million. To me, Mr. Speaker, that says commitment. We also know that in the east of Toronto families are looking for French education and so that's why since 2013 we've provided \$208 million in capital funding to C.S. Viamonde. We also recently announced this year, Mr. Speaker, we are providing \$80 million to support nine capital projects for French language boards. Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that the member from Beaches- East York has been a strong advocate. For these schools. I want to point out, including more than \$16 million to be invested into Viamonde school board to support the creation of a new –

>>MPP Tabuns: Again to the Minister of education. Minister, the only school on offer for francophones in the same neighbourhood lacks a sports field, has fewer amenities and is landlocked on less than an acre of land. On April 30th, Premier Wynne publicly stated that the government must always ensure that support is in place for minority communities that will allow them to have equal success. Given the realities of assimilation and the equivalence requirement of the charter of rights and freedoms, given the need for the province to provide leadership to defend those rights, given the Premier's commitment, what will this Minister do to uphold the charter rights of francophone secondary students in east-end Toronto?

>>Minister Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for this question. Once again we recently announced this year that we are providing \$80 million to support nine capital projects for French language boards including the 16 million to be invested in Viamonde school board. But, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out the member opposite would have us think that frankly students in the French language board are not doing well. But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that enrollment is increasing. In fact in 2016-17, over 105,000 students were attending French language schools and test scores continue to rise. Over 76% of students in French language school versus met or surpassed the provincial standard in reading, writing and math and on grade 3 EQAO. For grade 6 tests over 81% of students have consistently met or surpassed the provincial standard. Mr. Speaker, all this to say those students in the French language board are doing extremely well. I'm very proud of the work of the educators in that system and proud of our investments.