

Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript for Wednesday, November 22, 2017

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Date: Wed, 22 Nov 2017 11:57:41 -0500
Attachments: 20171122 - Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript.doc (121.86 kB)

Transcript of Provincial Question Period
41st Parliament, 2nd Session
Wednesday, November 22, 2017

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MPP Brown to Minister Thibeault Re: Electricity Exports

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker my question is for the Minister of energy. I'm going to put forward a pretty simple question. It doesn't require spin. It doesn't require fluff. It doesn't require historical context. There will be no need to blame people from 20 years ago or say your dog ate your homework. What I want to know directly to the minister of energy, is exactly what was the net financial loss incurred by the Liberal government when exporting power over the last two years?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the exact number is \$236 million in benefits, Mr. Speaker. As estimated by the experts in the independent electricity system operator, Mr. Speaker. And these benefits translate into reduced costs for the ratepayers, Mr. Speaker, something that we as a government see as so important. That's why we brought forward the fair hydro plan and reduced rates by 25%, something that they voted against, Mr. Speaker. In 2013 the net benefits of our exports has been over \$1 billion in savings to Ontario ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. Now if we want to go back to when they had their history and their talks about what they did in the sector, they were actually spending \$7 million in electricity in one day. Just to keep the air conditioners going, Mr. Speaker. They were complaining about having to import. We now export and make money, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. The Minister of energy just said they make money on exports. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, facts still matter in Ontario. His response is actually incorrect. The Ontario society of professional engineers laid it all out and it was reported in the financial post. The report shows -- I will quote, Mr. Speaker, the chief exports surplus nuclear solar wind and hydro power could have cost Ontario as much as \$1.25 billion over 21 months. So the facts are in the financial post, \$1.25 billion squandered by this Liberal government, lost to Michigan, New York and all across the northern United States. So, Mr. Speaker, we don't need fake spin. Facts do matter. And will the Minister of energy stand in the House and say that the financial post is wrong, engineers are wrong? No one believes this government's fake spin. Come clean. Tell us the truth.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He is right. Facts do matter in Ontario and that's why we bring forward facts each and every day, while they're the party that talks about spin when they have no policy and no idea what to do in this sector, Mr. Speaker. The experts in this sector are the independent electricity system operators, the people that run our system day in and day out, Mr. Speaker. And I take their advice and I listen to what they have to say very carefully. And what the IESO says, Mr. Speaker, and maybe they should listen, is that we have made \$236 million -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We made \$236 million last year. We made \$238 million the year before and we made more than that the year before that, Mr. Speaker. You want to go back all the way into history? Let's go back to 2002 and 2003. When Ontario paid \$900 million to import electricity because they let the system go.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of energy. It's almost comedy hour here. The Minister of energy's saying they rebuilt energy? This government -- Mr. Speaker, the Minister of energy being proud of his record on hydro? They tripled rates since 2003 and they're proud of it? They've allowed a situation to occur where we're subsidizing businesses in Michigan, Pennsylvania, the northern United States. You're charging Ontario families to subsidize our competitors. And facts matter, Mr. Speaker. So I will repeat my question to the Minister of energy. Are you saying that the financial post and the Ontario society of professional engineers are wrong when they say you blew over \$1 billion -- Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the government's getting testy about their own record of blowing \$1 billion. But I just want the Minister of energy to come clean, to tell the House the truth. Is the Ontario society of professional engineers, is "The financial post" correct -- When they say this government blew \$1 billion?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when we look at the experts, the independent

electricity system operator, who runs our system. Who knows that day in and day out needs of our entire system, our entire province, Mr. Speaker. They have said since 2013 we have seen \$1 billion in savings. And of course I'm very proud of the record of this government and what we've done with the electricity sector, Mr. Speaker. We've rebuilt the system that they left in Tatters. \$70 billion to actually fix the system, Mr. Speaker. Let's start looking at it. Eliminating coal. Making sure that individuals like Matthew, a 10-year-old boy, who hasn't had to go to the hospital for a year-and-a-half because the air is clean? That's something I know everyone on this side of the House So I will continue to work for people like Matthew and for other children in this province who need clean air to breathe, unlike that party who vote against everything that we do to make this province better for people like Matthew, for seniors, for adults, for children. We make sure that we look after the people of our province, unlike that party, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Brown to Minister Lalonde Re: Fire-Fighter Safety and Support

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Speaker my question is for Minister of community safety and correctional services. Firefighters have indicated they want to see proactive health and safety for the various aspects of their trades. Their section 21 committee provides guidance but nonmandatory health and safety regulations for firefighters. Mr. Speaker, how will the Minister address reviewing the section 21 committee mandate and a commitment to the safety of our firefighters? Will she make the guidance notes and other recommendations mandatory under the health and safety act?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: First, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the member -- the leader of the opposition is asking the question because they give me an opportunity to thank all our firefighters across our province who are working so hard to keep our community safe, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, I was a guest Speaker had the honour of going and speak with them in the last couple days when they were here yesterday for their meeting. And one thing that we have committed is the partnership with our firefighters, is the collaborative effort to raise the issues that they have brought forward for the last ten years with us, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm very proud of the fire safety records. We've seen a decrease all around our province regarding fire in buildings --In housing based on some initiatives and again, Mr. Speaker, I want to work and we are continuing to work with our firefighters.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister. A simple yes or no. Our firefighters deserve that. Will the guidance notes and other recommendations be made mandatory under the health and safety act, yes or no? Can our firefighters count on you?

>> Minister Lalonde: So I would say definitely they can count on us and working in collaboration and partnership as we've done for numerous years, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I'm very happy when recently, when I was appointed as a Minister of community safety and correctional services, part of my mandate was to create a fire safety technical table where lots of issues have been raised. Collectively, to find a solution to improve the well-being of our firefighters, and again I want to say and commend our member the Minister of labour for introducing PTSD, and that was a huge component, Mr. Speaker, of our collaboration and our partnership with our firefighters.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister. Since I can't get an answer on the section 21 safety action for firefighters, let me ask a different question for firefighters. Two years ago I rose in this House and I spoke of the late Billy Wilson. Over a decading a he lost his life running into a fire to keep my community, the city of Barrie, safe. A year ago I asked that same question about the need to have survivor benefits in the province of Ontario for our first responders who sacrifice their own safety to keep our province safe. And so for the third time, I will raise it again in the House and ask the Minister if I can have this province's commitment that we will set up an Ontario survivors benefit for the families of first responders, recognizing that they put their own family at risk. They put their own safety at risk. I saw what happened to firefighter Wilkins. His family was left with nothing after he gave his life for our community. Can I count on T Minister to make sure we have a program like that in Ontario

>> Minister Lalonde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off I want to say my heart goes out to all the families that have lost loved ones in the line of duty. You know, they paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep our communities safe, and we are eternally grateful. I was also very pleased actually to hear that our federal partners, our Liberal federal partners, are establishing a public safety ward which includes \$80 million to support families of those who have fallen in the line of duty. And every member in this House and all levels of government can agree that these families deserve supports., Mr. Speaker, our currently -- a fund such as the constable Joe McDonald public safety officers scholarship fund, and his name after constable Joseph McDonald of the Sudbury police, Mr. Speaker, who actually was shot in the line of duty. In 1993. Our government commands dedication of our public safety officers that exhibit every day. Thank you.

MPP Sattler to Minister Matthews Re: College Strike

>> MPP Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the acting Premier. Today is the second day College students have been back in the classroom since the strike, and they've been offered nothing but more chaos and confusion as to whether they can withdraw from their semester, get their tuition refunded and not lose their spot in the program of their choice. One student says, to everyone thinking that dropping the semester means you can still take second semester, that's not the case. If you want a refund, you withdraw from your entire program. Why is the Premier firsting students who can't complete the condensed semester to leave College entirely and then reply, with no guarantee that they will get back into their program?

>> Minister Deb Matthews: Speaker, I have to say that the line of questioning that the member opposite is pursuing is disturbing given that that was the party that has said if they were in power, those students would still be suffering from the strike. They were very clear, Speaker, at every turn as we tried to get students back to work, they blocked our legislation, Speaker. We used every opportunity. Last Thursday we sought unanimous consent to introduce legislation. This was denied by the NDP. On Friday we introduced legislation and then requested unanimous consent to debate the legislation the same day. Denied. On Saturday we asked the House to immediately vote on second and third reading. The NDP Said no. On Sunday we -- Immediate third reading vote, but again the NDP Said no. So, Speaker, students are back in the classroom.

>> MPP Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. I would appreciate an answer to my question. After five weeks of uncertainty, students need clear information from this Premier and this Minister. They have only days to decide about the condensed program and they need to be able to assess their options. Another student says I only get a full refund if I withdraw the semester which I can't even do with the program I'm in or I lose my full year. Thanks for nothing, Ontario government. Speaker, why is this Premier forcing students to drop out completely if they want their tuition refunded?

>> Minister Matthews: Speaker, I can tell you that we are doing everything possible, and the Colleges are doing everything possible to support students as to complete their semesters, Speaker. And that is what we are strongly encouraging students to do. And that is why we have given a two-week -- the member opposite says days, two weeks to decide what is best for them. Every student has the right to choose whether they want to withdraw, with the full tuition refund, or if they want to continue and work towards a successful completion of their year. Speaker, two weeks. We're urging students to actually take advantage of that two weeks, to understand how they're going to be able to get back on track after the strike that would have gone on indefinitely had the NDP Had their way.

>> MPP Sattler: Speaker, the Minister notes that students are being forced to give up their spot in their program in order to qualify for the tuition refund, with no guarantee that they will be accepted back in the future. That's not acceptable. These students want to continue the education they've started, but they have lives outside of the classroom. Many have kids, jobs and other obligations that will make it difficult to successfully complete an accelerated condensed course. They do not want to drop out. They want to defer until January, to get a fresh start on a complete semester. Why is the Premier forcing these students to drop out?

>> Minister Matthews: Well, Speaker, I am encouraging every student who is considering conditions to actually speak with their College, because there is nothing in our directive that prevents students from beginning in January, Speaker, but not every College program is semestered. Many have a full year, Speaker many and so students have to work with their College to find the best option for them. If they choose to withdraw, they will get a full refund of their tuition, Speaker, but I'm encouraging students to work to do the very best they can to complete the semester.

MPP Sattler to Minister Matthews Re: Student Compensation

>> MPP Peggy Sattler: Speaker, again to the acting Premier. Speaker, this Minister knows that it was inaction by her Liberal government that prolonged the strike for five weeks. The Premier's refusal to step in and facilitate a deal meant that some students had to give up their apartments. They've been forced to juggle work schedules. They've had to rearrange travel plans, maybe plans to go home for the holidays. A hardship fund tapped at \$500 just doesn't cut it. One student said that doesn't even cover my rent for the month I missed, not to mention my groceries, the parking pass that I already paid for, gas money to get to campus because I work there. Phone, internet bill, etc. Why can't the Premier come up with a fund that will actually meet the financial hardships experienced by students?

>> Minister Deb Matthews: Taken unprecedented action to ensure that students do have access to a hardship fund. It is well within the discretion of the College to determine in exceptional cases that limit the \$500 be waived, Speaker. The member opposite keeps referring to an opportunity we had to interfere in Collective bargaining. I want to make it very clear, Speaker, if we had interfered, they would be the first to be attacking us for interference. We let Collective bargaining proceed. The member opposite has referred to legislation that allows us to proceed. I explained yesterday there is overriding legislation, Speaker, and I am asking the page to send over copies of both bills and asking that real lawyers read them and then they should advise the NDP Whether or not they're -- Speaker, students have been put through the wringer because of this government's decision to sit on the sidelines and \$500 doesn't even begin to cover the cost

>> MPP Sattler: Another student says \$500 is not enough for all the hardship students had to go through. \$500 doesn't cover rent, not to mention all the other expenses during the strike. Money is nice but it doesn't solve the real issue, which is a lack of respect for students. Speaker, when will this Premier show students the respect they deserve and direct the Colleges to remove the \$500 cap on the student --

>> Minister Matthews: I have to say it's kind of interesting to note that now there is real concern for students coming from that party, because I can tell you if you review Hansard, if you review the debates that we had about getting students back to the classroom, you will see there is no reference to students, except when -- quote the Minister of labour and myself on this issue, Speaker. So this newfound concern for students have refreshin I'm just not too sure -- so sure how sincere it is.

>> MPP Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, instead of supporting students to move beyond the last five weeks of the strike, the help offered by this Liberal government is creating more chaos and confusion. The \$500 cap on the compensation for students to recover from the strike simply isn't enough. And students need to know today if the Premier will direct Colleges to guarantee that anyone who wants to withdraw from their program and get their tuition refunded will not lose their place. When will the Premier stop paying lip service to students and come up with an appropriate solution to the mess that students have been forced to endure over the past five weeks?

>> Minister Matthews: Well, Speaker, the member opposite might be interested to know the hardship fund that we have put in place was informed by consultation with students, Speaker. We sat down with students. It is the first time in the history of postsecondary education strikes that this kind of fund has been created here, Speaker.

[Applause] I think the NDP is really

[Unclear] Because they know that they blocked the return to the classroom of College students across this province. Half a billion students -- or 500 -- half a million students, 500,000 students know that the NDP blocked the return to classrooms, Speaker, and they're trying to pretend they are concerned for students, but it's very clear that they do not.

MPP N. Miller (Thompson) to Minister McGarry Re: Forest Conservation

>> MPP Norm Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of natural resources and forestry. As you know, the Ontario forest industry association, and a huge group of northern mayors, first nation chiefs, union leaders and business leaders are here at Queen's Park today to set the record straight about the sustainability of forestry in Ontario. Section 55 of the endangered species act, which removes duplication and allows the forestry sector to operate under the crown forest sustainability act is set to expire next June. When the E.S.A. was introduced, then Minister David Ramsay promised the forestry sector would continue to operate under the town forest sustainability act, which since 1994 has insured the forestry sector takes care of not only the forest but the animals that live there. Minister, will you stand up for northern communities and first nations, keep your word and let our sustainable forestry sector operate under the crown corp?

>> Minister Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Speaker, and I'm pleased to answer this question. Unlike the P.C.S., our government fully supports our forestry sector and the critical role that it plays in the success of the provincial economy. I also welcome so many members from forestry, industry as well as the northern communities here with us today in the Hall of Fame. Our government continues to work closely with our federal counterparts on caribou conservation and provides information to the federal government to support our shared conservation goals for caribou. Over the last few years, our government has invested \$11 million to support Ontario's caribou conservation plan. The investments allowed ministry researchers to participate in over 50 different research projects, including monitoring of caribou -- able to make more informed decisions about resource activities or development in areas where caribou live. In addition, we're providing this information, important information to the federal government to support their national program to report on the species. In the supplementary I'll talk about the exemption.

>> MPP Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister actually spoke of David Canfield and he'll give her a lesson on caribou. Back to the Minister. There are also many first nation chiefs and representatives here today who support and are active in the forest industry and they too are concerned about the upcoming expiration of section 55 of the E.S.A. And the lack of action on the part of this government to work towards a permanent solution. Speaker, these indigenous leaders want what everybody wants. The opportunity to provide economic security and jobs for their communities. Yet, Speaker, the lack of action on the part of this government is the standing in the way of that. So, Speaker, I have to ask the Minister, when will this government finally get to work on establishing a permanent solution to section 55 of the endangered species act. That is the result of a real partnership with stakeholders and right holders such as industry experts like OFIA and first nation communities?

>> Minister McGarry: Thank you very much. Our government continues to engage with indigenous organizations, forestry industry, municipalities, environmental organizations and other stakeholders as we seek to provide a balanced and creative solution using their input. We had all of these sectors with us earlier this year in a meeting and we will continue to uphold Ontario's high standards of sustainable forest management and creating opportunities for northern communities. And in saying that, our government knows how important this sector is. The exemption for the forestry industry expires in June 2018. Our ministry's been exploring possible solutions that minimize impacts on forest operations, protect species at risk and their habitats and continue to provide economic opportunity. For communities in northern Ontario, including those that are -- our indigenous partners are involved with. They continue to be a valuable part of our forestry sector and I think the

work that you do each and every day --

MPP Tabuns to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Rate Reduction

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. My question to the Minister of energy. In March, the privatized Hydro One filed its distribution rate applications for 2018 to 2022. Instead of reducing its rates, as the government promised would happen, the privatized Hydro One is seeking a 20% increase. But there's more. On page 2038 of the application, we learned that Hydro One wants to install tree payment meters which require the customer to pay first before they get any electricity. Anywhere prepayment meters have been used, they have hurt struggling families. Will the government direct the Ontario energy board to prohibit Hydro One's use of prepayment meters?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the O.E.B. is the quasi-judicial organization and our regulatory in the province, their mandate is to have the ratepayers' best interests in mind and so we leave the decisions, when it comes to rate applications, to the O.E.B., Mr. Speaker. You know, when it comes to Hydro One and their rate application, it is also important, Mr. Speaker, to talk about that the O.E.B. is reviewing this, and again, Mr. Speaker, there will be no increase more than the cost of inflation for the next four years, Mr. Speaker. That was part of the fair hydro plan that that member and that party voted against, making sure that ratepayers actually had that 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. Talking about Hydro One customers, they can see anywhere between a 40 to a 50% reduction because of the action that this government took to make sure that we protect ratepayers, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the Minister. After Margaret Thatcher privatized the U.K.'s water system, utilities began installing these prepayment meters. They hurt struggling families and they created a public health crisis. The Premier has hurt families in Ontario by privatizing Hydro One. Hydro One's installation of prepayment hydro meters would bypass Ontario's rules for disconnections. Hydro One won't have to disconnect anyone. The power will be cut off automatically if the customer doesn't feed the meter. The U.K. finally banned prepayment meters. Will the government do the same thing and stop Hydro One from installing prepayment meters?

>> Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, this is an application that is before the O.E.B. And the O.E.B. As the quasi-judicial regulatory of our electricity system, of our energy system, Mr. Speaker, they're reviewing every application with the ratepayers' best interests in mind, Mr. Speaker. I know the member opposite mentioned the importance of protecting the interests of the people of Ontario and that's what this government has done by bringing forward the fair hydro plan and reducing rates by 25%. But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, with the broadening of ownership of Hydro One not only have we seen, Mr. Speaker, reductions of anywhere between 40 and 50% but we're actually seeing a \$13.5 billion investment in the GTA's regional express rail. It's going to quadruple the number of weekly trips to 6,000. 5.3 billion. In the Eglinton Crosstown L.R.T. \$1 billion in auto Ottawa L.R.T. Waterloo regional transit -- the list goes on.

MPP Potts to Minister Flynn Re: Bill 148

>> MPP Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of labour. Speaker, this morning we completed third reading debate on bill 148, the fair workplace and better jobs act. This concludes, Speaker, more than two and a half years of evaluating the nature of our workplaces, how they have changed and how our labour and employment laws must be amended to reflect those changes. And this was a direction given to the Minister by Premier Wynne in his mandate letter. Now, Speaker, this consultation both -- informed both the changing workplaces review and the resulting legislation bill 148. We heard from countless groups and organizations across the province, many of whom are here today with us at Queen's Park. And they include representatives from labour

unions, employers, workers' advocacy groups, employees, women's advocacy groups, doctors, economists. Many, many more. So, Speaker, will the Minister please let us know how their input and feedback has been reflected in the fair workplaces better jobs act?

>> Minister Kevin Flynn: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Beaches- East York for this very important question. Let me start by thanking all the advocates that have joined us today, Speaker. They have worked so hard across this province. All they've asked for, Speaker, is to see respect and to see dignity in Ontario workplaces, Speaker. They provided incredible insight to the special advisors right throughout changing workplaces review. We listened to their input, Speaker. The feedback informed on decisions right throughout the province. Speaker, things like raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Establishing paid sick days. Five days paid leave, Speaker, for victims of domestic and sexual violence. Speaker, we know the province's economy is doing very well. But not everybody is sharing in that prosperity, Speaker. We still have people. In this province working 35, 40 hours a week, sometimes two or three jobs, Speaker. They can't get by.

>> MPP Potts: Thank you, Speaker. I would like to take a moment to thank the Minister of labour for his diligent work in bringing forward this extremely important piece of legislation. Over of the past two years and especially through the summer, I spoke with so many of my constituents in the riding of Beaches- East York about the challenges they face at work and at home. Speaker, many have been left trying to support their families on a minimum wage that just doesn't go far enough. They need a living wage. They're trying to raise their children. They're saving for their children's education and wondering how are they going to pay all their bills let alone get ahead. Our province's economy is doing extremely well. We cannot forget everyone is not sharing in this prosperity. Minister, I am proud -- Speaker, I am proud we have committed to help families in Beaches- East York and across the province of Ontario through the measures that are included in bill 148. Frankly I am shocked. That anyone in this House could withhold support for this very important bill. Will the Minister please let us know what the supporting legislation means to Ontarians?

>> MPP Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the member from Beaches- East York. Again I do want to thank all members of the House for the advocacy, the support they've shown on this legislation, Speaker. I agree it's shocking to think that anybody in this House would deny support for this bill. It increases the minimum wage for 1.6 million Ontarians. It ensures equal pay for work of equal value. More predictability, Speaker. Modernizing our organization practices. This is what our government believes in, Speaker. What the opposition would like to go back to the Harris years, Speaker, to where the minimum wage was frozen at \$6.85. They'd like to roll back our commitment to \$15 an hour, Speaker. We're not backing down. We're not going to back down. We're committed to ensuring the best of all futures for our families, Speaker. We're standing up for the rights of all Ontario workers. We're committed to fighting for Ontario families and, Speaker, we stand opposed to those who would block these changes.

MPP Jones to Minister Naidoo-Harris Re: Before and After School Care

>> MPP Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister responsible for early years and child care. Parents across Ontario are constantly struggling to find affordable child care options, and yet a "Globe and mail" article today reports that the government is placing more restrictions on what qualifies as after-school care. Under the Minister's restrictions, businesses offering unique programming such as theatre and dance will only be able to offer programs three days a week. Children will go to school five days a week. Working families lose options. How does limiting after-school programming help hard working families already struggling to find after-school programs for their children?

>> Minister Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for this very important question, because I know the situation with sprout kids have parents concerned and I want them to know we are working hard to resolve this issue with little to no disruption to the kids that are out there needing before- and after-school care. But, Mr. Speaker,

I want to clarify something. When it comes to children in our province in care, safety is our number one priority. Absolutely. Safety is our number one priority and we brought in rules based on recommendations made by the Ombudsman in 2014. And those recommendations came about because of a death of a child in care. And so we took those recommendations and moved forward almost right away with a set rules that we were going to bring in place. And we gave municipalities and everyone else two years to transition and those rules came into effect three months ago.

>> MPP Jones: It is offensive that this Minister is comparing after-school programs that provide theatre, arts, math tutoring to unregulated care that happens. It's offensive to those businesses. While parents who are struggling to find child care they can afford, you are limiting their options. This government appears to be on a mission to reduce the choices and availability for after-school care in Ontario. To quote a mum, it feels really wrong to have the government come in and tell you what you're able to choose for your child for an after-school program. How many after-school programs will be shut down leaving families with fewer options for after-school care?

>> Minister Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I am once again really pleased to stand up and answer this question. Because frankly it really exposes how little the member opposite understands what's going on. There are a wide range of programs that are offered when it comes to child care. We have child care. We have before- and after-school programs and we have recreational programs. And so we are making sure that when it comes to our children being in a safe environment, that they are protected. Those children who are five years of age and under are -- have different sets of rules than those who are 6 to 12 years of age. I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we are now have introduced before- and after-school care to our schools where there is sufficient demand across the province. 60,000 more children in Ontario are now. Accessing spaces. That is We worked hard to deliver that.

MPP Fife to Minister Naidoo-Harris Re: Child Care

>> MPP Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the acting Premier. Speaker, the crisis in child care in this province continues today. In the east end of Toronto, parents of 97 children were given one-week's notice to find alternative before- and after-school care. Sprouts was found to be in contravention of the early years child care act. Midway through the school year east-end parents were left with no full-week options. The government created chaos for these families, days to respond to parents' concerns. The ministry last night made an exception. Toronto councillor Dana Davis said it best. This province has totally bungled the school age program rules and begs the question, Mr. Speaker, will this government be cracking down on every karate program and dance studio in the province of Ontario now?

>> Minister Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to rise and answer this question because it is so important. We are absolutely transforming the way we are delivering child care in this province. We have been doing it for more than a year. Those pieces we are moving forward with are under way. I have to say that the member opposite and the party opposite is a little late coming to the party. We have moved forward with a framework that is now in place and that is expanding the child care in this province by 100,000 additional spaces. In addition to that we have moved forward with \$1.6 billion in capital funding. That will now move into place in 2018 and will build spaces. Right now in this year, the 2017/18 year, we have moved forward with \$200 million, 24,000 spaces are being created in this year alone. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we are making fundamental changes to ensure that we are building a solid foundation when it comes to children and child care in this province. And when it comes to this -- Before and after care and sprouts kid, my officials are there right now working with them to ensure that they are compliant and those children have care. Thank.

>> MPP Fife: Again to the acting Premier. One parent with a daughter in the sprouts program said that the move to limit sprouts before- and after-school care was paid by and I quote a government that doesn't really understand or support a working family. Parents across the province who rely on recreational programs like sprouts, they do so because they are unable to find licensed, affordable child care for the children. Certainly they can't after 14 years of this Liberal government. With other

neighbourhood programs full for the remainder of the school year, east-end Toronto parents were left with no comprehensive options. Speaker, Ontario families deserve quality, affordable and accessible child care in this province. What is the government's plan for authorized recreational programs, or will the Ontario parents in this case be expected to lurch from crisis to crisis across this province?

>> Minister Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, once again I'm really pleased to answer this question, because it's so important. So, first of all, absolutely when the situation with sprouts Canadians came to light we were ears -- concerned about those parents and those kids and we were working hard to ensure that we resolve the issue. Frankly I was a bit surprised because these rules came into force September 1. And for the last two years various programs around the province have been working to transition. And my teams have been working with them to ensure that we do it and help them get on track. Right now we are working with these families, but I do want to point out something, Mr. Speaker. When you have children that are 5, 4 and 3 years old in care, and when you are lumping them in with 6 to 12-year-olds the rules are different. You cannot bypass those child care rules. They are there to make sure we are supporting those children. And they are strict because of safety

MPP Dong to Minister McMahon Re: Ontario Place Revitalization

>> MPP Han Dong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of tourism, culture and sport. The province has an ambition -- ambitious vision to transform Ontario place into a modern vibrant year-round waterfront destination that's built on a legacy of innovation, fun, live music and engage residents and visitors of all ages. This summer we reopened the trillium park and William G. Davis trail which adds 7.5 acres of green space to Toronto's waterfront. That's a real benefit to residents of Liberty Village and Fort York communities. We host four diverse festivals in the spring and summer to celebrate the province's 150th anniversary. Speaker, through you to the Minister, can she tell us more about what she announced earlier this month. Pertaining to the opening of iconic Cinesphere theatre.

>> Minister Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for his question. It's been an extremely exciting year for Ontario place. For over 40 years Ontario place has been a cultural centrepiece and a hub for all activities for all Ontarians to enjoy. I'm excited to have this opportunity to speak to the iconic Cinesphere and exciting park of our Ontario place revitalization. I had the pleasure of welcoming Ontarians back to the Cinesphere earlier this month. In doing so we were able to introduce a new generation to the world's first permanent IMAX theatre. We revamped the space to make it a year-round facility everyone can enjoy making upgrades to the entrance, acoustics, the lighting and new digital projector as well. That's what makes the Cinesphere truly unique because it is a Canadian innovation the IMAX 70-millimetre film experience is truly a visual experience that is unparalleled. Finally we're enhancing access to Cinesphere too. By partnering with charitable organizations so that the community can come free of children charge so that everyone can enjoy the unique experience that Ontario place brings, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Dong: Thank you, Minister, for the answer. It's wonderful to hear that all the great work that's being done to transform Ontario place to a live new recreational and cultural space for everyone to enjoy. After all the legacy of Ontario place was and continues to be one of the culture's engagement in discovery. The development that we see on our beautiful waterfront is exciting, and to hear that many Ontarians have already been down the site, whether it's to watch iconic Cinesphere or go for a bike ride along the park and trail makes us want to build on this great momentum even further. Speaker, to the Minister, can she explain to this House how is her ministry will continue to make the vision of realizing -- sorry, of a realized Ontario place -- revitalized Ontario place a reality.

>> Minister McMahon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member mentioned, the vision for a revitalized Ontario place is one of lively cultural engagement. We call it Ontario place for a reason, Speaker. It's a place for all Ontarians. And our next steps in the revitalization plan will continue to

build on that principle. I'm happy to say that we're now officially in the design phase to create a wonderful green space at the 20-acre celebration common at Ontario place. We heard what Ontarians wanted to see and we listened. The space will be transformed and be used for festivals, community events and recreation. The ambitious vision for a modern vi Brant year-round waterfront destination is well under way and we look forward to continuing to welcome all Ontarians to what is truly a wonderful jewel on the waterfront of Canada's largest city. Thank you, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Harris to Minister Del Duca Re: Electric Car Rebates

>> MPP Michael Harris: To the Minister of transportation. While we pay to send our green energy across the border, Ontario auto dealers are being forced to pay here at home for yet another Liberal green scheme. Of course long on promises and taxpayer funding but short on results. Boasting \$14,000 rebates per luxury electric car, and of course the Minister 's own electric car lot, the Liberal electric vehicle program has become a costly vanity project propped up by tax rebates. Point of sale has auto dealers paying out of pocket while they await promised government reimbursement that's being held back. Dealers in the G.T.A. Alone are owed well over \$2 million. Speaker, will the Minister explain why he is making auto dealers pay the price for his electric car subsidy?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I thank the member for his question. I couldn't help but notice from the tone of the question if not the exact language it seems implied that member and his leader certainly don't seem to support the idea we want to deploy more zero G.H.G. Ee milting vehicles on our roads. Our government does not stand more starkly in contrast to that backward-looking assertion on their part, Speaker. What we've seen here in Ontario since we've introduce even more generous electric vehicle incentives, Speaker, through our electric vehicle incentive program, which which as he appoint -- pointed out offers up to \$14,000 for those individuals who choose to buy or lease one of these and up to \$1,000 by way of rebate for those families --For those families that choose to install home-base chargingings infrastructure. What we've seen, Speaker, is is actually a dramatic increase in terms of the uptake amongst those families especially as more products come on line that are more affordable for those middle-class families across the province who want to do their part to fight climate change unlike that member and his leader, Mr. Speaker ,. Thanks very much.

>> MPP Harris: Talk about pro payment. We just don't think auto dealers should be on the hook to pay for Liberal subsidies. This program off course has been a wheel-spinning exercise since they rolled it out. Of course the Liberals promised 485 electric vehicle charging stations by last spring.. A third of them weren't ready for the summer driving season. They promised 20% of the Ontario service vehicles would be electric by 2020. In 2017 they are just at 4%. And they promised to pay drivers massive incentives to drive electric cars off the lot. Now they're failing to deliver those rebates to the auto dealer who is of course caught now in the middle. Minister, why are you leaving Ontario auto dealers to foot the bill for your failing program, and when will you actually pay them back? \$2 billion alone for auto owners.

>> Minister Del Duca: Speaker, I think it would be far more forthright of that member to stand up and just declare he and his leader don't support the purchase or lease of electric vehicles in the province, that they don't support supporting middle-class families in this province who want to do their part to fight climate change. I was saying, Speaker, they're making it abundantly clear using the code language embedded in that question again they don't support these initiatives which is a real shame, Speaker, because we know as we put more incentives into the marketplace, more and more middle-income families are actually making the choice to do their part to fight climate change by purchasing or leasing these vehicles, Speaker. I will say, along with the electric vehicle incentive program, fco program de playing a charging network across province, 500 charging stations across 250 unique locations right across the province. We're making it easier every single day to support those Ontario families had want to do their part to fi -- fight climate change.

MPP Taylor to Minister Del Duca Re: Hamilton GO Stations

>> MPP Monique Taylor: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Deputy Premier. For years hamiltonians have been promised frequent all-day two-way go rail service. And, Speaker, we're still waiting. And now it looks like we're going to wait even longer. Despite spending \$80 million on two new G.O. Stations in Hamilton, it seems the government plans to leave these stations empty most of the time. Hamiltonians are calling them ghost stations. Why hasn't this government made frequent go service from these new station as priority?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I appreciate the question. I always love having the opportunity to stand in my place and talk about the fact that our government is in fact building go regional express rail, Speaker. I will say perhaps that member would want to speak to her Colleague from Hamilton east-stoney creek. He's told me many times in the past he's slight -- delighted our government's decided to build an additional G.O. Station at confederation in stoney creek, Speaker. Of course thanks almost exclusively to the advocacy of my Colleague from St. Catharines --Speaker, as I was saying, thanks almost exclusively to the long-standing advocacy of my Colleague from St. Catharines, our government has decided to extend G.O. Train service. All the way to Niagara Falls. Will continue to be focused on Speaker, I would point out there is a section of the Lakeshore west corridor -- that member did not know this, that is currently owned by C.N..

>> MPP Taylor: Thank you, Speaker. The purpose of spending \$80 million on two new G.O. Stations in Hamilton is not to provide photo ops for Liberal politicians. The purpose is to provide frequent go service hamiltonians have been promised for years. Instead we get ghost stations. Exactly when can hamiltonians expect all-day two-way go service through these new stations?

>> Minister Del Duca: Speaker, VI no clue why the member from Hamilton Mountain wants to so vociferously attack the member from Hamilton east-stoney creek. That's a question they can sort out in their caucus office, Speaker. That member may not realize this is it is a portion of what's known as the Lakeshore west corridor currently owned by c.n.speaker and they carry an awful lot of freight on that section of the Lakeshore west corridor. Our government is working closely with both C.N. And C.P. To make sure wye can rationalize train service and ultimately deliver more frequent G.O. Train service to Niagara Falls, to bowmanville, to Barrie and ultimately to Stoney Creek all the way out to other places in Hamilton and beyond. Thanks very much, Speaker .

MPP Martins to Minister Ballard Re: Composting Food Waste

>> MPP Cristina Martins: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of the environment and climate change. Each year Ontarians generate about 3.7 million tonnes of waste from food and organic materials with more than 60% sent to landfill. In fact food and organic waste make up approximately one third of Ontario's total waste stream. Our government recognizes that this needs to change. Last week our government introduced our proposed food and organic waste framework which outlis our path forward tore reducing food waste and increasing the recovery of organic materials in Ontario. The framework is currently posted to the environmental registry for public consultation. Speaker, can the Minister please explain to the House how our proposed organic framework would help reduce organic waste while benefitting Ontario's economy?

>> MPP Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the hardworking memg from Davenport for that very important question. You know, as the member mentioned, Speaker, last week my ministry introduced our proposed food and organic waste framework, right? The proposed framework is the next step in moving Ontario toward a circular economy, an economy where food and organic waste is no longer seen as waste but as a resource, Mr. Speaker. We know that recovering organic resources not only is beneficial to the environment but it also builds our economy. Research from the U.K., Speaker, shows that there is \$14 of financial benefit for every \$1 invested in food waste

prevention. So our proposed organic framework has the potential to create new jobs in Ontario. Current efforts to divert food and organic waste create about 100 jobs in Ontario as we speak.

>> MPP Martins: Mr. Speaker, we know that managing waste and reusing our resources is a critical part of achieving our goals to protect our land and environment. Create a greener future for Ontarians and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When food and organic waste breaks down in landfill it produces greenhouse gases. In 2015 greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector accounted for about 5% of total greenhouse gas emissions in the province. That amounts to 8.6 mega tonnes of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Mr. Speaker, if global food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide after the United States and China. That's why Ontario is proposing to take strong action to prevent organic and food waste from ending up in landfills. Account Minister please describe to the House how recovering organic and food resources would benefit Ontario? Ontario?

>> Minister Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you again to the member from Davenport for this question. You know, Speaker, our food and organic framework is the next step toward moving toward a waste-free Ontario. If we double the province's current resource recovery rates of food and organic waste, we could reduce an additional 1.1 mega tonnes in greenhouse gas emissions. You know, Speaker, that's the equivalent of removing approximately 260,000 cars from Ontario's roads each year. Each year, Mr. Speaker. And it's bringing us closer to our climate change goals. Under our climate change action plan, Speaker, we're moving forward to reduce greenhouse gases and stimulate economic growth. Meanwhile, Speaker, members opposite have no real plan. To reduce organic waste and keep resources out of landfill in Ontario and they have no real plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, no real plan to fight climate change, Speaker.

MPP Nicholls to Minister Lalonde Re: Prison Conditions

>> MPP Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Minister of community safety and correctional services. According to the "Toronto star," inmates at the Elgin Middlesex detention centre are suing the government. Between the years of 2010 and 2013 there have been a pattern of systematic negligence. The lawsuit cites overcrowded, unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Sadly this is not an isolated problem. A recent report by the independent advisor on corrections reform describes shocking abuses and disorder in Ontario's detention centres. Detention centres are overcrowded and cell block violence is a huge problem everywhere. Minister, it doesn't appear as though you have the backs of our C.O.S. You aren't giving them the resources they need to carry out their duties safely. I've said before that minor tinkering isn't going to fix. The crisis in corrections. Minister, you're failing our correctional officers. So what specifically are you going to do to solve these problems?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you very much to the member for that question. As he knows, I cannot comment specifically on anything. But what I want to share with this House is our full commitment on moving forward in the transformation of our corrections system. Mr. Speaker, we have made investment in the past few years, and we are going forward in bringing in this House legislation based on recommendation from Mr. Howard safers from the Ombudsman, and we have engaged also with our stakeholders, our union representatives, our indigenous communities in bringing the most -- the biggest transformation in Ontario's history when it comes to our corrections system, Mr. Speaker. I was also very -- All throughout the summer to visit our institutions and meet with frontline workers and I want to say thank you.

>> MPP Nicholls: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the Minister. You haven't been listening to the correctional officers around the province. On the Liberals' watch, prisoners like Adam cathay have been held until solitary confinement while awaiting trials. He was held for four years in conditions so degrading previous inmates oathe same cell died but the Liberals didn't care. They repeated coroner's warning of unsafe conditions and only became a problem with this government when cathay's case reads the newspapers our correctional officers, Speaker, have brought the same

problems to this ministry's attention many times before. The Ontario human rights commission is now suing the ministry over cathay tapes. Now inmates are suing you for systematic negligence. The Minister, you're not listening to our frontline staff. The correctional officers who are the boots on the ground and who face behavioural uncertainty The Premier claims she wants to be remembered as the social justice Premier. Minister, does this appalling state of corrections pass for social justice?

>> Minister Lalonde: So I know I have time limited but, Mr. Speaker, the question of that member is krubl troubling for me in one sense. Let's remember the time when this party was in power -- and I hear this actually all throughout my tour of our institutions this summer, Mr. Speaker. You know, we hear about the failed privatization of our jails and the cuts and the cuts of social programs that used to exist in our institutions. I hear about the farming programs, the construction programs that were cut under that government, Mr. Speaker. You know what? We have made full commitment in bringing forward the most transformation correction system policy-drichb driven new act in this House this fall. And we have engaged with not only our frontline workers but with everyone in our system to make sure that we get this right for all Ontarians.