

Premier Wynne's Year End Interviews Media Scan: December 18-19, 2017

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Print Coverage

Toronto Star: Premier to campaign on economic equality; Wynne will look for ways to 'level the playing field' ahead of June 7 election; A8; 2017.12.19

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Premier to campaign on economic equality; Wynne will look for ways to 'level the playing field' ahead of June 7 election

Premier Kathleen Wynne says she'll campaign in next June's election on more ways to "level the playing field" for Ontarians struggling even as the economy improves with unemployment at a 17-year low.

"Everybody in the province knows what I stand for," Wynne told the Star in a year-end interview, touting a new pharmacare plan for people under 25 and a \$14 minimum wage starting Jan. 1, moving to \$15 in 2019.

"Anything we do going forward is going to be consistent with what we've already done," she added, flagging prescription drug and dental coverage as "gaps" in medicare that need to be addressed.

"I have a deep belief that we don't play on a level field. And so, what can I do to level that playing field?"

While Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has released his full "People's Guarantee" platform for the June 7 vote - including a four-year delay to the \$15 minimum wage - Wynne is cagey on when the Liberal effort will be revealed.

Most elements are widely expected in the government's annual budget, expected earlier than the usual late March or April.

"We will be introducing a budget in the spring . . . the rest of the strategy, we'll have to wait and see," the premier said, quickly changing the time frame to a more vague "in the new year" when reminded spring begins March 20. Nor will Wynne reveal whether the government will push the Legislature to pass the budget before it adjourns for the campaign, which will officially kick off in the second week of May.

A recent poll by the firm Campaign Research after the PC platform was released suggests the election race has tightened, with the Conservatives and Liberals neck-and-neck for top spot within the survey's margin of error and the New Democrats about 13 points behind at 22 per cent.

But Wynne's approval rating was 19 per cent, compared with 29 for Brown and 33 for NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

The premier, who has embarked on a series of taxpayer-financed town-hall meetings to hear from the public, acknowledges voter perceptions of her are "relevant" but said she has no plans to change course.

"I have to do my job and I have to listen to people and put in place what I believe to be the supports the people need ... their determination about me personally is up to them."

Wynne cites 25 per cent off hydro bills, new transit lines in the works and the Vaughan extension that just opened, free tuition for low- and middle-income families, more child-care spaces, her successful push for an improved Canada Pension Plan and indexing the \$15 minimum wage to inflation as ways she has tried to improve the daily lives of Ontarians.

Opposition parties, however, say overcrowded hospitals, hydro bills that skyrocketed out of control and almost 15 years in office leave the Liberals ripe for defeat.

"This is about patients waiting in agony, treatments being delayed and people having their health and dignity impacted by hallway medicine. This is about people's lives," Horwath said last week, highlighting an issue that her party will hit in the campaign.

While she wouldn't reveal details about the Liberal election strategy, Wynne was certain she won't be pictured buying pot at one of the new government-controlled cannabis shops as she was buying wine at a grocery store.

"I don't use marijuana, so I won't be doing that," she said, noting she tried pot "a long, long time ago. I'm on the record on that."

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Toronto Star: Wynne isn't ready to give up the ghost just yet; A8; 2017.12.19

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EDITION: ONT

BYLINE: Martin Regg Cohn

KEYWORDS: ghost,christmas,media,peppered,kathleen,wynne

ILLUSTRATION: In a year-end interview, Kathleen Wynne went out of her way to project a path to re-election that would focus on fairness, Martin Regg Cohn writes.
Rick Madonik/Toronto Star

WORD COUNT: 662

Wynne isn't ready to give up the ghost just yet

A year ago - call it the ghost of Christmas past - the media peppered Kathleen Wynne with questions about stepping down early to spare her Liberals a humiliating defeat in the next election.

This week - perhaps the ghost of Christmas present - the media was instead demanding whether she'd commit to a full term, through 2022, if re-elected as premier.

We can't rely on any ghost of Christmas future to foretell the province's political fate. But the mere fact that reporters had rephrased their questions to such an extent is perhaps a minor miracle for the premier whom many assumed would have given up the ghost by now.

In a series of year-end interviews Monday, Wynne wouldn't tell the media how much longer she'd remain in power if her Liberals win next June 7. It's still too early to take bets on a Wynne resurrection, but a premier who was given up for politically dead a year ago may now be in a dead heat, according to the more closely watched public opinion polls.

Speaking to the Star in the corner office she has occupied since 2013, Wynne went out of her way to project a path to re-election that would focus on fairness amid economic uncertainty. Facing an unexpectedly centrist feint from the opposition Progressive Conservatives, who are vowing to more or less continue many Liberal programs they had previously criticized - from pharmacare to minimum wage increases - Wynne vowed to come out fighting in the new year with a distinctively progressive platform.

On Jan. 1, her government will implement a full youth pharmacare program covering Ontarians up to age 25. She wants Ottawa to bankroll an expansion for all adults nationally, but Wynne hinted at an Ontario-only program - much like her proposed provincial pension plan in the 2014 election - if federal funding "doesn't happen" soon.

The premier wants her legacy to be about "social justice," but says she needs more time in government to leverage a strong economic recovery. While Ontario's growth has led the industrialized world in recent years and unemployment is at historic lows, the challenge of precarious work is rising.

Precarious employment could also be in Wynne's personal political future.

If no party gains a majority in the next election, she hopes to form a minority government with support from the opposition New Democrats whose policies are more closely aligned. She cited their decision to prop up the Liberals from 2011-14, when the NDP wielded the balance of power.

"You would be in a precarious parliament and so I think that you have to find a way to make it work," Wynne mused in the interview. "No matter what the configuration, I will do everything to ensure that a progressive platform is implemented."

That means expanding on recent progress in child care, pharmacare and dental care, while making "free tuition" even more accessible to post-secondary students. Wynne declined to divulge details of her upcoming campaign platform - likely to be unveiled in a spring pre-election budget - but said voters will soon get a taste of "the next pieces of our plan."

Reflecting on the changing workplace, she said the party must also speak to displaced workers caught in recurring economic disruption. Government can provide more nimble support through education, but also through the basic income pilot her Liberals are testing for the working poor and people who jump from job to job.

"I have a deep belief that we don't play on a level field. And so, what can I do to level that playing field?" she said.

"It's our job as human beings to find ways to help each other and so that, for me, is at the root of what government is about. We come together, and we decide as a society how we are going to support each other."

And who gets to govern us.

Martin Regg Cohn's political column appears Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. mcohn@thestar.ca,
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CBC News: Kathleen Wynne pitches Liberals as 'change' after 14 years in power

By: Mike Crawley

Dec 19, 2017 7:55 AM ET

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/kathleen-wynne-ontario-election-2018-1.4455076>

Premier Kathleen Wynne has a message for voters who think it's time for a change in Ontario: she is all about change.

It's perhaps a surprising message from the leader of a party that's been in power for more than 14 years, facing an election next June.

"There's always need for change in Ontario," Wynne said Monday in a year-end interview with CBC News. "I believe in good change and we have brought and will continue to bring good change."

Wynne referred to her government as a bringer of change several times during the interview, which focused on the looming 2018 campaign, culminating in election day on June 7.

"I believe firmly that the path that we're on, the changes that we've made, the changes that we've introduced are in the best interests of the people of the province," she said.

Wynne pointed to two key reforms that will launch on Jan. 1: new employment laws, including a minimum wage of \$14 an hour, as well as free prescription drugs for children and young adults.

"The changes that we're bringing in on Pharmacare and minimum wage ... have taken time," she said.

"There's more change coming," Wynne hinted. "Stay tuned."

'We are not done as a government'

Wynne would not offer any specifics about what she has up her sleeve. I asked her specifically if she is

planning an income tax cut or a full-scale provincial child care program, and she declined to answer directly.

"Everything that we will do going forward is going to be consistent with what we have already done," Wynne said. "There is more to be done. We are not done as a party, we're not done as a government. Exactly what that's going to look like, I can't tell you right this minute."

She said she does want to make progress on covering prescription drug costs for all Ontarians, calling it the gap in Medicare. Wynne and Health Minister Eric Hoskins are "adamant that we need to go forward and help people to be able to cover their medication," she said.

"I'm going to continue to push at the national level for a national Pharmacare plan. If that doesn't happen then we have to have a serious conversation about how we move forward."

The government will bring in a budget in the first few months of 2018, but Wynne would not say if she intends to get it passed before dissolving the legislature for the campaign period. "I'll have to leave that till the new year. There are all sorts of factors that will come into play. I can't tell you exactly what will happen there."

Nor would Wynne say whether she will step down if she fails to win the election.

In 2018, she will be seeking re-election without a number of her key cabinet members, including Economic Development Minister Brad Duguid, deputy premier Deb Matthews and Treasury Board president Liz Sandals, all of whom have indicated they won't run again.

I asked Wynne whether, when she entered politics, she had imagined that she would be the premier who would bring in the sale of wine and beer in supermarkets and marijuana in government-owned shops.

"Never in a million years," she replied.

Global News: ANALYSIS: Wynne says Ontario ballot question will be 'uncertainty'

By: Alan Carter

December 19, 2017 9:01 am

https://globalnews.ca/news/3924043/kathleen-wynne-2018-preview-analysis/?utm_source=%40globalnews&utm_medium=Twitter

While it didn't seem possible 12 months ago, 2017 turned out to be a good year for Kathleen Wynne.

But was it good enough to make 2018 a great year for Ontario's Liberal premier?

Twelve months ago there were questions about whether Wynne would continue as leader or be pushed out by rivals, and her personal polling numbers were in the "things-you-scrape-off-your-shoe" range.

As the year draws to a close, those poll numbers are now up off the floor, and more importantly, Liberal policies are proving to be popular.

"We are acting in the best interest of the people who we serve. We serve the people of Ontario," said Wynne during an end-of-year interview at Queen's Park with Global News.

Those programs are appealing enough that the opposition PCs have decided to steal the Liberal strategy of stealing ideas.

Do you like that 25 per cent off hydro prices Wynne introduced? PC Leader Patrick Brown will give you that and more.

How about Liberal commitments for pharmacare or daycare spaces? The PCs promise to keep those promises too.

If imitation is indeed the sincerest form of flattery, then Brown is singing Liberal policy praises louder than an egg-nogged Christmas caroler.

But as the calendar peels away to 2018, the game begins anew.

In the spring when political lawn signs sprout like dandelions, the people of the province will go to the polls to decide whose plate of goodies they like best.

Since all three Ontario parties are offering similar platforms, largely swiped from each other (many of the Liberal planks were lifted from the NDP), what will the ballot question be?

Uncertainty, says Wynne.

"People feeling like they're not sure what's coming next," Wynne said. "That uncertainty – that's the environment we are operating in. So whether the ballot question will be about jobs or whether it'll be a cost of living, it will be in that area because it's that uncertainty."

In the face of this uncertainty should the people of the province seek change? Wynne sidesteps the question.

Wynne presented herself as an agent of change in her successful 2014 come-from-behind election victory.

In 2018, that path isn't available to her, so instead the Liberals hope to present change as a risk in an age of uncertainty.

Alan Carter is the host of Focus Ontario, a Global Toronto anchor and an analyst for Global News.

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CTV News : With provincial election months away, is anyone paying attention?

By: Allison Jones

Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:27PM EST

<https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/with-provincial-election-months-away-is-anyone-paying-attention-1.3727941>

The new year is expected to start the unofficial countdown to Ontario's June election, with key pledges from the governing Liberals kicking in and the Tories working hard to sell their early platform.

Avid political watchers may feel as though the campaign is already in full swing, with the Progressive Conservatives -- ahead in the polls -- already having nominated most of their candidates and releasing their platform more than six months before the vote, and the Liberals flogging their main election message of fairness at every opportunity.

But so far, the majority of Ontarians haven't been paying attention, said University of Toronto political science professor Nelson Wiseman.

"I don't think it's on their radar," he said. Most people won't have even noticed the PC platform being released, he said. "I don't think it matters one iota. Nobody is sitting around leafing through their 78-page program."

That will ramp up in the new year, predicted Premier Kathleen Wynne.

"Once there are set election dates in place then everyone knows when the election's going to be, which is the point," she told The Canadian Press. "But it means that there's more strategic positioning that goes on earlier, I would say. Definitely, as we go through the next session when the legislature comes back in February it will definitely (heat up)."

As of Jan. 1, two of the Liberals' major plans, which will form key parts of their re-election bid, come into effect -- a \$14-an-hour minimum wage that would rise to \$15 in 2019, and pharmacare for youth under 25 years old.

Those programs are two examples of how the Liberals have been describing their plan as one of fairness and opportunity, a theme that will carry through to June.

"Creating fairness is what I think government exists to do. It's always been at the heart of what I believe about elected office," Wynne said. "Opportunity, when we think about growth and we think about how the economy needs to flourish in Ontario and in Canada, that's about creating opportunity."

Much energy will also be spent in the new year contrasting the parties' plans, Wynne signalled. In the weeks since the PC platform release, the Liberals have already attacked their promises on child care, a carbon tax, mental health funding and a value-for-money audit.

"I think it's only fair to people in the province that they have a sense of what we all stand for," Wynne said. "These next few weeks and months are going to be about yes, making those contrasts, but most importantly, stating emphatically and reinforcing emphatically who we are and what we believe in."

A major factor working against Wynne in the election -- along with her dismal approval ratings -- will likely be that the Liberals will have been in power for 15 years by the time the vote rolls around.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown said by now people know what the Liberals stand for, and he will work to get his message out, continuing to flog his platform around the province as he did late this year in an election-style bus.

"I work endless hours and talk at every townhall and every cultural function and every community function I can," he said in an interview. "Certainly we're encouraged by the fact that where we get to know people it's going pretty well for us."

Brown noted that in byelections his party has taken seats away from the Liberals, party membership is up to nearly 200,000 from a low of around 12,000 after the 2014 election, and the PCs have recently fundraised far larger sums than the Liberals.

One of Brown's biggest challenges remains that polling consistently shows half of Ontarians don't know who he is. The Tories have been trying to combat that with TV ads featuring Brown and having him tour the province.

"I'm just going to be myself," he said. "I think there will be closer scrutiny of the three different political parties and the three leaders as we gear up for the election."

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said her party will roll out policies over the next several months, acknowledging their underdog status.

"People see us as the third party," she said. "We don't have the most seats in the legislature...We have the smallest team, but many people say we punch above our weight. That's because we focus on listening to people and trying to bring forward ideas that will bring forward positive changes in people's lives."

TV Coverage

CFTO : CTV News Conducts Year End Interview With Premier Wynne

Source: CFTO

Dec 19, 2017 12:09 PM (10)

Anchor: Premier Kathleen Wynne is facing what many consider to be an uphill battle in the provincial election which is now six months away. CTV's Paul Bliss got a one-on-one interview with her at Queen's Park. Paul, we both know she's a fighter, and she can't be ruled out despite popularity polls.

Reporter: Oh, no. That's for sure. Kathleen Wynne is a shrewd and smart politician. She campaigns very hard and she campaigns very well. I asked her about her popularity because the big challenge she will face before the June election is going to be if she can sell herself to the voters once again. I even asked her if she removed her glasses to warm up her public image. We began our interview, actually, under the portrait of former Premier Mike Harris which is right beside her office. Harris' cuts to education are what inspired Kathleen Wynne to become political in the first place. She's had a tough political year, testifying at the Sudbury bribery trial, watching her personal approval drop to the lowest level of any premier in history. But she also had victories like cutting hydro bills 25 per cent, passing legislation to move minimum wage to \$14 an hour January 1st, not to mention, delivering free prescription drugs to everyone under the age of 25. She even told me Ontario will go it alone and provide free drugs for all ages if the federal government doesn't pass a national pharmacare plan. But one of her biggest challenges, as I said, getting people to connect with her before the June election.

Reporter: Dalton McGuinty and Tim Hudak, especially, your old rival, used to say election is not a popularity contest.

Premier Kathleen Wynne: I've said that, too.

Reporter: Are you going to play that in the new year, because at some point, you have strong policies, but how do you take away the fact that some people just don't like you.

Premier Wynne: So I can't control that. You know... I have to be myself, I have to let people get to know me and then they make their decision. But what is really important to me, Paul, is that if there something that they need, if their child needs support in some way, if their aging parent needs support, that they get that support. That's what's really important, whether they like me or not, it's kind of beside the point. It's not really about popularity for me. It is about making sure that we have the supports in place that people need.

Reporter: We also talked about the impact of the college strike. Tonight at six, I will tell you what she said when I asked her if it's true she got rid of those glasses to make her seem warmer to the viewing public. I also asked her how it made her feel, as former Education Minister, knowing 26,000 students dropped out of college because of that strike under her leadership. We'll send it back to you, Andria.

Interview Transcripts

Premier Wynne's Year-End Interview With The Canadian Press

Date: December 18, 2017

Length: 15:53 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Allison Jones, The Canadian Press;

Shawn Jeffords, The Canadian Press

ALLISON JONES, THE CANADIAN PRESS: So (inaudible) year-end interviews obviously more looking more forward to the year ahead rather than recapping the year that's been. Next year's obviously quite a big year in Ontario politics. Does it feel to you like the election campaign is already underway? Or do you expect things to really ramp up once we're in the new year?

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: I think things will ramp up in the new year, but once there are set election dates in place then everybody knows when the election's going to be, which is the point, but it means that there's more strategic positioning that goes on earlier I would say. But definitely, I think as we go through the next session, when the legislature comes back in February, as we go through that session it will definitely heat up.

JONES: I'm hoping you can talk a bit about your theme. I know when we sat down here in June you talked a lot about fairness, and we've heard you say that word a few times here and there since then. And sometimes it's (inaudible) once in a while, but lately you've been adding the word opportunity as well. You're talking about fairness and opportunity now. What's behind that shift?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I think – I mean fairness is – creating fairness is what I think government exists to do you know? And it's always been at the heart of what I believe about elected office, that our job is to create as fair a society as we can, whether it's through education, whether it's through health care, whether it's through the things that we're doing like the changes in the workplace, \$15 minimum wage or 100,000 child care spaces, all of those things are about fairness. Or even retirement security. When I first came into this job, you know that was about people who had worked all their lives having a decent retirement. So fairness is at the core of what I believe government exists to do. And opportunity, when we think about growth and we think about how the economy needs to flourish in Ontario and Canada, that's about creating opportunity. And people need to see what the future can hold. So when I travelled to China or Vietnam or I go to different parts of the province and talk to entrepreneurs and talk to folks who are developing new companies and technologies that are changing, all of that is creating opportunity. And so the two go hand and hand, fairness and opportunity go hand and hand as far as I'm concerned.

SHAWN JEFFORDS, THE CANADIAN PRESS: Premier, talk about the strategic position when it comes to the fixed election date. There's been a lot of speculation about what you will do at the start of the new year, whether you are going to prorogue, whether you will come back early, when you will start (inaudible). Can you give us any indication of what (inaudible) and what you take into consideration when you make a decision like that?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well the legislative calendar is in place and you know I'm looking forward to coming back in February, as I said. I think that there's a lot of work to be done. There's going to be a lot of changes in Ontario as of January 1st, and people are going to see a lot of change there. They're going to see minimum wage go up, so people who are earning \$11.50 today are going to see their wages go up \$14 an hour. Families who are going into a pharmacy with kids with a prescription are going to be able to show their health card and get that prescription for their children free. So there are major changes that we're implementing and I'm looking forward to seeing the impact of those in the new year.

JEFFORDS: When it comes to some of those measures that you announced – you know you were talking about the ORPP, you know, these are pretty ambitious plans that you've laid in place. What is left for this term? What do you need to accomplish by the time (inaudible)?

PREMIER WYNNE: Oh there's so much to be done. There's so much to be done in Ontario you know? So we are continuing to build – it was great to be able to open the Spadina subway extension on the weekend but there are infrastructure projects all over this province that are underway that will come to completion. There are changes that we are working on in terms of education, you know our curriculum review and looking at changes around student wellbeing, that's part of our vision for education for the future. And as I said, there are ongoing health care changes that we are implementing to make sure, yes, that kids get free prescription medications starting in January, but to make sure that people all over the province have access to the home care that they need, that they have mental health services. There are many, many things that are part of our plan that we are just implementing.

JONES: I assume that the next sort of several months between now and the election is going to be (inaudible). We've seen a bit (inaudible) – the PCs came out with their platforms sort of contrasting the Liberal plan with the PC plan. Can we expect more of that between now and then, and are you going to be focusing on the PCs and sort of leaving the NDP to the side or – what are we going to see on that score?

PREMIER WYNNE: I think it's only fair people in the province, that they have a sense of what we all stand for you know? And so these next few weeks and months are going to be about, yes, making those contrasts, but most importantly stating emphatically and reinforcing emphatically who we are and what we believe in. So you know as I travel the province, I'll be doing town halls, I'll be meeting with groups all over

the province, as I have been, and I will continue to talk about what we are doing, but also talk to people about what comes next from their perspective you know? So families around the province who are concerned about their young adults, young kids, getting jobs. You know let's make sure that the processes and the plans that we have in place are touching people in all parts of the province. So I'll be hearing from people and that will build on the work that we've already done. We've built the foundation but there's much more that we have to do.

JONES: Does their plan being out so early give you a chance to sort of one-up them on certain promises? We've already seen Eric Hoskins say well, sure, they promise this much but we're going to be spending more on mental health.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well – I mean that's about mental health, and so I mean what we've said about mental health is that we already, if you look at our record, we've already spent \$10 billion over 10 years, which is really much more than they are projecting going forward. So we are already committed to that. You know I think that the difference is that we are already in the process of implementing the plan that we will build. So what happens in the new year will be consistent with the work that we have done today. Some of it will be about implementing things that are already on our books and some of it will be taking further initiatives but it will all be consistent with our belief system about making our society fairer, providing opportunity, and doing that in a fiscally responsible way.

JONES: And over the past couple of years we've seen your budgets contain one sort of really big, signature (inaudible). Last year we saw the pharmacare, the year before that I think or maybe before that was the free tuition. Can we expect that for this pre-election budget as well? Will there be one really huge item that you're working towards?

PREMIER WYNNE: We'll let the Finance Minister work on that but as I said, whatever we do going forward is going to be consistent with what we have done. So we have balanced the budget. We have made investments in infrastructure. We're seeing job creation and economic growth outstripping that of the rest of the country, but at the same time we are very, very aware that people are not doing equally well and that there are people in the province that are not feeling the benefit and so I'm going to continue to look for ways to take on those challenges and to make real that commitment to fairness across the province because we're not there yet. There's more to be done.

JEFFORDS: Premier, in 2014 we heard a lot about how this was a time for change, that the Tories were poised to take government. That obviously did not happen. You won and you won big. What did you learn from that election that you will apply to this election given that the polls suggest that you are behind again and the Tories may form government?

PREMIER WYNNE: What I have taken from that experience and from other political experiences is that the most important thing I can do is make sure that the commitments that I am making are A) do-able, that I can follow through on them and I have followed through on – I have followed through on the commitments that I have made to the people of Ontario and I will continue to do that, and that the things that I tackle, the things that I put in place, are things that are going to support the people, that are consistent with my belief that government exists to create that fairness, to create the opportunity for people to benefit from economic growth. First we have to stimulate economic growth but the reason to stimulate economic growth is so that people can benefit from it and their lives can be enhanced.

JEFFORDS: Was there any in particular lesson from that? I mean I think people counted you out in 2014. Do you think that that was the case?

PREMIER WYNNE: I learned well before the 2014 election that if people are counting you out you just can't let that get you down. You know you have to – because people, consistently, have thought that I was not going to win an election, that I was not going to win the leadership, I couldn't beat the leader of the opposition. There have been so many junctures in my political life where the pundits have said, 'well she's gone.' So I just have to read that, understand that's what the pundits think and then carry on and do what I know is right and that is listening to people, developing a plan based on what people need and then implementing that plan which is exactly what we are doing.

JONES: I want to ask a cap-and-trade question. Do you think that you'll be facing an uphill battle next year to sell voters on your cap-and-trade plan versus the PC one that comes with an income tax cut, that's a shiny new bauble that people are going to hear and be interested in? So how do you – is it an uphill battle and how do you convince voters that your plan is better?

PREMIER WYNNE: Our plan is real because what we have just said is that we are joining the carbon market of Quebec and California because it is the most cost-effective way for the people of this province to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. You know, people in Canada, people in Ontario look at what's happening. They know that there's more flooding, they know that there are fires, they know that the climate is changing. And so, I think we have a pretty strong consensus that there needs to be mitigation. We do need to make changes. So the carbon market under the cap-and-trade system is the most cost-effective way to do that, and as we get that revenue from the cap-and-trade, it all goes back into helping people retrofit their houses, or helping businesses to develop technology and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions so all that money goes back into our society. To see that, (inaudible) that's the one we are implementing, that's the benefit that people are going to see. Greenhouse gas emissions go down, money going back in to retrofit and to developing new technology versus a system that is more expensive for people on a day-to-day basis and there is no guarantee that will actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions. So I think that contrast will be pretty compelling to the people of Ontario.

JONES: We've got a couple questions if we still have time that our colleagues across the country are asking other premiers in sit-down interviews, put them together in year-end videos. So the one I want to ask about first is your thoughts on the international conversation that's taking place these days around sexual assault and harassment, what you think of that – if we're at some sort of tipping point – and has that made you think about any changes that need to be made wither with your own Caucus policies or broader policies that need to be enacted in the Legislature or in Ontario?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, I keep thinking we're at a tipping point and things are going to change for good and there are more revelations so I'm very proud of the changes that we've made in policy. We've brought out the It's Never Okay policy. We put money behind an ad campaign that has actually demonstrably changed attitudes, and we've relaunched that ad campaign (inaudible) and we also have processes that have been changed here at the Legislature. We've put training in place for staff and for all MPPs and I think that's ongoing. I think that that kind of work can't stop. I think that we really have to look to ourselves and make sure that we are doing everything we can to stop sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual violence and at the same time, work to inform, support people in community.

JONES: Just a quick one: what do you see as Canada's greatest strength and the country's greatest challenge at the moment?

PREMIER WYNNE: I think that our greatest strength is that we are a stable, open democracy. We put a lot of stock in the multicultural, diverse open society and I think that (inaudible) wherever I go in the world, I've become more convinced that that is our strength. I think one of our – I mean we have a number of challenges as a country as so many countries do in this global economy right now. We talked about one of

them, we talked about climate change which I think that is the biggest challenge that we face as a country and as a planet. I think more locally, our biggest political challenge right now is our relationship with the United States. And I think that the work that I've been doing to build bridges and build connections with elected representatives in the United States, governors, my colleague governors, to reinforce how integrated our economies are and how interdependent we are. I think that is work that will continue into the new year as this challenge could become more critical, particularly on trade.

Premier Wynne's Year End Interview With The Toronto Star

Date: December 18, 2017

Length: 19:39 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Rob Ferguson, Toronto Star;

Martin Regg Cohn, Toronto Star

ROB FERGUSON, TORONTO STAR: I'm wondering, because I've been thinking strategically here, does the fact that Patrick Brown came out early with his platform in such detail, does that help you? Because you're, like, in a hockey game. You're like the coach that can do the last line change and get the best players out there that match who the other team already has on the ice. Because it shows what they're doing and now you're – yeah.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Here's the thing. I've had a plan I have been implementing my plan since I've been premier and so everybody in the province knows what I stand for. They know what we've done or they know components of what we've done and we're in the process of implementing this phase of our plan. So January 1st is going to be a big day with OHIP+ and with them minimum wage going up so those are two more parts of our plan. I would say it's about time we knew something about what the Conservatives stood for but I don't think that there's a strategic play here in the sense that we've already been consistent and we've already demonstrated what we stood for and anything we do going forward is going to be consistent with that we've already done.

FERGUSON: How soon will we see that? Will we see that in the budget and how early do you want to do a budget and do you want to get it passed or do you want to have a budget and then we sit for a while and then we come back?

PREMIER WYNNE: Is this like a campaign conversation we're having?

FERGUSON: Yes, because we are trying to look forward.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well what I can guarantee you, Rob, is that we will be introducing ideas and initiatives that are consistent with the plan that we are already implementing. We will be introducing a budget in the spring and the rest of the strategy, you know, we will have to wait and see.

FERGUSON: Okay, so budget not till spring.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, the spring budget is always in the spring.

FERGUSON: Yeah, but spring starts mid-March.

PREMIER WYNNE: (Inaudible).

Unidentified: The next session of the Legislature.

FERGUSON: So we can't pin you down on a date. But don't you think though – and I understand what you say about everything is going to be consistent because I wouldn't expect anything less or different from that but does – so you're saying the PC platform doesn't play any kind of role at all in how you strategically plan and place everything?

PREMIER WYNNE: No, what plays a role, if you look at what we're doing now in terms of the \$15 minimum wage, the child care spaces, the Fair Hydro Plan, those are initiatives that are responsive to the conditions that people are living in. We've got strong economic growth, we've made infrastructure investments, we're outstripping the economic growth of the country and our unemployment is very low in terms of the last 17 years; it's the lowest that it's been in the last 17 years. So all of those conditions allow us to do some of those other things and they did take, you know, the fact that the economic growth is as strong as it is and yet people are not sharing in that, there are people who are not sharing in that growth, what that says to me is that as a government we have to step up and make it more fair. We have to create some fairness in the way that the economy is functioning and at the same time provide for opportunity across the province. That's what the circumstance dictate and quite frankly, that's what I think government exists to do.

FERGUSON: Will we see anything more pushing forward on minimum wage? Will we see anything more pushing forward on pharmacare or are you going to stand back on those for now?

PREMIER WYNNE: So we've already said that, minimum wage, once it is \$15 an hour in January 2019, then we will peg it to the cost of living increases. In terms of pharmacare, I think that that's a different question because there is a national conversation about pharmacare and Minister Hoskins has been very, very vocal, as I have been at the table with my colleague premiers, about the need for a national pharmacare plan so I think you will see us continue to push for more support across the country for pharmacare.

FERGUSON: And when we get to the election, are you going to (inaudible) full term, if re-elected?

PREMIER WYNNE: I'm running. The last year you asked me if I'm running. I'm running for office.

FERGUSON: And we believed you. Some other people didn't though.

PREMIER WYNNE: Let's get to the election then we'll have the next conversation but it is my firm plan to run in this campaign and lead the party into the election and into the next term.

MARTIN REGG COHN, TORONTO STAR: Just following up on pharmacare, you had a similar conversation or contest on pensions a few years ago, and when Ottawa wouldn't meet you half way, you pushed ahead with your ORPP. I can still remember the initials. So if Ottawa doesn't meet you halfway or doesn't provide the necessary support on pharmacare, why not dial it up from 24 to a higher number in the campaign. You're not ruling that out, are you?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, I think your analogy is exactly right. The reason that OHIP+ is happening is just that – that we haven't had an agreement from the federal government to move on pharmacare and so that's why we are moving ahead on OHIP+. I hope that we will have a federal government that will work with us now on the national plan. If that doesn't happen then I think it's an open question. Yes, I think it's an open question what do we do next because we have to continue to support. There are some gaps in medicare. Pharmacare is one of them, and we heard the other night, which we've heard many times, dental care is one of them.

REGG COHN: So, just to follow up again on the platform questions and the Conservative platform, there's a lot of continuity. There are a lot of elements that people thought they might get rid of that they're keeping; minimum wage, pharmacare, rent control, stuff like that. It's almost as if they're saying, 'you like that stuff so we're not going to spoil the party for you. We're going to keep it going.' And these are things that people like but they don't like Kathleen Wynne and they don't like the Liberals, so we'll take it from here. Isn't that potentially perilous for you that if people like a lot of those policies which you keep talking up and they don't like you or the party or both or some combination, isn't there a risk that people will say, 'yup, if they're going to continue those good things that the Liberals are doing let them take it from here.' How do you answer that?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well the way I would answer it is –

REGG COHN: How do you address that?

PREMIER WYNNE: The plan we have put in place is one that is do-able. We haven't said we're going to make \$12 billion worth of cuts and we're going to (inaudible) supports in place. We haven't said we're going to charge you more and not reduce greenhouse gas emissions. So we've actually put a do-able plan in place.

REGG COHN: But let's say that they can't bogged down in the details of cap-and-trade. Let's be honest, people can't. And let's assume they're not scared about the \$6 billion or \$12 billion. (Inaudible) child care rebates, pharmacare, minimum wage at \$15 eventually (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Again, the people of Ontario will decide and they will question us very closely in the run up to and in the (inaudible) period of the campaign, but I believe that people want to see a plan that actually can work and the people of Ontario are very smart. If you say to them, 'we're going to cut \$12 billion out of education and healthcare and still we're going to make all these things happen,' I think they

will see through that and so what we are saying is, 'here is exactly how we are going to implement the plan. Here is how we'll roll it out and here is what it is going to cost.' We've been very clear about that.

REGG COHN: One of the comments that's often been made, fairly or unfairly, (inaudible) you had a lot – especially early on – you had a lot of balls in the air. A lot on the agenda and you had to prioritize. But let's say that you have done child care or you will do child care even more fully, 100,000 spaces, and other elements. Kind of a variation on what I was asking about how the Tories might be asked to take over from here. Greg Sorbara, your former Campaign Co-Chair used to say, 'it's great that we've done these things but what are we promising for next time?' So how are you going to differentiate yourself from the Progressive Conservatives and also what you've done so far?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, again, we will build on the initiatives that we've already implemented. I came into this office saying we were going to deal with retirement security. We've done that. I said we were going to make investments in infrastructure. We're doing that. We've opened the subway extension on the weekend.

REGG COHN: But on the (inaudible) people are going to say, 'what are you going to do for me next?'

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, and so what I will be saying to them is, 'and here are the next pieces of our plan and they are consistent with what we have done and here is how we are going to do them.' You can measure our capacity to actually implement these things by looking at how we have implemented the things that we promised and so there will be more child care spaces, there will be a \$14 minimum wage going to \$15, there will be lower electricity prices and there will be free tuition. We said we were going to do those things. We've done them. Now here are the next pieces we are going to put in place and judge us on that because this is what we believe in. We believe in fairness and we have put in place initiatives and supports to promote fairness.

REGG COHN: So Rob and I don't want you to (inaudible) yourself, so please don't (inaudible) yourself, wait a minute. But tell us –

PREMIER WYNNE: He totally does.

REGG COHN: But tell us how you can (inaudible) on child care. You mentioned 100,000 spaces, that's just (inaudible). What does that mean? That number is – it doesn't mean anything to me personally. So how do you change the perception and the reality of child care in a way that gets people understanding that actually it's more affordable for me? So universality in Quebec is often talked about. What can (inaudible)?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I think the only – you know I think the only thing that will convince people is when they see new child care spaces that they can afford in their (inaudible).

REGG COHN: (Inaudible) paying for it.

PREMIER WYNNE: Possibly. But you know we have said that we're going to put subsidy in place. We are

going to support the building of spaces. We've got 200 schools, 200 communities that are going to see more child care spaces. That's what's convincing to people, that they can open their door, go to their local school or community centre and actually see more spaces, and that's what they will see.

REGG COHN: \$7 a day is also convincing people.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I understand that, but you also know in Quebec that there are changes that are being made to that system as well. So we want high quality child care that is affordable and is available to people, and particularly in the 0-4 years – that's where people are most challenged.

REGG COHN: So do you have any thoughts about why today – you know your party is depending on which poll you're looking at is doing significantly better. Your personal popularity is whatever. So do you have any better sense of what it is today that – you had a lot of time to meet people and work on these issues, what is it today that is holding people back on you personally?

PREMIER WYNNE: Again, you're going to have to talk to people about that. I have to do my job and I have to listen to people and put in place what I believe to be the supports that people need because of what they tell me. And then their determination about me personally is up to them. And it's – you know it's relevant, of course it's relevant, but what for me is important is that if a family needs child care they get the child care; if someone's earning minimum wage, they can look out for themselves and they can look after their families; if someone is anxious about their child going to college and university that they can access free tuition. So those are the things that are critical to me.

REGG COHN: When you were running for leader a few years ago, people would sometimes ask you why you want to be leader. Now that you've had a few years on the job, why do you still want to be Premier?

PREMIER WYNNE: I think you asked me how I wanted to be remembered, and I said (inaudible) –

REGG COHN: Different question though, yeah. Legacy.

PREMIER WYNNE: But it does go back –

REGG COHN: But they're two different questions. What do you want to be remembered is different from why you still want to be Premier. So (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I actually think they come together.

REGG COHN: Okay.

PREMIER WYNNE: I think those questions come together, because I don't want to be remembered for

something different than why I am in the job you know? And I have a deep belief that we don't play on a level field, and so what can I do to level that playing field?

FERGUSON: Going into that –

PREMIER WYNNE: And I just – I'm going to say this, I don't know whether you want to use this or not and I haven't talked about this before, but I believe that people get their sense of how the world works really early on and you know I grew up in a family where I had a very sick sister, from the time I was a baby. So I was born and then I had a sister who was very ill and throughout her whole life she was you know – it was harder for her and I saw elementary school and high school through that lens, that there are people who just start out and have a harder time you know? And that our job – and it wasn't just about my sister but you know my family, my grandmother was very active in the United Church, and it's like I incorporated into myself that it is our job as human beings to find ways to help each other. And so that for me is at the root of what government is about. We come together, we decide as a society how we are going to support each other. Otherwise, we would just do everything by ourselves and we can't.

FERGUSON: What do you think – you know, as much as you've done, what do you think are the gaps other than just you know getting to pharmacare and maybe more on dental, what are the other gaps that you see that you would like to fill in another term?

PREMIER WYNNE: So I think that we have a big challenge as Western society when it comes to the nature of work. So what our jobs will look like, what are they going to be. So it's interesting to me that our basic income pilot, for example, has kind of become part of the discussion around technology and displaced workers and advanced manufacturing. So I think a really big issue of fairness going forward and helping society is going to be what is it that we're going to do as a society to make sure that people have meaningful work and that people feel that they're part of the economy and that they can take part. You know and part of it is making sure that everyone gets as much education as they can and that we get the right education, but it's also about what are our towns going to look like? What are our communities going to look like with the technology? I mean retail is a good example of that.

REGG COHN: And newspapers.

PREMIER WYNNE: And newspapers and retail, yeah.

REGG COHN: Believe it or not, you raised this in your kick-off speech in the Japanese Cultural Centre and lost your leadership. How's that for memory work?

PREMIER WYNNE: How's that for consistency?

REGG COHN: Speaking of level playing fields, supposing the field is stacked a little bit against you after the election and you're down a seat or two, do you think you could still do business with Andrea Horwath and say our platforms, our objectives while not exactly congruent, are closer together than they might be with the Progressive Conservatives?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well you'll remember my first year, I was Premier of the minority in Parliament. The budget passed –

REGG COHN: They had more seats. What about (inaudible) Patrick Brown?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I think if we have fewer seats, a few more or fewer, I mean I think it's the same thing. You'd be in a precarious Parliament, and so I think that you'd have to find a way to make it work.

REGG COHN: So you could see a scenario where Patrick Brown would have a couple more seats but you could still form a (inaudible)?

PREMIER WYNNE: Again I'm not going to speculate on that but we will work to make the Parliament work, whatever the people of Ontario decide.

UNIDENTIFIED: We have two minutes, Martin.

PREMIER WYNNE: And I'll do everything – no matter what the configuration, I'll do everything to ensure that a progressive platform is implemented and that my plan, our plan, is informing the way forward in this province. I will do everything to make that the case.

REGG COHN: And presumably, premiership under the Liberals have been more progressive than under the Progressive Conservatives for Andrea Horwath's perspective (inaudible)

PREMIER WYNNE: Well you'll have to talk to Andrea about that. You'll have to talk to Andrea about that

FEGURSON: All right, so we saw you when beer and wine went into supermarkets – buying beer and or wine, maybe wine –

PREMIER WYNNE: I know what you're going to say.

FEGURSON: Yeah so are you going to – will you go to a pot store on Canada Day and buy some stuff?

PREMIER WYNNE: I don't use marijuana, so. I wouldn't be doing that. But do I want it to be rolled out responsibly? Yeah.

REGG COHN: You can buy it as a gift for your kids.

PREMIER WYNNE: Or they can buy it themselves if they choose to. That is up to them. They are all adults.

REGG COHN: As long as they're over 18.

PREMIER WYNNE: They are all adults. All my children are over 18.

REGG COHN: Have you ever tried it?

PREMIER WYNNE: A long, long time ago.

REGG COHN: Yeah I thought I'd (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Yes I'm already – I'm on the record on that.

FERGUSON: You should always answer that question by saying 'have you?' So you can ask him (inaudible).

REGG COHN: (Inaudible).

Premier Wynne's Year-End Interview With The Globe And Mail

Date: December 18, 2017

Length: 15:54 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Justin Giovannetti, The Globe and Mail

JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI, THE GLOBE AND MAIL: So do you think 2018, this year coming up, is this finally the year we get to start looking beyond NAFTA? Yeah I'm starting with trade.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Well I think that everyone is really very focused on what the outcome of NAFTA, the NAFTA discussions, are going to be, and one outcome is that NAFTA is not there and we have to fall back on a previous trade agreement or negotiate a new one you know? So I think there's a lot of uncertainty about that and a lot of anxiety about it. I'm still focused on getting to a point where we actually have a workable agreement in place. I'm going to continue to talk to governors, I'm going to

continue to do what I can to you know really reinforce what is already being said to the White House, whether it's by the auto sector or by groups of governors, and that is that our economies are very much integrated, and I'm going to continue to reinforce that.

GIOVANNETTI: I mean there hasn't been a negative headline in a few weeks that I can think of but generally it's been a very negative message in the last little while. Are your hopes still up?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I would say that I'm less optimistic than I was a couple months ago, for sure. I think that what's happened at the table with some of the very untenable proposals being put on the table by the United States has made it feel less like we will get there, but I still maintain that there is so much vested interest on the part of American workers and American businesses and the American public that eventually, through probably more painful public discussion as well as negotiation, eventually we will get there. There will be recognition that NAFTA has worked for everybody. I mean when you think of nine million jobs in the United States that are dependent on trade with Canada, 28 states for whom Ontario is the number one and number two market, you can't imagine economies that would be more integrated than that. So I hope we get there.

GIOVANNETTI: So I was at the Eaton Centre this weekend because I'm a last minute shopper, apparently like a lot of Ontarians.

PREMIER WYNNE: That doesn't even sound last minute to me, really.

GIOVANNETTI: But the segue there is you know there's not a lot of time, legislative time, left before the next election, and I was wondering in terms of last minute achievements is there something that you're looking to achieve or something that you think you could get through before we all break for the last time? Before 2018?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I think we have – you know we have some, whether it's legislative or not but certainly in terms of policy initiatives we have a lot of work underway right now. There's work on building child care spaces. There's always transportation, there's infrastructure work that's being done. We're going into the next phase of the high speed rail, for example. We have social assistance review that's been done and there are recommendations on that. So there are a lot of areas where there's more work to be done. And all of that work we do going forward will be consistent with the foundation that we've built. January 1st will be a big day, you know with the pharmacare, the OHIP+ plan coming into play, and minimum wage going to \$14 an hour. So there will be big changes for people come January 1st.

GIOVANNETTI: So I'm just going to have a quick tangent here. So these come from my colleague from (inaudible). Sorry it came this weekend so I'll be reading it from my phone (inaudible). But the Globe and – it's okay, I'm not going to ask if you're working for China this time. The Globe and Mail revealed a year-long investigation on Saturday that repeat offenders – this was a front page story – are systematically taking advantage of the OSC and other securities regulators in Canada because the OSC and others lack proper tools to crack it down. One in nine white collar criminals reoffend after being sanctioned, showing that deterrence is a big problem. The article is the first (inaudible) that has been able to see such data. Are you concerned about this and do you want to do anything about it?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well if you're asking if I'm concerned when people break the law or bend the rules and get away with it or reoffend? Yes, yes I am. But I think those infractions are something that have to be dealt with by multiple levels of government and so we will certainly work with our federal partners.

GIOVANNETTI: So in a forthcoming investigation to be published in a few days, which we wanted to show you first, the Globe will reveal there are a total of \$1.1 billion in unpaid security fines across the country, money that should go back to victims and taxpayers. Of that, about 40 per cent or \$400 million of those uncollected fines are attributed to the OSC. So given that the province oversees the OSC, do you find that acceptable that they aren't going after all these fines and do you want to do something about it?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I have to know more about that. I have to know more about what they have or haven't done but again do I think that people should be held to account? Yes. And so again when I have more information about that, I'll work with my Finance Minister to determine what we can do.

GIOVANNETTI: Okay, it'll be out in a few days.

PREMIER WYNNE: Okay.

GIOVANNETTI: So a few weeks ago B.C.'s Finance Minister responded to the problem of unpaid fines with the BCSC by saying that it was unacceptable and she would order the securities regulator to clamp down and find new ways to boost fine collection and that her government would work with BCSC to find problems. Is that the kind of thing that you'd pledge to do here?

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, so again when we have more information about exactly what the situation is, certainly our Finance Minister will look at that and you know if there are models in other provinces where there are different things being done than here then we should know about those and figure out if those are things that we could adopt.

GIOVANNETTI: (Inaudible) comes out. Do you think we should halt – so there's this ongoing modernization process with the OLG. Do you think we should halt this process while regulators both in Ontario and British Columbia have probes into one of the main companies that has both won and is currently bidding on some of Ontario's most prized gambling (inaudible)?

PREMIER WYNNE: So again – it's Great Canadian you're talking about right?

GIOVANNETTI: Yes.

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, they're actually not charged with anything as I understand it and you know I would just go back to what – everybody needs to follow the rules, whether you're an individual or whether you're a gambling conglomerate. So we will work to make sure that all the rules are followed.

GIOVANNETTI: So both the Mayors of Niagara Falls and Ajax though have told us that they'd like the process to be paused and that they'd like to take a little more time just to make sure that we're making any decisions that as a province we might regret decades to come, so.

PREMIER WYNNE: But I think that's a different thing than particular companies that may or may not be involved in funding. I think there are different political reasons and community reasons that those mayors are stepping forward and I really need to let the OLG and the Ministry of Finance work with those municipalities.

GIOVANNETTI: But clearly, Niagara Falls is not concerned. They're (inaudible) to gambling.

PREMIER WYNNE: No, no they're not – and we've crossed that line in Ontario. We have – gambling is legal. It's part of what we do as a society so that's not the issue. The issue is just make sure that everybody follows the rules, but again, there are different things at play in those communities in terms of existing facilities and so we need to let the process roll out.

GIOVANNETTI: Okay. I guess maybe a little wider on that bigger question of gambling, how do you feel about the way that, you know, come through to this kind of through the back door in terms of – I wasn't really expecting to have to write about gambling but now that I'm writing about this, as I've said, it's here. Gambling isn't – from what has been explained to me, it was brought in at one point for schools and hospitals and now we have this process with OLG. We are looking to become gambling leaders in North America. We've come thrown our hat into the gambling ring. Is that something that you're totally comfortable with?

PREMIER WYNNE: Are you asking me personally or as government? I mean, as leader of the government, I want to make sure that when gambling takes place that it's done legally, that it's done safely and that people who are at risk of gambling addiction that they get services that they need. I mean, it can destroy people but so can alcohol. There are many challenges that people face around gambling. That's why we have resources in place to help people with problem gambling. But other than that, I think that we just need to make sure that we have rules in place and that everyone abides by those.

GIOVANNETTI: And changing topics to something even more fun: housing. Are you concerned with housing affordability in the GTA?

PREMIER WYNNE: Absolutely. I mean, that's why we brought in our Fair Housing Plan. That's why we put those 16 measures in place and I think that, whether it's the non-resident speculation tax or whether it's the support for developers to build rental, I think that those are things that have helped. Rent controls on buildings built after 1991 will help people – who will not see those exorbitant rent increases. So I'm satisfied that, for the moment, the market has cooled somewhat but we're paying close attention to it. I said at the time that we would be monitoring the effects of the changes and we'll see where they go.

GIOVANNETTI: Okay, because, yeah, we were standing in that patio in Liberty Village just over six months ago when that plan came out. So now there are projections next year that show housing prices will either stay generally stable or will go up by 6 per cent during – whatever. But generally, it seems you've stopped the rapid increase but it's stopped around \$1 million, give or take. So –

PREMIER WYNNE: So we can't – well, let me step back. I said at the beginning of this when BC made their move, I said that I want to be very careful that we didn't interfere unduly in the market but at the same time, there was a frenzy about the market that kind of begged for an intervention and so we made that intervention and now I can't imagine a scenario where we would force prices down. I don't want to suppress people's savings. I mean, real estate is very important to people but at the same time, we need to build affordable going forward. We need to make sure that there's affordable housing that's available to

people whether it's high rise or it's single-family dwellings, there need to be choices for people, particularly those getting into the market.

GIOVANNETTI: So, I've had a few Christmas parties so far this year and one of the questions, when people forget what I do for a living is they ask me about the election next year.

PREMIER WYNNE: Me too.

GIOVANNETTI: I'm sure you might give them a different answer. But the question I get a lot, I mean I'm kind of phrasing it a little differently, but the question I get a lot is what differentiates you from Patrick Brown, from Andrea Horwath. It seems like a lot of people – we're talking about the three parties – people know who all three of you are, but it's not always a given. They have problems telling your policies apart. Do you think that in the next six or so months, do you have a plan to differentiate yourself, at least in the public's eye, in a significant way?

PREMIER WYNNE: Again, people will have to decide. What I'm going to do is I'm going to talk about what we've done and what our plan is going forward. We've built a foundation and everything that we do going forward is going to be consistent with what we have done. I came into office, I said that we were going to work on retirement security. We've done that. We've invested in infrastructure. I said I was going to do that. We've seen economic growth and I also said that fairness is very important in terms of what I believe government exists to do and so the things we have been doing recently have been about that. But I live my political life in the political activists centre, you know, I've said that all along. I think that there's a lot government can do but government can't do everything and so I think that's how we differentiate ourselves from the NDP who just think we can do everything and don't really have any idea where the resources are going to come from to do that. I think, right now, if we look at what the Tories are suggesting, they are saying they can cut \$12 billion out of education and healthcare and still do all the things that they've promised and it's just not practical. It doesn't work that way. I've seen that. I got into politics because there was a Conservative Premier in office who was gutting our healthcare and education systems and that's a clear differentiator between me and Patrick Brown so people will make their own decision but we will, for sure, be making those contrasts.

GIOVANNETTI: And I guess, finally, at this point before the election, you know, you've been here before in different roles. Does this feel different in any way?

PREMIER WYNNE: The difference, today, for me is that I have now, since 2013, been the Premier in this province and I am incredibly proud of the work that we have done and the changes that we have seen here and I'm quite prepared, not just to defend those, but to defend them and point to the impacts that they've had and how much more we have to do. And so I feel more confident in our ability to put in place for supports for people, to actually change the province in a way that will make it more fair and provide more opportunity for people.

GIOVANNETTI: Fair to say that you're fighting for your record for the first time and you're not defending someone else's?

PREMIER WYNNE: That's fair, yeah. I think that's fair. These are the things that I said I was going to do in 2013 and I've delivered on them and there is still a lot that is needed in this province.

GIOVANNETTI: Thanks so much.

PREMIER WYNNE: Thank you.

Premier Wynne's Year End Interview With CTV News

Date: December 18, 2017

Length: 13:22 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Paul Bliss, CTV News

PAUL BLISS, CTV: (inaudible) of Mike Harris. He's the reason you got into politics is what you've always told us.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: He is, it's true. Yes, I'm very aware of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves on the other side, but I have to say, since Dalton's picture has been put up –

BLISS: Okay.

PREMIER WYNNE: I do see Dalton McGuinty when I walk into my office every morning.

BLISS: So what's more inspirational, seeing your nemesis or seeing (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Well when I see my predecessor's picture I do remember what was going on in those years, and Dalton was my boss for a number of years. (Inaudible) it's nice to see him in the morning.

BLISS: Let's go for a walk. You got into politics by (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, so... can I just reframe that?

BLISS: You're the Premier, you can (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: I got into politics because what I saw happening to the public (inaudible) education

system , in particular, I found was going to (inaudible). I (inaudible) province and I believe that what the education system and the institutions that we have built in this province is about is about creating a society that gives everyone an opportunity (inaudible).

BLISS: Can I do little (inaudible)?

PREMIER WYNNE: So I was very worried. My kids were (inaudible) school at the time and I was really worried about what was happening to education, I was really worried about the attitude that the provincial (inaudible) municipal governments and not be respectful and so I felt that those were destructive trends and I wanted to (inaudible) correct them.

BLISS: Did you ever think that you would be premier back then?

PREMIER WYNNE: No. No, I did not. I mean, I was, at that time, I was thinking about running locally. I had run for office of the trustee in 1994 and then I thought that I might do that again. I did. In 2000, I ran to be a trustee and I became a trustee but no, it never crossed my mind that I would be Premier. But it did start to cross my mind that maybe I would get into provincial politics to be at the table where decisions were being made.

BLISS: Do you feel you are in a similar position now, where you are going to be fighting again against cuts that might come should the Conservatives win?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I'm very worried that if the platform that the Conservatives have put out ever were implemented we would see cuts to education to the way we did under Mike Harris, so yes, it is very concerning to me because I do not believe that serves the people of this province. I do not believe that cutting out education system, cutting out healthcare system, I do not believe that that is in the best interest of the families, the children, the individuals in Ontario and therefore it's not in the best interest in the economy of the province.

BLISS: You had a super busy year. You cut hydro rates 25 per cent, you introduced pharmacare, you're boosting minimum wage January 1st. What's your high for the year of 2017?

PREMIER WYNNE: So we balanced the budget and we were able to do some of these things. The high, the reward in terms of the changes we are making is that people will have an easier time, that people's lives will be better. So increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2019, on January 1st, people who were earning \$11.60 an hour are going to earning \$14 an hour. That's going to change their ability to look after themselves and their families so I think when I think about what the benefit will be, that's really the reward (inaudible) because it will change people's lives.

BLISS: What's the political low for you?

PREMIER WYNNE: You know...

BLISS: It's not a trick question.

PREMIER WYNNE: No, no, I know.

BLISS: Legitimately, what was your low point?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I think that one of the things that I am most worried about, Paul, is what's going on with our relationship with the United States. I think that there is a huge risk that our very integrated economies – NAFTA, yes, is a trade agreement, but it's symbolic of how closely connected we are to the United States. And so, to have a President who doesn't seem to understand or care about that, is very, very worrisome to me, and I would say that's an ongoing anxiety for me.

BLISS: Speaking of big changes, let's talk (inaudible). Speaking of big changes, Ontario is overseeing the legalization of marijuana (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Or (inaudible) cannabis.

BLISS: (Inaudible) You're in charge of (inaudible) of having to implement it and police it. (Inaudible) are you concerned about the impact on (inaudible) what are your worries on (inaudible)? You lived in (inaudible) for a year so I know you're (inaudible) and open minded.

PREMIER WYNNE: I was very, very young when I was in (inaudible). Our plan to (inaudible) responsibility in protecting kids and making sure that we have a responsible system that does undercut the black market but protects young people. That's, for me –

BLISS: So you have no worries about it?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, I have worries about it which is why we are putting in place the plan that we are.

BLISS: About the impact on young people.

PREMIER WYNNE: About the impact on young people, absolutely. And I think that, having the LCBO as a part of that (inaudible) that will be very helpful as we roll out the (inaudible).

BLISS: Okay. Come over here, I want to show you something. I want to ask you something (inaudible). Did you notice the tear in the painting up there? This beautiful piece of art. Lower left.

PREMIER WYNNE: I didn't. I didn't notice (inaudible) but I can see it now. I see it but I didn't realize what

had happened. It's unfortunate but it's being repaired.

BLISS: It's going to be a good story (inaudible) someone on scaffolding. (Inaudible) talk for a little bit more on another issue. The year ended with a college strike that lasted five weeks. 25,700 students did not drop out, essentially. You were Education Minister (inaudible). How do you feel about the fact that nearly 26,000 young people (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: I think it's very worrisome. I mean, I'm glad that 90 per cent of students are back in college and they're working to finish their semester but it's really – you're right – it's painful for me that kids would leave because they felt that they (inaudible). Having said that, I'm glad that we've been able to support those young people and give them a tuition rebate so that they don't have to financially suffer and my expectation is that the colleges will be reaching out to those young people to get them to come back in January. The learning from this is that we need to look at the way such (inaudible) affects kids. Right now, there isn't anything in the rules that allows a separate entity to say, 'you know what? The year is in jeopardy so the government needs to step in.' So we need to look at (inaudible) that's something that needs to change.

BLISS: You talked about free pharmacare. (Inaudible) mentioning (inaudible). The NDP are promising, for the election if they win, that they'll provide free pharmacare for everyone. Right now, yours is for people 24 and under. Are you going to make it (inaudible) that they're going to make in trying to score with voters. Are you going to consider free pharmacare for everyone at some point?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, let me just be clear. Their plan is for a smaller number of medications for the people. We're committing to a full coverage of 4,400 medications for young people from birth to their 25th birthday. And yes, there is more that needs to be done. Both Minister Hoskins and I have been very serious champions of a national pharmacare plan. It needs to be put in place. We need to have full coverage. There's a real gap in medicare –

BLISS: Would you have full coverage, though, without the federal government?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, we're going to work with the federal government but we have said, given that the federal government hasn't stepped up, we're moving forward with this first part of the plan. and yes, ultimately we do need to have coverage. Ultimately, i hope it's with the federal government but we know it needs to happen.

BLISS: You and I get along very well. I've known you for a long time but the polls still show your popularity is low and I know you're asked this question all the time. Dalton McGuinty and Tim Hudak, especially, your old rival used to say, election's not a popularity contest.

PREMIER WYNNE: I'd say that too.

BLISS: Are you going to (inaudible) that in the new year because at some point, you've got strong policies but how do you take away the fact that some people just don't like you?

PREMIER WYNNE: So I can't control that. I have to be myself. I have to let people get to know me and then they make their decision but what's really important to me, Paul, is that if there's something that they need, their child needs support in some way, if their aging parent needs support, that they get that support. That's what's really important. And whether they like me or not, it's kind of beside the point. It's not really about popularity for me. It is about making sure that we have the supports in place that people need and at the end of the day, if people have those supports then they will make their decision about who they're going to vote for.

BLISS: So you're really going to rely heavily on policies (inaudible). You've got a lot in play that will appeal to people – families.

PREMIER WYNNE: You know, that's the government (inaudible). Government isn't about a personality being the determining factor. It may be. People may decide they're not going to vote for us because they don't like me, but you know what? I hope that even if they do that, that they have felt the benefit of the things that we've done because that's the point of being in government, from my perspective.

BLISS: The Toronto Star keeps saying you removed your glasses. (Inaudible) the party wants to give you a warmer image. Are those guys right at the Star? I like them a lot. I (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: My eyes are changing and I've always taken my glasses off and on and right now the prescription's not working and it really it about not having time to go get them changed.

BLISS: (Inaudible). We're going to lock that down (inaudible) and I have a couple of questions to ask you. Premier, I want to ask you about Jane, your spouse. I see on Twitter sometimes, that she jumps to your (inaudible). She'll tweet something out – it's always really supportive – do you vet her tweets? Is this something –

PREMIER WYNNE: No, I don't, and actually as you say that (inaudible).

BLISS: (Inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: No, I don't. I don't.

BLISS: Do you have conversations at all about – because I know she's a tremendous supporter of yours.

PREMIER WYNNE: She is. You know, I think that political life is hard on families and families have a piece of the picture and they are – their primary (inaudible) is to – the person they love is in the public eye so we have a lot of conversations about what is being said in the public realm, for sure, and we go over the newspaper in the morning. She's one of those political spouses who is very involved and very engaged in politics and so it's a constant topic of conversation.

BLISS: Are you going to have time with your family with Jane over the holidays? We have the elections

literally five months away. What does the Premier do over the Christmas break five months before an election?

PREMIER WYNNE: I'm going to be spending time with my family. They don't get very much of me and I'm really looking forward to (inaudible) grandkids. (Inaudible) snow a couple of days. Maybe see the four-year-old. We think we might be able to get out ski on his own this year, and they all skate. They've all been taking skating lessons so yeah, it's going to be nice to have a few days (inaudible).

BLISS: I have to tell you a quick story that I think you'll like. I was stopped on the street by a man the other day and he said, 'have you done your end of the year review with the Premier yet?' and I said, 'no.' I didn't even know this man. He goes, 'is she going to give you gingerbread cookies this year?' I said, 'I don't know. I'll have to ask.'

PREMIER WYNNE: I have them for you upstairs in the office. (Inaudible) some shortbread that Jane made too. Ginger cookies and shortbread.

BLISS: My year is complete. Premier, thank you very much. It's always a pleasure and Merry Christmas to your family.

PREMIER WYNNE: Thank you.

Premier Wynne's Year-End Interview With CBC News

Date: December 18, 2017

Length: 17:18 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Mike Crawley, CBC News

MIKE CRAWLEY, CBC NEWS: Why isn't it (inaudible)?

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: There's always (inaudible), and we are changing many things. I've been the Premier since 2013 and we have made a lot of changes in Ontario. We are building infrastructure across the province. We have brokered enhanced retirement security. January 1st is going to be a big day for change in Ontario. So you know, families will be able to go to the pharmacy and get prescription medication for their children for free and minimum wage is going to go from \$11.50 an hour to \$14 an hour. So I believe in good change and we have brought it and we will continue to bring good change to Ontario.

CRAWLEY: So do you understand why some people might though be a bit cynical about the fact that it

has taken this long for such changes to come?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I would say that those changes that I identified have taken time. I mean they have been initiated years ago. And I mean I can go back to when I was Minister of Education and we introduced full-day kindergarten in Ontario. So yes that's a change that has taken a number of years but it's now in place. So these are not all things that we're doing today, these are changes that have taken place over time and there's more change coming.

CRAWLEY: So when you look ahead to the election I assume that you truly believe that you can win. What makes you think that you can win this time?

PREMIER WYNNE: I truly believe that it's important that I run, it's important that our voices be there, Mike. You know the electorate will decide, the people of Ontario will decide, and that's the way it is in every election I've gone into, the ones that I've won, the ones that I've lost. And I have always gone in with a list of what I had to offer and the things that I (inaudible) were relevant and could be helpful to my constituents. And so – and my constituents now are people of Ontario and I believe firmly that the path that we're on, the changes that's we've made, the changes that we've introduced are in the best interests of the people of the province, and that's why I'm running again and that's why our plan is what it is. It's about fairness, it's about opportunity, it's about making sure that there is a more level playing field for people because the economy is doing well but even though the economy is doing well and we're outstripping growth across the country, we're leading growth across the country, our unemployment rate is the lowest in 17 years, even with those factors there are still people who aren't feeling the benefit of that growth and those numbers.

CRAWLEY: So we've seen a lot from you about the fairness agenda, making things more fair around pharmacare, around auto insurance, hydro, all these things. One of the things that I see you mention in your communication is making daycare more affordable. We've seen you making daycare more accessible, 100,000 spaces you're going to create, what are we going to see from you in the new year around making daycare more affordable?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well there's subsidy as part of that. So right now people with kids in that 0-4, so before they go to full-day kindergarten, are having a really hard time finding spaces and finding spaces that they can afford. So we're not just building spaces, we're also attaching subsidy to those spaces so that families that really can't afford to pay the full freight of child care will have that support.

CRAWLEY: But you're waiting on a report about fundamentally making child care more affordable to the broadest possible population? So are you going to act on that report before the election?

PREMIER WYNNE: I mean there may be other changes that we can implement before the election but we're not waiting for that. We are starting the building and we know that as (inaudible) then we will attach subsidy proportionally to those spaces. Because I know there are pressure problems where there are waiting lists, where people are not able to find what they need. And what I see, Mike, as being the most fair is that people have choice, that they have choice, whether they want to put their child in a well-run regulated, licensed child care spot or whether they choose to stay home and that has to be people's choice and that's why getting these child care spaces built and getting the subsidies in place is so important.

CRAWLEY: In your first new conference you had after you came back from your trip overseas, you went

quite hard at the PCs around their tax credit idea having around child care, basically saying handing money to people is not a –

PREMIER WYNNE: It doesn't build spaces you know?

CRAWLEY: Right.

PREMIER WYNNE: It doesn't build capacity into the system and that's what needed. People need to know that in their community there is the capacity to provide space for them, for their children and for their neighbours too.

CRAWLEY: Okay but are we going to something more than just a few more subsidies? Are you going to – because people in daycare are saying they need – there needs to be a system, a proper daycare system.

PREMIER WYNNE: I understand that. And there are many people in the child care advocacy area who we're working with. I mean they were standing with us as we made the announcement the other day about the spaces that were being built. You know they'd like to see a national child care plan. They'd like to see a system right across the country. I don't have control over that. I can only do what I can do in Ontario and so we're working with those advocates and we're working with community and parents to do everything we can to make sure that the spaces are built and that they are affordable.

CRAWLEY: You're going to bring in a budget sometime in the next few months. Is your intention that the budget will be passed before the legislature adjourns or dissolves before the election?

PREMIER WYNNE: I think the – I mean the certainty that we will bring in a budget – there are all sorts of factors that will come into play in terms of what's in the budget, the reception in the legislature. You know I can't tell you exactly what will happen there, but we will bring in a budget. The Auditor General will be bringing in an opinion on our books before we go into an election. That accountability is (inaudible) we brought into place, our government did. And so in terms of the timing of the passage of the budget, I'll have to leave that to the new year.

CRAWLEY: Will you allow the legislature to continue to sit right up to the (inaudible) period or will you ask for it to be dissolved earlier?

PREMIER WYNNE: We don't have any intention of changing the legislative calendar.

CRAWLEY: Okay, on municipal councils who say they don't want marijuana shops in their municipalities, why aren't you willing to say okay, that's the will of the council, we will not put a marijuana shop there?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I've said we'll work with municipalities. There are only 40 that are going to be rolled out in the beginning and then it will go up to 150, but we said we'll work with municipalities. I just have to always remind – and I have done that with Mayor Barrow from Richmond Hill. We had a

conversation, you know. I have to remind them that if people want to get marijuana under the new scheme, even if there's not a shop in their town, there's going to be an online service that people can access. So the accessibility is there, whether there's a store in town or not. There are 444 municipalities in Ontario, there are only going to be a certain number that have these stores to start out with and other people will have to choose to get it elsewhere. So I think we will work with municipalities to determine where those first stores will be. And I appreciate the input.

CRAWLEY: (Inaudible) thought you would be the Premier that would oversee beer and wine going into the grocery stores and marijuana shops being sold –

PREMIER WYNNE: Never in a million years. I mean they're interesting issues – the federal government has brought in the legalization of marijuana, and I have to say that the genesis of the beer and wine in the liquor stores for me was really these great craft beer businesses that were not able to break into the market, and that really didn't seem fair to me and so that was what led to the discussion around changing the rules around beer and wine.

CRAWLEY: So the PCs have pulled out their platform. Does it give you any kind of an advantage the fact that you've – you kind of know what you're dealing with in the sense of what they're promising and you're able to in some ways lay your cards on the table last?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well you know except the Conservatives and the NDP have (inaudible) about for a long time. I mean they watched me implement our plan, they watched me make decisions, and so the opposition and the people of Ontario know what I believe in, they know what I stand for. And so everything we do going forward is going to be consistent with what we had already done, so I don't think that it is a particular advantage. I mean nobody knew what the Conservatives thought about anything so you know it's interesting to see what they think they will running on. But that really isn't going to have an impact on what we do because what we do is going to be consistent with our belief system and what we've already worked on and what we're implementing.

CRAWLEY: So I've seen how you counter the PC platform they're trying to create. What is your tactic with dealing with the NDP? Are we going to see maybe getting a little bit of that telling voters that a vote for the NDP is practically a vote for the Conservatives like you did in 2013?

PREMIER WYNNE: You know I don't know. I don't know exactly what it is Andrea Horwath is going to do. I don't know what the NDP are going to do. What I do know is that we're going to continue to build on a plan for fairness and opportunity I believe government exists to do. And we – you know I operate out of that activist centre. You know I implemented a lot of strategies in this province to make our society fairer, to provide more opportunity, and that's what we'll continue to do.

CRAWLEY: There's been very clearly a tactic on your part to capture the progressive vote, and that weakens the NDP, and this idea that there's you know –

PREMIER WYNNE: I think that's who I am though, Mike. I mean that's who I am, it's what I believe in. You know when I say that government exists to make our economy, our society, fairer, I really believe that, because I think otherwise people could do it by themselves you know? But government needs to be part of making society fairer, but it can't do everything and I think there's the difference. I mean Patrick Brown is saying he's going to cut \$12 billion out of education and health care. I don't believe we can do that. Andrea Horwath is you know – all the proposals that she's brought forward are either unaffordable or impractical,

some of the things that she has said. And I don't know what she's going to bring forward as we go into the election, but that's certainly been her past record. What we've tried to do is bring in supports and changes that are doable and that help people in their lives, and that's what we'll continue to do.

CRAWLEY: Is this a win or go home election for you? In other words, if you don't win, will you step down?

PREMIER WYNNE: You know what I'm just working very hard between now and election, to be ready for the election campaign and I'm thinking about implementing our plan. As I said, this is going to be a very busy year starting right on January 1st with the changes that we're bringing and pharmacare and minimum wage, so I'm pretty focused right now.

CRAWLEY: How confident are you in your campaign team? Especially now that you've got Pat Sorbara back?

PREMIER WYNNE: I have a great team. I have great people around me and you know it is the older timers who've been around for a long time, as you say, but it's also great new young people who maybe have been through a campaign, some of them have not been through a campaign but they've been working in political offices, they've been volunteers in their communities, and we have a lot of very, very strong people all across the province.

CRAWLEY: Do you think your campaign is going to be different this time around influences of social media? You think you're going to see a lot more stuff happening on Facebook than previous campaigns?

PREMIER WYNNE: You know it's hard to say. I mean the influence of social media just keeps increasing, so I would say yeah in the political realm it will continue to be a force. I mean if we look at what's happening in the United States, it's pretty dramatic, the impact social media has had. But what I always say to candidates and volunteers is social media is very important, I don't take away from that, but nothing takes the place of human beings talking to one another, actually getting to know one another. And so I'm a big advocate of knocking on doors, going to community meetings, going to where people are to answer their questions and let them know what we're about. Nothing takes the place of that.

CRAWLEY: What do you expect the tone in this campaign is going to be?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well it – I hope it will be a civilized – a civil debate you know? I think that's what people want to hear from us. They want to hear us debate issues. They want us not to be making personal attacks. They want us to be telling the truth, and you know being consistent in our presentations. And so that's what I will endeavour to do.

CRAWLEY: When you did (inaudible) crunching down the numbers a bunch of times, do you think there's going to be room for something in the way of an income tax cut, perhaps a targeted income tax cut towards lower income people, lower class people?

PREMIER WYNNE: I'm not going to pre-empt the Finance Minister you know? I have been very focused on – and we have been focused on – investing (inaudible). We have balanced the budget and we're now in

a position to be able to do things like the OHIP+ for families on January 1st. So I'm not going to pre-empt where we may be –

CRAWLEY: Right, but in trying to pursue your fairness agenda, are we – have we seen everything or is there more to come to make life a bit more –

PREMIER WYNNE: There is more to be done, Mike. I mean we are not done as a society. We are not as a party. There is more that has to be done. Exactly what that's going to look like, I can't tell you right this minute but there's more that we have to do because people are still feeling the pinch of a really uncertain economy and so we need to figure out, you know, what is it that needs to come in.

CRAWLEY: (Inaudible) are we going to see some extent of what that is in the next few months before the election?

PREMIER WYNNE: I have to say stay tuned. (Inaudible) not to but I have to say stay tuned.

CRAWLEY: One of your favourite phrases isn't it?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well yeah, just on that one because you know we've been pretty clear. So for example, (inaudible) we've said really clearly there's a gap in medicare and that pharmacare is a gap. And so we, in the absence of a national pharmacare plan, we're moving forward with OHIP+ for children and young people. But is there more to be done there? Yes. And I'm going to continue to push it at the national level for a national pharmacare plan. If that doesn't happen, we have to have a serious conversation about how we move forward. But both Minister Hoskins and I are adamant that we need to go forward in that and help people to be at the top of their (inaudible).

CRAWLEY: Thanks for talking to me.

PREMIER WYNNE: Thanks.

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Premier Wynne's Year End Interview With CHCH News

Date: December 18, 2017

Length: 14:41 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Nicole Martin, CHCH News

NICOLE MARTIN, CHCH NEWS: [Joined in progress]... popularity in Hamilton specifically. So predominantly NDP (inaudible) in Hamilton with Conservative ridings on the outside, especially Niagara, how do you plan on winning over Hamiltonians?

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Well my strategy for Hamilton is my strategy for the province which is to make sure that we understand what's happening in communities and work to put supports in place that will help people. Hamilton's booming right now. Hamilton is doing very, very well and that goes for the rest of the province. The economy is thriving but not everyone is sharing in it. So even Hamilton, that's doing very well, there are people who are not doing as well. And so, raising the minimum wage, increasing the number of child care spaces, free tuition, all of those are strategies to help support people who are not feeling the benefit of the thriving economy. So we will continue to work in that vein to put supports in place for people.

MARTIN: In hydro, in terms of your popularity, that's really dragged you down in terms of a lot of people's perspectives especially in Hamilton too. How do you assure people that our hydro rates are not going to skyrocket in the years ahead?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well people are seeing that their electricity prices have gone down. Their hydro prices have gone down. Hydro costs have gone down and so that's the most concrete thing we can point to but we also have a long-term energy plan that shows that we have a plan going forward and that we will continue to work to reduce those costs as new technologies come on, as we make new decisions about how we're going to generate electricity in the province so that is how we will continue to work with people across the province. The most important thing though was that we needed to reduce costs by that average 25 per cent and some of the rural communities around Hamilton there are people who see a 40, 50 per cent reduction.

MARTIN: Do you find that a lot of people lost trust in you with the sale of Hydro One that was a so opposed by the public? And if so, how have you been trying to regain the public's trust.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, I think there have been different understandings about that and I understand why the NDP would want to put a particular lens on that. I said all along that we need to leverage existing assets that were owned by the people of Ontario to build new assets. That, broadening the ownership of Hydro One, was about building transportation like LRT, like roads, like bridges, in all parts of the province and so I think that there are many, many people who understand that because many of those same people who were concerned – and it was a hard decision – concerned about broadening the ownership of Hydro One also wanted to see transit and transportation infrastructure built.

MARTIN: Have you ever had a more difficult time giving away \$1 billion than what you've experienced with the LRT in Hamilton?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well it has been a discussion, I will say. We are very eager to start building. We want to see that LRT. It will make a huge difference in people's lives in Hamilton and at the same time we want to work with the council.

MARTIN: Talking about marijuana legalization next year, when you go to open up the first pot shop, will you be rolling a joint?

PREMIER WYNNE: No, I won't be. I don't use marijuana so I won't be. But we are implementing the federal decision in a responsible way to protect young people and to undercut the black market and I think that's a good thing. But we're going to do it very carefully and responsibly.

MARTIN: How much of the pot dollars will actually go out to the cities, the municipalities? We're hearing from last week that the province will be (inaudible) about 75 per cent of the (inaudible).

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, and I'm really pleased. I'm pleased that the federal government has backed away from that 50/50 split of taxation dollars because the province and municipalities actually are going to be bearing the brunt of the costs of implementation. So we're now – now that we know we're going to be getting that share, we'll work with municipalities to figure out what their costs are going to be. No one has really run what all their costs are going to be and we'll work with municipalities so that they are supported in the implementation. I have been one of the premiers in the country that has said all along this is about provinces and municipalities that have to implement. It's not just the provinces and it's certainly not just the federal government.

MARTIN: (Inaudible) is a councillor so they said that they feel a lot of this is pushed onto them now. The Chief of Police, even last week, was saying that they don't know how, in terms of the dollar amounts for training police officers. Has all this been figured out?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, those are the kinds of costs we now need to get a handle on because those training costs and enforcement costs are exactly the costs that we're talking about. But remember there will be other enforcement costs that will disappear because of the legalization so we need to figure out what those costs will be but I am very, very committed to partnering with municipalities because I recognize that they are on the front line and they are going to need the support of the province.

MARTIN: Ahead of the election next year, how do you plan on winning this and what is your campaign strategy?

PREMIER WYNNE: So, when you ask what's my strategy to win, my strategy to govern and to put in front of the people of Ontario a plan is really what I am working on. And then, if that plan is accepted then we will win and if not, then we won't. That has always been my strategy as an MPP in my own riding and then as the leader. So everything that we will be doing in our platform in the new year will be consistent with what we have been doing and I have said many times that government exists to make society fairer, to make our economy fairer, to do the things that people can't do by themselves. So building childcare spaces, making medication free for children from birth until their 25th birthday, free tuition, making sure that people have an affordable place to live; all those are things that people need support in, they can't do by themselves and so we will continue to work to put in place those supports for people.

MARTIN: What's something about yourself that you want to maybe get across to people that don't really know who you are?

PREMIER WYNNE: What an interesting question. I guess the thing that I hope people know is that I am in politics because I believe that government can be a force of good and it has to be a force of good and that, really, everyday every decision that I make with my colleagues is about how can we do the thing that is going to help the most people? Because otherwise, I don't know why we'd be in politics because just winning is not the point. Just winning is beside the point. It is about doing things that provide opportunity for people, that make it possible for young people to dream about what they want to do and then be able

to make those dreams a reality and especially for kids who may not have the supports around them, you know? Because there are kids that don't have the supports that they need and so it is particularly for those kids and families that I hope our policies help. So that's what I hope people know about me.

MARTIN: And you've been going and you've been doing these town halls. You're really putting yourself out there to be openly criticized by people. What are some of the main concerns you are hearing from Ontarians and how do you plan to tackle them?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well first of all, the town halls that I've been doing really are consistent with the way I've always done politics. In fact, when I was first in office, I was kind of kidded about – conversations about when I was first in this role as Premier, you know, some of the media and my opposition would poke fun at me because I was always talking about conversations with people and I believe that conversations are the way we get to know each other. So when I am in these town halls and I've done many in campuses, college and university campuses, and in community centres, I hear very local concerns. I hear about a particular business of concern or I hear about a particular school or I'll hear a general concern like I did the other day in Brampton. I heard from a little girl who asked about homelessness. So she asked me about a big societal issue that we are tackling with our anti-poverty strategy. So you hear the full range and that is very, very helpful as we make decisions about how to best support communities.

MARTIN: What do you think the local issues are to people in Hamilton and in Niagara?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, I think in Hamilton and Niagara, as I said, Hamilton is doing very well. There are pockets of the region that are not doing as well so I think jobs are a big concern. I think jobs in Niagara are a concern as manufacturing changes. I think policies around agriculture, support for agriculture both in the rural parts of Hamilton and also in Niagara, are a huge challenge. In Niagara, the OLG and gaming is an issue, but I think throughout the whole region, transportation is a big issue. The GO train to Niagara, which we are going to build, getting the LRT built, those are big, big issues for the region because people in Niagara and Hamilton know that their future economic health depends on having that infrastructure in place which is why we're working with the municipality to get it built.

MARTIN: And a big question that's remained quite vague from the province is all-day GO from Hamilton – do we know the timeline for this? If negotiations have been in place with CN?

PREMIER WYNNE: So that's the wildcard, is getting those agreements finalized with CN. So I can't give you a date but I can tell you we are committed to getting there, full-day two-way GO will be a game changer for the Hamilton Greater Toronto Area and so we will work with CN, work with our partners to make sure it happens.

MARTIN: How important is that in the coming years to do?

PREMIER WYNNE: It's a huge priority. Infrastructure and getting that connectivity regular and frequent is a huge priority for me. I know what a game changer it can be for commuters and for businesses. It will take congestion off the roads because if the train is more convenient than driving, more people will take the train and so it's a top priority for us.

MARTIN: I'm looking back at this past year as it's coming to an end now, what is your biggest

accomplishment? What are you most proud of that will have a lasting impact on the province?

PREMIER WYNNE: I think the thing that I am most proud of is being in a position, because we've balanced the budget, to be able to do the things that I just talked about. So the pharmacare for young people, free tuition; being in a position that actually make these changes that are really going to change the trajectory of people's lives. I think that's the thing that I am proudest of because that's what fairness is about, that's what government really exists to do.

MARTIN: Is the budget balanced, in fact?

PREMIER WYNNE: The budget is balanced. We will demonstrate that (inaudible) new year and we've been able to do these things because of that. And I guess the other thing, which doesn't have so much to do with the budget being balanced but is really about fairness, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. As of January 1st, people who are earning \$11.60 an hour will be earning \$14 an hour and as of January 1st, 2019 they will be earning \$15 an hour. And that is so important. I hear it from people all the time. I hear it from the explicitly. I also know because I hear them talking to each other about how important it is, and so I'm pretty proud of that as well.

UNIDENTIFIED: Premier, with where the polls were a year ago, where they are a day and where they could be next June after the election, if you pull out another victory, what would you say you relied on within yourself to be able to do that? To go from adversity to victory again, what would you peg to be responsible for that?

PREMIER WYNNE: A really deep belief in what I'm doing. A really deep belief in the ability of government to be able to help people and I wouldn't have gotten into politics if I didn't believe that government in Ontario had been a force of good in people's lives. I got in because I was concerned about what was happening with publicly funded education and I think that every time I'm asked about polls or I'm asked about popularity, I go to that place inside of me that says, you know what? This is about other people. This isn't about popularity. It's not about our government's popularity. It is about whether people believe in what we're doing and if you look at the polls about how people feel about our policies, people like what we're doing. Whether they like me or not, that's sort of beside the point but if they like what we're doing, that's all that matters.

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Premier Wynne's Year-End Interview With The Scott Thompson Show

Date: December 19, 2017

Station: Global News Radio 900 CHML (Hamilton)

Length: 15:02 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Scott Thompson, Host

SCOTT THOMPSON, HOST: And speaking of the government, thanks to those of you who sent in some

questions. The Premier of Ontario Kathleen Wynne is joining us on air right now. Good afternoon Kathleen Wynne. How are you today?

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Good afternoon Scott, how are you?

THOMPSON: I'm doing very well thank you.

PREMIER WYNNE: I'm fine, thank you.

THOMPSON: Thanks so much for taking the time to join us. I really do appreciate this. Obviously it's busy this time of year for everybody and we appreciate you taking the time to join us today.

PREMIER WYNNE: It's a pleasure. I liked what you said about the LRT – want to get it built.

THOMPSON: You know this is a little bit of a sore spot for us down at this end of the lake as I'm sure you know. What is your position? It looks now as if obviously we've agreed to let Metrolinx run it. Now they are saying that they want it to all be under the HSR Union, Local 107 I believe. What's your answer to that moving forward?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well – yeah you know what I'm not going to wade into the debate, Scott, but what I will say is you know we have committed a billion dollars to this. We've said we want to get it built, and I think you know that since I was Minister of Transportation, which was in 2010, this debate has been going on. So I just hope that once these discussions have been had City Council will turn to us and we can we can get the shovels in the ground.

THOMPSON: One more question on LRT. There's some people in town that I think believe that if we don't spend the billion dollars on LRT that you will give it to us for something else to use. Is there anything you can add to that discussion?

PREMIER WYNNE: This money is for higher order transit right? And there's been a long discussion about it. We want to get the LRT built and that's what the money for.

THOMPSON: All right thank you, I appreciate that clarification. Let's get rolling here. How do you convince Ontarians of change when it's your government that's been here for the last 15 years or so? It's not the opposition, it's you that's got us where we are. How do you take that moving forward?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well let me just say first of all that we are making right now a lot of change in Ontario. We're – you know we're putting in place supports and changes that that are making the province more fair. We just look at January 1st there's going to be a big change in this province. People who are earning \$11.60 an hour as minimum wage are going to be earning \$14 an hour and families that have a prescription from their medical practitioner, their nurse practitioner, their doctor, they go into a pharmacy to buy medication for their kids, they are going to be able to get that medication free with their health card.

So there's change happening, Scott. And you know it's happening because we know that even though the province is doing very well – we're leading economic growth in the country, we're outstripping economic growth in the United States and OECD countries – still there are people who are not benefiting from that economic growth. And so the changes we're bringing in are changes to level the playing field, to make Ontario fairer, to provide more opportunity for people. And you know free tuition for example is another example of that for kids who – students who come from families that are not as affluent, they can go to college or university without worrying about accruing that huge debt. So that's the change that we need right now and that's the change that we're implementing.

THOMPSON: Premier, many are asking why more fair now? Why not more fair years ago? Why not more fair for example before the whole electricity situation? Why now?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well what I would say to that Scott is that since we've been in office we've been working to level that playing field. You know I just referenced the fact I was Minister of Transportation in 2010 and we were already working to invest in infrastructure in Hamilton. Since I've been the Premier, when I came in to this office in 2013, one of the things I ran on in my leadership was fair retirement security and we worked to get the Canada Pension Plan enhanced. So what we're doing right now, those initiatives I talked about, whether it's the OHIP+, or whether it's free tuition for students, those initiatives build on the platform that we already had in place. And we're able to do those things now because we balanced the budget and we have a bit of capacity to take these next steps. So it's all part of a continuum but we are able to take these steps now because of the economic growth that we're seeing.

THOMPSON: How do you combat what some would say a kindlier, gentler PC Party that more resembles a Bill Davis government than a Mike Harris? How do you position that moving into the next election?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I would just ask people to look very, very closely at what they're proposing because I lived through and was you know I was a young mom and I was engaged in school board politics when Mike Harris was the premier. And I can tell you that with Patrick Brown promising to take \$12 billion out of health and education, to make those cuts, that very much smacks of what happened in the in the late 90s. And so it's very worrisome that that's part of the platform of someone who thinks that he's ready to be the premier. I believe that that would be very bad for families, for individuals, for children in this province, we've seen that happen before. And so the distinction between what he's proposing and what we're saying is that you know we recognize that there needs to be more fairness. We recognize that there need to be supports for people but we don't think that can come at the cost of taking \$12 billion out of services to people in the province.

THOMPSON: Many on the left when talking about the PCs will use the Mike Harris government as an example. I'm still angry the 407 was sold. So that's my – you know the bee in my bonnet there. That being said there's lots of people talking about a kinder approach as in the Bill Davis as opposed to the Mike Harris days, even incorporating a lot of your policy in their platform. Is it going to be different fighting a Bill Davis approach as opposed to a Mike Harris approach?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well again Scott I don't see it as that distinction because I don't recall Bill Davis taking \$12 billion or the equivalent in the 70s out of services in this province and that's exactly what the Tories are proposing. They're saying they can take \$12 billion out of services and charge people more for a carbon tax. You know we chose to put cap and trade in place, to join the carbon market with California and with Quebec because it's a cost effective, cheaper way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and I think we can all agree that needs to happen, but not by charging people more. And so what the Tories are proposing is to take \$12 billion out of services and to charge people more in order for greenhouse gas emissions to go down. That doesn't make any sense to me, and I think that people need to look very closely at what he's proposing.

THOMPSON: What about cap and trade? Many are confused, don't see this as simple or as transparent as a straight carbon tax, and especially when it comes to the Prime Minister. He's elected more for a carbon tax on everybody than an actual cap and trade? Why not be in sync with him?

PREMIER WYNNE: So here's the thing. If you have a carbon tax like the Tories are proposing you'd have to keep increasing that carbon tax in order to see the greenhouse gas emissions go down. In order to get rid of the pollution you have to keep increasing that tax. And so what we've said is you know what? Let's put a cap in place and let's make sure that industry works to make sure that they reduce their pollution and at the same time as money comes in – because what happens is that industry basically pays to buy themselves some time to reduce those emissions and that money when it comes into government it goes right back out again to help people in their homes, in their businesses, to reduce pollution. So we reinvest in retrofitting people's houses, you know windows, new heating systems, to help them to reduce pollution, to help businesses develop more technology so that they can reduce pollution and that's why the cap and trade system, the carbon market, is a better system for us here in Ontario than a carbon tax.

PREMIER WYNNE: Wouldn't it be better though for everybody to be on the same page?

THOMPSON: Well what the Prime Minister has said is that you know everybody needs to be meeting their targets and reducing pollution. And we were already down this road you know, Quebec had already joined the market with California, we had already indicated we were going to join the market with Quebec, and you know we made the point that if you look at B.C. they've got a carbon tax, and I know the Tories always point to B.C., but the problem is the greenhouse gas emissions are not going down. The pollution is not being reduced because the carbon tax hasn't been raised. So we looked at that and we thought you know what? This doesn't make sense. It's going to be cheaper for the people of Ontario if we put in place a joint carbon market than if we put in place a carbon tax.

THOMPSON: What do you say to those that say it's less transparent because we don't know where the money goes?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well what I say to them is they can go online, they can look at the Ontario site and they can see where the money goes. They can see where the programs are, they can see that we have put in place a tracker of where those dollars are being invested and the money that has come in through the carbon market and where it's going out to be invested in – as I said, in people's homes and in businesses to develop technology. So the money is going out into the community.

THOMPSON: Obviously California, Ontario and Quebec populous provinces. That being said, do we not need more involved in this for it to actually work? Are you concerned that other provinces don't seem to be jumping onboard?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well here's what we need, Scott, it's we need other countries to be involved and if you look at what's happening around the world countries like China are moving to adopt a cap and trade system. So really what we need is we need to look at this globally and what we're seeing is that cap and trade is the option that large developing and polluting countries are opting for, which says to me that we're on the right track. You know Ontario and Canada are – we are a small population, we have to do our part, but we also have to work with other nations to reduce pollution globally. And that's what the Paris conference is about, that's what the global discussions are about. And so I'm really encouraged that other nations are going for cap and trade.

THOMPSON: The last time we talked Premier we talked about the electricity system and of course what's been happening in Ontario and how other provinces are changing their system and at that point I believe you said that you know we had done it first, that the rest of the provinces are now playing catch up to us, and this in response to people being concerned of their raising hydro rates and such. Was there really an advantage to being first here for us? Wouldn't it have been better to just take our time and do it methodically and without –

PREMIER WYNNE: So you're talking about shutting down the coal plants?

THOMPSON: Well the whole Green Energy Act.

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, yeah, so – I mean these things are all related right? What we know is that the environment is struggling given the greenhouse gas emissions, given climate change, and so as I said earlier we have to – we all have to do our part. So shutting down the coal fired plants was a huge step in that direction. In fact, Scott, it was the biggest reduction in pollution in North America at the time and so we've taken a big step. But we were big polluters so we needed to do that. And then the development of renewables was part of that – the response to the shutting down of the coal fired plants. I'm quite comfortable for us to say to our kids and our grandkids you know, yes, we're developing technology in Ontario, whether it's clean air, whether it's clean water, we're developing technology that when I travel the world people are looking to us for that technology and that wouldn't have happened if we hadn't gotten into –

THOMPSON: Are they buying this stuff off us Premier? Are they buying this technology off us? Because we heard you know like when I was talking to Energy Minister Thibeault he would always point to the Siemens plant in Tillsonburg, which of course is now closed down. Where are the jobs that are being created?

PREMIER WYNNE: So I just came back from a trade mission to China. We signed over \$2 billion worth of agreements and as part of those – I don't have the exact breakdown – but as part of that we had clean tech companies with us, we had water tech companies with us, and those partnerships are creating jobs here in Ontario. There's 20 – I think there's 2,100 jobs as a result of those agreements that we would sign. Now some of them are research, some of them are university partnerships, but a lot of them are business partnerships, agriculture, food, clean water, clean air. So yes, those technologies that are being developed here are very important here but they're very important in the rest of the world as well.

THOMPSON: What about your future Premier Wynne? If re-elected will you fulfill your term? That's been some chatter in the media of late. Will you continue the full term if re-elected?

PREMIER WYNNE: As I've said when I'm asked that question I'm really focused on June and the election, and you know in terms of getting from here to there I've got a job to do. You know we're implementing a plan to make this province fair and full of opportunity as we can and then we're going to run an election and I look forward to serving the people of Ontario in whatever capacity they choose for me.

THOMPSON: Kathleen Wynne is there with us, Premier of Ontario. Kathleen Wynne, thank you so much for the time. Much appreciated.

PREMIER WYNNE: Thank you Scott. All the best. I hope everyone has a great holiday.

THOMPSON: And back to you too. Thank you so much.

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Premier Wynne's Year End Interview With The Andrew Lawton Show

Date: December 19, 2017

Station: Global CFPL (London)

Length: 15:06 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne;

Andrew Lawton, Radio Host

ANDREW LAWTON, RADIO HOST: So for a look at 2017 and what's coming up in the year ahead, very pleased to welcome to the program Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne. Premier, good to talk to you again, thanks for joining me today.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: It's a pleasure, thanks Andy. Thanks for having me.

LAWTON: So 2017, I mentioned a couple of things here. It has been a very busy year. What do you see, looking back, as being the real hallmarks for your government's perspective?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, we are we're leading economic growth in the country, Andrew. Ontario has done very well. When I look at the investments that we've made in transportation, whether it's roads or bridges or transit, look at the investments that we have made in young people, helping young people to go to college and university and knowing that businesses come here because of our educated workforce, and you see the job creation that has gone on. So we're leading the country on all those metrics and that, for me, is a huge accomplishment and it has meant that we are able to do things like the things you were talking about, like OHIP+ which means that kids from birth until their 25th birthday starting on January 1st will be able to get free medication. We can only do that because we've balanced the budget. The economy is growing and we are committed to making Ontario a fair province; as fair as it can be with opportunity for people across the province.

LAWTON: Do you think that economic success and growth that you're talking about has it all sectors equally because I still hear from people, certainly in southern and southwestern Ontario, that they aren't seeing that growth that people continuously hear you and your Cabinet members talking about.

PREMIER WYNNE: And that's exactly why making investments and supporting people is important because you're absolutely right. The economic benefit has not been even. People across the province

have not felt that evenly and so we need to make sure that every part of the province, including Southwestern Ontario, feels that benefit and that's why these initiatives are so important. That's why it's important that we raise the minimum wage. That's why it's important that we put in place supports for young people going to postsecondary education, families that can't afford medication. That's why those things are important.

LAWTON: Looking to 2018, do you still have some governing left in you or is it really a countdown to that election?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I'm running in the election.

LAWTON: Yes.

PREMIER WYNNE: We are getting ready for the election but in the interim, Andrew, I'm implementing our plan. We have a lot of work to do. There will be a lot of change coming on January 1st and I'm really looking forward to the new year because of the changes that we're bringing in but I'm also looking forward to the debate that will take place during the election. I think we have a really good foundation that we can build on as we go into the election and there's a lot more to do. We can't say, yet, that Ontario is the fairest place in the world to live. It's pretty good and we've done a lot of work as a society but there is absolutely more to be done.

LAWTON: Do you think that fairness, as a standalone concept, exists outside of equality or other things because you talked about fairness with hydro rates, with minimum wage increases and it's a word that we don't often hear about used sort of as justification for public policy and I'm wondering sort of where that approach comes from for you.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well let me just say two things to that: fairness exists with opportunity. So I think that fairness, it's important that we have a fair society and, for me, that goes hand in hand with opportunity for everyone. And where it comes from, Andrew, is what I believe government exists to do. I mean, I think that the playing field is not level for people for various reasons across society and government exists to do the things that we can't do by ourselves. So government exists to level that playing field to the greatest degree possible. Government can't do everything but government can put in place a great education system, can have a great healthcare system, can make sure that where the private sector lets people down, the public sector can step up so that's where raising the minimum wage comes in. We have the capacity, as government, to put in place a framework that provides more fairness so that, for me, where the notion of fairness comes from.

LAWTON: But it's the private sector – when you mentioned the minimum wage – that has to foot the bill so why does government know better?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, when we see, as I said, an economy that's booming and corporate profits that are the highest in years, I think we can make a strong argument. The other thing is, Andrew, we look across all sectors and we see many, many businesses that are already paying a living wage. This isn't about being punitive. This is about saying, 'look, if we pay people a living wage they're going to be spending money in your stores, in your businesses because they'll have the ability to do that.' On \$11.60 an hour, people cannot make ends meet and if you look at New York, look at California, look at Washington State, look at Alberta – we are competing with all those jurisdictions and they're moving to a \$15 minimum wage or have already done so. So that's who we're in competition with and I want to make

sure that people in Ontario are able to look after themselves and we're able to compete with all of those other places.

LAWTON: Your MPP in Barrie had spoken, a little over a week ago, at a news conference with the Labour Minister Kevin Flynn and she had said a quote I know you're familiar with by now. She said, "If you're going out of business on the backs of your employees because you can't afford to pay them this, then perhaps you should reassess your business plan and reassess whether you should be an employer at all." Do you honestly think that it is that cut and dried for employers though that they just shouldn't be in it if they're seeing razor thin margins and are concerned about the impact of the minimum wage hike?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, let me just say – I mean our member in Barrie, Anne Hogarth, is a very, very strong and supportive member of the people in her community. What she wants is what I want which is if people are able to look after themselves, look after their families – and we get it that there are businesses that need some support through a transition. You know, we want businesses to thrive. We're lowering the small business tax rate by a percentage point. We recognize that there are burdens that business carries but at the same time, Andrew, I think that if we live in a society as wealthy as Ontario is, is doing as well, we can afford to have people able to feed their families and feed themselves. We'll continue to support businesses across the province. The Southwest Ontario Development Fund has invested in businesses in southwestern Ontario for that very reason. We think that government has a role to play in partnering with business and supporting them but we also think government has a role to play in making sure that people can look after themselves and look after their families.

LAWTON: But if we're talking about – not the greedy employers that just don't want to pay anyone any more money and want to pocket it and not the people that are already doing it – those people that are in the middle here, the businesses that they would love to but they don't see a way to make it work. Do you think it is as simple as saying 'if they can't make it work they just don't belong in business' because that was certainly how a lot of people took Ms. Hogarth's comments?

PREMIER WYNNE: Again, I'm not going to comment on what Anne said. I know that Anne believes in small business. I know that she supports businesses and she supports her constituents in being able to look after themselves. And that's exactly the stance of our government. We want to support businesses. We want to find ways that they can thrive. We've got in place programs to help businesses hire young people. We've put subsidies in place so that they can they can do that. We're lowering the small business tax rate. We recognize that there are there are challenges for business. We're making direct investments in businesses to help them get started or build capital or buy equipment so we know that there's more that we can do but at the same time, the other side of the coin is let's make sure people can look after themselves in their in their communities.

LAWTON: What do you see as being the biggest challenges that individuals face moving forward in the economy because you acknowledged a few moments ago that there are some people that have been left behind? You've said that you're trying to target these people with your policies, whether it's pharmacare, with OHIP+, whether it's a lower income earner earning – workers with minimum wage but for individuals that are trying to make Ontario that land of opportunity that I think people have always seen it as, what do you see as the biggest barriers to that goal, to that dream?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I think that a lot of those concerns lead back to education or training, making sure that the ability to get a job isn't taken away from someone or isn't out of reach from someone because they haven't been able to access the right training. So whether you're talking about a newcomer, Andrew, or whether you're talking about someone, for example, who's been displaced because of advanced manufacturing. We are, as a society, we're putting a lot of hope and stock in technology and the ability of technology to create new jobs and that is happening. We're seeing great new jobs created because of the development of technology but the flip side of that is that there are people who are displaced because of

technology and automation. And so we need to make sure that there are ways for people who are displaced to get trained or people who might have been thinking that they were going into one field and then that job isn't there anymore, make sure that they are able to get retrained. One of your local members, Deb Matthews, has been working on this as a Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development. She's worked on improving our adult education system, making sure that there are programs available for people because I think the biggest concern confronting Ontario now and into the future is what are those jobs going to look like and how are we going to make sure that people are prepared for them and that highly skilled workforce that we have remains highly skilled and competitive.

LAWTON: You mentioned Deputy Premier Matthews, obviously a fixture in London politics, not seeking re-election. A number of very high profile members of your government taking a back seat now. You've got Liz Sandals, Brad Duguid, you've got Glen Murray who stepped aside. How do you say that there is this really united front moving forward when a lot of people are saying, 'you know what? I'm not going into that next election.'

PREMIER WYNNE: All those people that you talked about and Deb has been a great friend and such a strong, strong member for South-West Ontario and for the province. As Deputy Premier, she has traveled this province and she has pushed so hard. People do public service as they can and all of those folks have put in many, many years of public service and they have to make personal decisions based on their own family circumstance and I just thank them all because they've done terrific things for their own communities. And in each one of those cases it was a very hard decision for them to move on but I just want to thank them. And you've got a great young candidate running in Deb Matthews' riding. And I think that if you look across the province, you'll see great young people – new faces – coming into ridings across Ontario and that's as it should be, Andrew. We need people to step up and you need a mix of experience and use and that's exactly what we'll have going into the election.

LAWTON: Are you concerned that there is going to be an appetite for change? Your government's been in power for 14 years now. You, only for a smaller portion of that as Premier, but you are the face of government. Do you think that Ontarians are ready to turn the page and if so how are you going to combat that between now and June?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well the people of Ontario will make that decision. And, as you say, I've just been the Premier since 2013. We are constantly changing. We are constantly putting in place initiatives that are changing the face of this province. And I've talked about a few of them whether it's free tuition for young people who may not come from affluent families or whether it's free prescription medication for kids or the increase in minimum wage. Those are big changes and they are big changes that we are just implementing now. And I'm restless in that way. Andrew, I'm always looking for what is the next thing that we can do? What is the next thing that must happen if people are going to be able to live out their dreams in this province? And that may sound a bit lofty but it actually is why I'm in politics. It's why I got involved in the first place and it's why I'm continuing. The job's not done.

LAWTON: Premier Kathleen Wynne joining us on the line for a look at the year past and also the year ahead in Ontario politics. Just on a lighter note, Premier, what's at the top of your Christmas list this year?

PREMIER WYNNE: Actually, I was I was watching my – I went up to Orangeville to see my grandkids in their in their Christmas concert just this morning and my daughter had on this great Christmas sweater. I do not have a Christmas sweater, Andrew, and I said to my family, "That's what I need. I need a Christmas sweater." And so, I think my daughter and my grandkids are going to go out and find that. That's the top of my list.

LAWTON: The ugly Christmas sweater or like an actual nice Christmas sweater?

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, I'm not so keen on ugly, you know. The one that Jessie had with it was kind of nice looking but if I can go into ugly – what I hope for the people of the province is that they have some time with their friends and family. I also know that, Andrew, this time of year can be... it can be hard for people. It can be very hard for people and so, again, that informs the change that that we're bringing in. I want these times of year to be less hard for people. I want people to have the things that they need.

LAWTON: All right, and we come full circle there. Premier, thanks very much for the time and Merry Christmas to you and your family. It's been a delight.

PREMIER WYNNE: Thanks Andrew, all the best.

LAWTON: And to yourself as well.