

# Transcript of Provincial Question Period for September 28, 2016

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**Date:** Wed, 28 Sep 2016 11:51:50 -0400  
**Attachments:** 20160928 - Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript.doc (122.88 kB)

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Transcript of Provincial Question Period  
41st Parliament, 2nd Session  
Wednesday, September 28, 2016

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

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MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Thibeault) Re: Energy Management

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. On September 22nd, the Premier of Ontario told Evan Solomon that skyrocketing hydro costs where, and I quote -- were, and I quote, worth it. Is it worth it this government forces people to choose between heating and eating? Is it worth it that there's 567,000 House holds that are behind in their hydro bill?, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell the families who can't put food on the table that these prices, using her words, are worth it? Can she say it is worth it for the people to have to sell their homes? Can she really tell the people of Ontario that this mess she has created is worth it?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, well what I can say to the leader of the opposition is that it is absolutely imperative that we make sure that people have the supports that they need so that they can pay their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. The changes that we are making it make sure that there is for example the Ontario energy support program in place, Mr. Speaker, the removal of the debt retirement charge from the bills, Mr. Speaker, and the changes we've made most recently that we announced in the throne speech so the removal of the provincial portion of the H.S.T., the additional 12%, Mr. Speaker, that means that rural and northern communities have access to 20% reduction, Mr. Speaker. All of those were an acknowledgement of the fact that the improvements that we've made in the system, the fact that we have invested in the system has a cost associated with it, Mr. Speaker. And we understand that we need to help people to deal with those costs every day.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. I'm bewildered when the Premier talks about improvements because no one in the province of Ontario has seen improvements. I was recently in ... in northwestern Ontario and I stopped by edina foods. I chatted with the owner there and he had a question for the Liberal government that he asked if I could ask the Premier directly. As a small business owner in northern Ontario, he wanted to to how he's expected to pay his hydro bill and staff with \$13,000 as his monthly bill. Mr. Speaker, are those hydro bills worth it if a business is struggling to meet their payroll? This is a question of whether he can continue to actually keep his staff for a local business that is previously successful. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier, is her hydro mess worth it if it means that businesses are going to have to close?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know, it's exactly why we are expanding the I.C.I. Program, Mr. Speaker, so that smaller businesses can take advantage of the opportunity to reduce their electricity bills by up to 34%, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister of energy is going to want to give them -- the member opposite some examples of businesses in the next supplementary but, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely why we're expanding that conservation initiative, the industrial conservation initiative. Expanding that program. Mr. Speaker, is it worth it to kids who have asthma to have clean air because we shut the coal-fired plants? Is it worth it to communities that have unreliable energy -- Because we invested under more than 10,000 kilometres of line that they have reliable power? Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's worth it to have no smog days and to have a system that is 90% clean and has been rebuilt, Mr. Speaker. It's worth it.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. What we hear in the government's talking points is reliable power. That's their defence for having this extraordinary disaster of an energy policy so let's talk about their defence. Let's talk about reliable power. All you have to do is look next-door to Québec. In 2015 Québec had three power outages that result -- Mr. Speaker, Québec had three power outages that were a result of either faulty equipment or human error. Ontario had 32. Total outages in Ontario equaled 11.5s. In Québec it was only 6.5 hours. Ontario has had as many outages as B.C., Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Alberta combined. We don't have reliable power in the province of Ontario. We have the opposite. Our hydro system is both unaffordable and unreliable.

So direct question to the Premier. How dare you say we have reliable power in the province of Ontario? You have created a mess. Why won't you apologize to people of Ontario?

>> Min. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise. And answer the leader of the opposition's question because perhaps the leader of the opposition should not be so quick to choose who he compares our province to. He claims Québec hardly experienced an outage. Two nights ago 150,000 residents of Gatineau lost their power during rush hour. It was triggered by a substation transmission failure, Mr. Speaker. It seems that Ontario and Québec are not immune to occasional unforeseen events and luckily we have the hardworking power workers union that work in both of our provinces to quickly remedy these outages, Mr. Speaker. But I know the opposition has begun to make these truly bizarre claims about dump trucks hitting poles and weather knocking down wires, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to hear the plan from the leader of the opposition how he can control car accidents and the weather, Mr. Speaker. He has no plan for anything else. He must have a plan for that.

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Thibeault) Re: Energy Rates - Fundraising

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Premier's Minister of energy said yesterday that this government has been tasked with finding ways to bring bills down. The Minister said he is going to save families \$2.45 by cancelling the next round of renewable contracts. But in fact he is not saving them a cent. He's just not going to raise prices. The definition of a saving is a reduction. No one is saving anything. Did I save \$25,000 this morning by not going out and buying a car? That's not how savings work. The government's logic is completely faulty. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier come clean? Will she admit that this latest P.R. stunt won't save families a cent?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: So, Mr. Speaker, as I said we inherited an electricity system that had been badly neglected under the previous government, Mr. Speaker. Families and businesses across Ontario couldn't count on the electricity system, Mr. Speaker. It was dirty, Mr. Speaker. We shut down the coal-fired plants. It is 90% clean renewable energy now, Mr. Speaker. So by the elimination of coal, Mr. Speaker, we've avoided about \$4 billion in health care and related costs. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that kind of savings, that's direct savings to the people of the province. So, Mr. Speaker, we have made -- we've put in place initiatives to help people to deal with their bills, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the Ontario energy support program, whether it's the removal of the provincial portion of the H.S.T., whether it's the removal of the debt retirement charge, Mr. Speaker. All of those are initiatives that will help people and businesses to deal with their bills. We're further moving, Mr. Speaker, to take costs out of the system that will mean that there will be future cost avoidance.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier, and don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. I do applaud the government for finally realizing these renewable contracts that they signed were reckless and not in the best interests of Ontario. But the question, Mr. Speaker, is why did it take so long for this government to realize this? Is it because they milked 30 of these renewable energy companies for over \$1.3 million in donations to the Ontario Liberal party? It is clear these contracts were never what was in the best interests of Ontario. It was all about what's in the best interests of Liberal coffers. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is now that the Premier has acknowledged these renewable contracts for energy we couldn't use, had to give away to Pennsylvania and New York and Michigan, now that she's acknowledged that was a mistake, will the Premier consider apologizing to people of Ontario and giving back the \$1.3 million they took from these companies and help -- the families with their hydro bills?

>> Min. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it reckless, Mr. Speaker, that we have a party talking about energy with no plan. I want you to think, Mr. Speaker, just a few years ago we had to send warnings out to let people know that if they went outside, they would have difficulty breathing, Mr. Speaker. Breathing, Mr. Speaker. Breathing was difficult. But we've got a party on the other side that doesn't want to invest in that. They left a crumbling system, Mr. Speaker, for us to pick up. The 2013 long-term energy plan had forecasted some costs, Mr. Speaker, and we made sure that we're removing those costs. They made fuel \$2.45 for families. That is important. I will find 50

cents and \$50, Mr. Speaker, to make sure we continue to help families, not to sit there and -- Make up --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the Premier again this question. I hope this time I can get an answer, not passing the buck. The reality is the government has acknowledged, has acknowledged that these contracts were reckless and unnecessary. The government has admitted that mistake. So my question is, given the fact that government has received, the Liberal party has received \$1.3 million in donations, because of these contracts that were a mistake, and also given the fact the auditor general said we are going to overpay by, hear this, \$9.2 billion because of these contracts the government has now acknowledged was a mistake. \$9.2 billion Ontario was going to overpay. Liberal party gets \$1.3 million. My direct question to the Premier -- and I hope she will answer it -- will she apologize to people of Ontario for taking \$1.3 million. To the Ontario Liberal party and causing Ontario to overpay on hydro by 9.2 -- Billion dollars.

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of renewable energy, our government is very proud of the electricity inics that we have in this province. 18,000 megawatts of renewable contracted or online. Ontario ranks first in Canada for installed wind capacity. More than 40% wind, Mr. Speaker. When we're talking about fund-raising Mr. Speaker -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope I have enough time to rhyme off the long list of the events that the leader of the opposition has done in fund-raising over the last little while. At the Albany club \$10,000 per person. Guests with the P.C. Health critic. That's \$500. At the metro Toronto convention centre --

MPP Singh to Premier Wynne Re: Toronto Hydro

>> MPP Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. For three days new Democrats have asked a very simple question and have yet to receive a clear answer -- for three days. Is the Premier planning on helping the sale of Toronto hydro? Yes or no?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to speak about Toronto hydro, he will have to speak to the mayor of Toronto and the councillors on the city of Toronto, city of Toronto council.

>> MPP Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just over two years ago our leader Andrea Horwath asked the Premier about the sell-off of Hydro One. Now the Premier said and I quote -- it must actually be very hard for the leader of the third party to ask these questions. She knows that we're not selling off the assets, end quote. Well, of course Ontarians all know that all the while the Premier was in fact working on the sell-off of Hydro One. So now it's very understandable that people are concerned with the next move. The Premier's leaving the door wide open to selling off municipal hydro utilities, and people are worried that yet again the Premier's not telling people what's actually going to happen. So does the Premier understand how people are worried that she's trying to help the sale of more of our hydro system?

>> Premier Wynne: Let me just repeat, Mr. Speaker, that if the member opposite wants to speak about the city of Toronto or other municipalities, Mr. Speaker, he's going to have to talk to the elected officials in those communities, Mr. Speaker. That's the way it works.

>> MPP Singh: Mr. Speaker, we all know and the Premier ought to know that the province has a large role in this. They can actually assist or not assist in the sale of local utilities so new Democrats again are asking a very simple question. Is the Premier hoping to distract from her decision to sell off Hydro One by helping to privatize local utilities like Toronto hydro?

>> Premier Wynne: The fact is that there are other municipalities in Ontario that have made decisions like this. They have done that on their own, Mr. Speaker, and if the member opposite wants to talk with the municipality about their decisions around electricity, they'll have to go to their mayors, their councils and have that conversation.

## MPP Singh (Smith) to Premier Wynne (Thibeault) Re: Energy Investment - Hydro One

>> MPP Jagmeet Singh: My question again is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, it's déjà vu all over again in Ontario. In October 2014 people wanted to know if the Liberals were going to privatize Hydro One. After all it was privatizing Hydro One that -- something that they didn't run on. It wasn't something that they mentioned in their campaign, but the government wouldn't give a straight answer. Fast forward to today, and Ontarians saw a throne speech that didn't say a word about the Liberal provincial government assisting local utilities and privatizing. Now Liberal insiders are saying that selling Toronto hydro is, quote, a good idea and Queen's Park is interested in helping make it happen, end quote. And just like in 2014, the Premier is dodging this very simple question. Will the Premier be honest to the people of Ontario. Are the Liberals planning to privatize more local utilities, yes or no?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just say to the member opposite, I'm being very honest with him and with this legislature and the people of Ontario. Those decisions are decisions that local councils have to make, as has happened in other parts of the province where local councils have made decisions around their distribution companies, Mr. Speaker. The local communities are going to need to make those decisions, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite wants to talk about the building of transit and transportation infrastructure in the province, Mr. Speaker, and how there is a build going on across the province, whether it's roads and bridges or whether it's transit all across our urban centres, I'm happy to talk about that, Mr. Speaker, because we know how important it is that we make those investments, that we create those jobs in the immediate term and foster the economic development going forward. If the member opposite wants to talk about that, I'm happy to talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Local municipalities will certainly make decisions but those decisions will be influenced if they know that the provincial government wants to assist them in privatizing those utilities. That's why the question is here. Two years ago, the Premier denied that she was privatizing Hydro One. Today the Premier isn't denying that she's planning to help the municipalities sell local hydro utilities. Ontarians are worried. They've been let down by the Liberals before and they're worried they're going to be let down yet again. Will the Premier just clear the air once and for all and tell Ontarians, is she going to help privatize municipal hydro utilities by Toronto hydro and the many others around this province?

>> Min. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured to be able to stand and answer the member's question when it comes to relating to Toronto hydro. That is totally a decision for Toronto city council. And I know the other member is contemplating running for other offices so if he's interested he may want to consider running for Toronto city council and he can be part of that decision, Mr. Speaker. But until that time -- but until that time, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about Hydro One. Every dollar realized from our current assets will be reinvest under Ontario's infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and this will support the single largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history, Mr. Speaker. I was very proud to be able to announce in North Bay, Kapuskasing in my own riding of Sudbury, Mr. Speaker, \$20 million for infrastructure investment truly needed by many of these municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and I'm looking forward to making more of those announcements.

>> MPP Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, yesterday's F.A.O. Report shows that Ontario is on the brink, particularly low income people, people in northern and rural Ontario are paying more and more for energy. People will be pushed over the edge with the further privatization of Hydro One. Privatizing local municipal hydro utilities will only make it worse. These are real people who can't pay their bills. More than half a million Ontarians are in arrears. Will this Premier start listening to the people of this province, take action and commit to no more sell-off of our public assets and public hydro utilities?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question because it's another opportunity for me to be able to stand up and say you know what? We've also heard that from the F.A.O., but we've heard it from the people of Ontario and that's why we acted, Mr. Speaker. We brought forward our three-point plan with a specific piece in there for 20% for northerners and rural folks to make sure that they can get that 20% reduction on the bill, Mr. Speaker. The unfortunate

thing is when we tried to get this bill passed quickly because we still have a lot of work to do to make sure we can get the L.D.C.S in place the opposition voted against our unanimous consent to make sure we can get this through quickly, Mr. Speaker. Speaking of the F.A.O., the F.A.O. Confirmed the afternoon Ontario House hold spends less on electricity than every other province except B.C. But we still know, Mr. Speaker, that some families are having difficulty. That's why we've brought this program forward. That's why we have six other programs in place. The O.E.S. P. program, the leap program. Mr. Speaker, we have so many I don't have enough time to rhyme them off. Thank you very much.

#### MPP Yurek to Minister Hoskins Re: Opioid Overdose Tracking

>> MPP Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question's for the Minister of health and long-term care. Every day we read about the Crisis and how it's killing someone in Ontario every 14 hours. Western provinces have already created a system to track these overdoses finding real-time data for the fentanyl crisis. They utilize the data to deal with this drug crisis. However Ontario is unable to track in real time and data they are using currently is from 2014. Speaker, when will the Minister put in place a system to track the overdoses and deal with the opioid crisis that's killing Ontarians every day?

>> Min. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. And the fact is that Ontario does have an automated real-time system existing in I think 118 hospitals across the province and we're actually expanding that to include all hospitals, which based on triage provides us in real time automatically to the ministry and to public health officers if they want to access that data, all data on overdoses including overdoses that are due specifically to opioids, Mr. Speaker. Now when it comes to opioid deaths or overdose deaths it is slightly more complicated and I'm happy to address that in supplementary. I want to reassure Ontarians that in fact we didn't need to take the measure that B.C. did because we already had in place an automated real-time process through triage and hospital E.R.S that provides the ministry immediately with that data with regards to overdoses in the majority of hospitals in this province.

>> MPP Yurek: Back to the Minister. Speaker, it's interesting that the Premier contradicted the Minister's claims when speaking to global news's Alan Carter. She said Ontario does not have the data the Minister claims to have and they should actually appoint someone to look into the problem. Even the Premier doesn't believe the Minister's claims. Health professionals and law enforcement need the tools to deal with the fentanyl crisis. When will the government get its act together and come up with a plan to deal with this opioid crisis?

>> Min. Hoskins: Well, I was standing about 2 feet away from the Premier when she did address this with Alan Carter. That certainly isn't my recollection of what she did say. But when it comes to overdose deaths, it is important that Ontarians understand that there is a process in place, that those deaths -- those which are suspected as well as being the result of a narcotic overdose, they have to be referred to the coroner of Ontario and the coroner is required or has the opportunity if he feels that it's merited to actually undertake a death investigation. I hope the member appreciates that there is a time required to undertake that death investigation to determine in fact that that overdose is due to narcotic overdose, Mr. Speaker, and to the specific type of narcotic whether it's opioid or other, so that process does take a little bit longer. However we are working with the coroner and many others. I hope to have more to say shortly on this in terms of further improving the system that's in place.

#### MPP Tabuns to Minister Thibeault Re: Green Energy Commitments

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the Premier. Speaker, we expect the Conservatives to attack renewable energy. It's not what people expect from the Liberals, and they have every reason to be disappointed. Bills aren't increasing because energy is renewable. At heart it's because we're privatizing the energy system. But instead of fixing the problem, instead of admitting that they've made a mess because of privatization, the Liberals are turning their backs on renewable energy. Why are the Liberals abandoning renewable energy and defending privatized

energy?

>> Min. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and answer the question from the Honourable member. It's very important we continue to emphasize that we have 18,000 megawatts of renewables already contracted or online, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned we ranked first in Canada when it comes to installed wind capacity. More than 40% of all wind and all existing clean energy contracts will be honoured, Mr. Speaker. Since 2003, with green energy invested billions of dollars from private sector investments creating over 42,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker. But let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, that the 0 --90%, 90% of our electricity system is emissions free, Mr. Speaker, and we haven't stopped yet, Mr. Speaker. We still have the fit program. We still have the microfit program and we're bringing forward net metering to continue with renewable in this province, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Tabuns: Speaker, I'm not vice the Premier doesn't want to answer this question because her approach is directly contrary to the way she represents herself to the people of this province. The core reason that hydro bills keep going up is privatization. Bull instead of stopping the sell-off of Hydro One or shutting down the process of helping local distribution companies sell off their utilities, instead of focusing on ensuring renewable energy is publicly owned and affordable, the government is abandoning renewables. Can the Premier explain why she's defending privatization and abandoning renewable power?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now no one's abandoning anything, Mr. Speaker. We're actually continuing to invest in more. And so I think the important thing for us to say, Mr. Speaker, is we're committed to renewable energy and we've built a strong track record that demonstrates many of our successes, Mr. Speaker. As I said before and I'll continue to say it's something we should all be proud of in this province. 90% emissions free. 90% emissions free is our electricity system generated by diverse supply of generation sources including wind, solar, nuclear, hydroelectricity, Mr. Speaker. I got to go up and lower matagami. 450 megawatts of power coming from hydroelectricity, Mr. Speaker. Renewables are an important element of our government's plan to close all of our coal plants, Mr. Speaker. We are the first jurisdiction in north America. To make sure that we do not have any coal fired electricity generation, Mr. Speaker, making it healthier for everyone in this province.

MPP Vernile to Minister Moridi Re: Ontario Research Fund

>> MPP Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of research, innovation and science. Minister, I understand that you recently were at princess Margaret hospital to announce a new round of funding for the Ontario research fund. Support for this sector is creating tangible benefits for the people of Ontario. We're seeing this every day in hospitals right across the province. Some of these great crews have the added benefit of creating more effective and more efficient treatment options so that the money that we are saving can be reinvested into research for life advancements. Minister, I know that people in my riding of Kitchener Centre where we are an innovation leader, they want to know we are continuing to introduce did you telling-edge medical procedures which are putting us at the forefront of medical research in north America. Could the leader please tell us some more about recent advances that were made possible through the Ontario research fund?

>> Min. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for her advocacy, for research and innovation across the province of Ontario., Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending princess Margaret hospital to award a total of \$5 1 million to support world-class studies and research talents at the leading institutions across our province of tomorrow. Thanks to the funding of this government provides for medical research, our scientists are always on the brink of new and exciting advancements. For example Ontario research fund, Mr. Speaker, helps scientists at sunnybrook hospital develop high intensity ultrasound technology that can be used in the treatment of uterine fibroids. This discovery will take Ontario hospitals -- save Ontario ... \$55 million annually. Other discov Eries made through the same program have helped scientists discover. Can be treated using high intensity ultrasound. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that last year sunnybrook scientists were able to bridge. The blood brain Barrier.

>> MPP Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Minister for his answer. Minister, investing in research excellence and supporting the people who are driving our innovative economy is key to developing medical technology that is saving lives and making our health care system more efficient and in my community I know it's providing hundreds of jobs. We know that this part is much bigger. There's a bigger plan to bring health benefits to the people of Ontario and position us as a continued economic leader. The difference between thriving and merely surviving in this very competitive global economy is the priority that we're placing on medical and scientific research. Minister, could you please share with the members of this House some of the recent examples that demonstrate advances as a result of investing in the Ontario research fund?

>> Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again thank you for the member from Kitchener Centre for the question. Mr. Speaker, our government is dedicated to making sure that Ontario is a global leader in medical sciences. Our investment into the Ontario research fund have recently yielded significant advances. For example at the Ottawa hospital, Dr. Duncan Stewart discovered the stem celling are -- Seouls are able to treat septic shock, a condition with high fatality fund. Also helped ... Duchesne muscular dystrophy is a disease that affects the stem cells not muscle fibres. This breakthrough discovery, Mr. Speaker, will help us save people who suffer from this debilitating disease. Mr. Speaker, investment into the Ontario research fund. Ontarians, and that is why our government, under the Premier Kathleen Wynne, will continue to invest in this fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Clark to Minister Hoskins Re: CCACs & PSW Support

>> MPP Steve Clark: Thanks, speaker. My question's to the minister of health and long-term care. Sarah Patterson and Jordan Mikowski love their 8-month-old daughter Everly and they want her home. Everly needs 24-hour care but doctors at the children's hospital of eastern Ontario supported her coming home but the southeast community care access centre was missing in action. For four weeks they've delayed funding, forcing Sarah and Jordan to pay \$300 a day for care, now over \$10,000 and counting. Monday the ccac presented a woefully inadequate plan and shockingly said take it or leave it. These parents won't sign it and I support them standing up to this heartless action. It will cost ten times more to care for ... and it will tear this family apart. Baby Everly belongs at home, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister join me and tell the ccac to do its job and keep her there?

>> Min. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't imagine what the parents of this tiny baby are going through right now. I am familiar with the situation, and I certainly do commit to doing what I can to ensure that that family and that young child is able to get the resources that she needs to support her in her young life. But we have made and we are making important changes that do enable this kind of flexibility and this kind of support where we've eliminated the nursing maximums that are able to be provided through home and community care through our ccacs for those most complex patients, Mr. Speaker. We recently announced more than a million additional hours of P.S.W. Support services. Through our ccacs and other changes that we're making to hopefully be able to provide this kind of flexibility and assistance.

>> MPP Clark: Back to the minister. The government and the ccacs' self-managed care model forces families to set up a small business. They must wet wsib. \$2 million in liability insurance. Pay taxes on the funding. Even hire an accountant. It's ridiculous. But Everly's parents, they'll jump through the hoops. They just want, in Sarah's words, something that's fair and manageable so we can live life. They're surviving now but only because of incredible community support. And that's what Ontario's health care system has come to. Families relying on bake sales and coin cans at gas stations. Sarah and Jordan are exhausted and they're running out of money, and the ccac, it couldn't be doing less. So, you know what? I'm just going to ask the minister. Please. Pick up a phone and call the ccac. Tell them to get their act together.

>> Min. Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt ministry officials are working with the ccac and with cheo as well. I hope the member can appreciate there are a number of high complex cases across the province. This I think he would agree is one of them. We need to make sure we're doing everything we can to provide the appropriate health care and medical support to individuals. I wish the member opposite had have come to me specifically to enlist my support. Unfortunately he has



to raise it in this context. We are working on this case and I commit to the family that we will do everything possible.

#### MPP Armstrong to Minister Flynn Re: Minimum Wage

>> MPP Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, people in my community of London continue to experience higher rates of unemployment than elsewhere in the province. And for Londoners who do have jobs, many still struggle to make ends meet. Their hydro bills are too high. They can't afford child care, and even people who finish College or university years ago are struggling with student debt. Speaker, the city of London had a great idea, to become a living wage city, \$15 an hour. It's about doing better so that more people can have hope and opportunities. Will the Premier follow London and Alberta's lead and increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

>> Min. Kevin Flynn: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member for this question. Speaker, when you look at examples around all of north America of how governments have treated this issue, Speaker, I think we should be especially proud of what we've been able to do in the province of Ontario to bring in a system that's predictable, that's stable. It was given to us on the advice of poverty advocates, of people from organized labour, people from the business community. I think we've become an example of how it's done, Speaker. What we've done is we're about halfway through a five-year period before we take another look at it, Speaker. We've got one of the highest minimum wages in the country. Business knows when it's coming in. They can plan for it. And those people that are working at the minimum wage level, Speaker, they know they're going to get a wage increase from time to time, Speaker. Every year actually, not from time to time.

>> MPP Armstrong: Speaker, Londoners read this week that one of our own local employers pledged to increase his employees' wages to \$15 and literally change her life. Living on minimum wage is a reality for twice as many Ontarians now as when this government came to power. Ontarians ... good jobs. They should be able to build a life, and a minimum wage is an important start. Will the Premier commit today to raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

>> Min. Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. And thanks to the member for the supplementary. Speaker, you have to go back to a time between 1996 and 2003. Ontario didn't increase its minimum wage. People who were working at that level simply saw no increases at that time. We know who was in power then, Speaker. What we did is we obligated as a government to look at this in an organized way, Speaker, in a way that was predictable, in a way that was stable and we came up with a system that I think, Speaker, other provinces, other states. Are looking at around the world, Speaker. I think it's a predictable way of doing things, but it also as I said earlier allows for every five years you take a review. What has that led to people at the minimum wage level in the province of Ontario, Speaker, have earned more than any other jurisdiction in this country over the past few years. They'll continue to get regular increases. Speaker, I bring this up once again. When the opportunity was there to provide advice, Speaker, the NDP Made not one single submission.

#### MPP Hoggarth to Minister Zimmer Re: Indigenous Games [videoclip to follow]

>> MPP Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Speaker. This question is for the Minister of indigenous relations and reconciliation. I understand that next summer Ontario will host the 2017 North American indigenous games right here in Toronto. These days will welcome up to 10,000 indigenous people from all across north America to the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Métis Nation of Ontario. The games sound like a wonderful opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of indigenous athletes, especially those from Ontario. Can the Minister tell us how our government is supporting the 2017 North American indigenous games?

>> Min. David Zimmer: I want to thank the member for the purpose Barrie for that question. Yes, next ... we are prepared to welcome over 5,000 indigenous athletes to Ontario to compete in 14 different sports. This is the first time that Ontario has hosted the games. To bring the games to Ontario. Our government is investing \$3.5 million over three years to support the Aboriginal sport

and wellness council. A few weeks ago I was in Hamilton for the announcement of a major partnership between the city of Hamilton and McMaster university to support these games through a new western cup. I was also at a similar event at York university. In the city of Toronto earlier this year. I am confident that the 2017 North American indigenous games here in Ontario will be the best games ever.

>> MPP Hoggarth: I'm excited to hear that our government is supporting this great initiative to showcase indigenous sport and bring the games to Ontario. This is also a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of the exceptional sports facilities, infrastructure and programs that are a lasting legacy of the 2015 pan am parapan am games. We know that sport is empowering for both indigenous and non-indigenous youth and that participation in sport gives them self-confidence, resiliency and generates pride. Account Minister tell us how our investment in the 2017 North American indigenous games will benefit indigenous youth and athletes in Ontario?

>> Min. Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker. Again I thank the member for her -- for Barrie for her interest in these games. Our investment in these games will support the development of indigenous athletes, coaches and mentors. It will build a brighter future for indigenous youth in Ontario. You know sport has the power to heal and to improve the quality of life for indigenous youth. It encourages emotional, spiritual and physical strength. That's why five of the recommendations in the truth and reconciliation report involve sport, including support for these games. For young people, sport has the power to heal, to improve the quality of their life. It encourages emotional, physical growth, confidence and ambition. We are looking forward to. All of the broad benefits that these games can bring to Ontario and to indigenous peoples.

MPP Walker to Minister Hoskins Re: Personal Support Workers

>> MPP Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question's to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I'm hearing firsthand accounts from personal support workers about the precarious working and living conditions at some long-term care homes such as how one P.S.W. is expected to look after 30 or 40 frail sick residents an impossible if not dangerous task. Double demand for personal support workers there can be no greater priority than improving our P.S.W. Work force so our seniors can enjoy safety and comfort in the care they receive. Knowing this, Mr. Speaker, why has this Minister not prioritized providing that job stability and consistency to Ontario's 100,000 personal support workers?

>> Min. Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would disagree. We're doing a great deal for our P.S.W.S across the province. In fact we were the government that instituted, implemented a minimum wage for our P.S.W.S where we've also increased the hourly support to our P.S.W.S that fund the flow directly through the lthins down directly to the P.S.W.S, a \$4 increase over the past several years. A \$4 an hour increase to the wages that they are receiving. We're also working with our P.S.W.S on a long-term strategy to not only elevate the profession of these essential health care workers working so hard and diligently and compassionately in our health care system throughout including in our long-term care homes but we're working with them. We've developed a standardized curriculum which is now in place, Mr. Speaker. We're working with them in terms much issues of regulation. And professional abilities to make sure that our P.S.W.S are able to practice to the full scope of their abilities.

>> MPP Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has to take responsibility for the continued lack of standardized training and regulation of P.S.W.S in Ontario. Instead of looking to the leadership of other provinces like Nova Scotia and B.C. Who managed to put the safeguards in place and define their P.S.W. Standards -- standard, this government wasted 13 years and squandered \$5 million on a defunct P.S.W. Registry. I say, Minister, the ball's in your court. When will you give the P.S.W.S a plan they need so they can finally do their job?

>> Min. Hoskins: ... so we are ... those standards. We do have a standardized curriculum for P.S.W.S, Mr. Speaker. We're responding to what we're hearing from P.S.P.S, the associations that represent

them, organized labour that represents them as well and we're working very, very hard to make sure we're putting in place guided by them and good advice the measures, the supports, the training, the financial supports to enable them. In fact we're providing many of them with financial support to upgrade their training, Mr. Speaker, so there are a whole set of regulations one of them we're engaging the sector very vigorously to determine how on a go-forward basis we can continue to respect and acknowledge, improve the delivery of services our P.S.W.S offer. Mr. Speaker, that work will never be complete but I think that we have to acknowledge there have been important gains made for this important sector within health care.

#### MPP Gelinas to Minister Hoskins Re: Personal Support Workers

>> MPP France Gelinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The throne speech said personal support workers are getting the pay hike that they were promised, but the Ontario personal support worker association, representing 21,000 members, said that is, quote, incredibility and misleading. In fact according to the "Toronto star" thousands of P.S.W.S -- The "Toronto star" says that thousands of P.S.W.S have seen their weekly incomes go down. Can the Minister tell us exactly how many P.S.W.S have seen their pay cheque go down? And if not, why not?

>> Min. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's ironic because both of the opposition parties voted against the increase in wage for our P.S.W.S. We're hearing the heckling from them now but the reality is it was this side of the House that implemented a \$4 an hour increase to our P.S.W.S. Let alone in the health care sector. They deserve that increase. We provided it to them. You did not. And so we are working -- That is funds that flow through directly all the way down to the P.S.W.S in terms of increases. We're also working with all of our health care providers in the home and community sector to standardize the contract so we will be ensuring even more the supports there for our P.S.W.S. If we look in long-term care, 2,500 more P.S.W.S in long-term care opens since 2008. We're making great progress, Mr. Speaker. We're working with that sector.

>> MPP Gelinas: The question was how many P.S.W.S saw their pay cheque go down? I can tell you, Speaker, it is thousands of them that have seen their weekly income fall, not rise. They are seeing times with their clients being cut sometimes down to 15 minutes. People are getting less home care, Speaker, not more. It's not just me saying this. We're hearing it from the P.S.W.S on the front line. We're hearing it from the Ontario personal support worker association as well as being reported in the "Toronto star," Ottawa citizen and other papers. When will this government step up, stop cutting the hours of care families need and make sure that every P.S.W. sees the full wage increases that were promised to them for every hour that they work? Thank you.

>> Min. Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, here's what we're hearing from P.S.W.S across the country, that they appreciate the wage increase and they appreciate the attention that the Liberal government has been providing to them, in the complete absence of any leadership I should add from either of the opposition parties -- Many P.S.W.S have said to me they have never experienced a government that has acknowledged the importance of their contribution to the health care sector in this province ever. Not the NDP Not the Conservatives that both voted against any wage increase for P.S.W.S. It is shameful, Mr. Speaker. And they stand up now, talking about those that perhaps may be affected by this policy. She doesn't talk about the tens of thousands of P.S.W.S who have moved into a position where they can actually earn a wage which is worthy and responsive to the talent that they bring every single day.

#### MPP Martins to Minister Lalonde Re: Condominium Owner Protections

>> MPP Cristina Martins: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of government and consumer services. Speaker, when I travel throughout my riding whether it's in the north and the south, I see many new condo developments. Actually there are many new condo developments across the entire city. Many of my constituents live in condos and that number continues to grow as developments are built in my riding. Speaker, my Davenport office is regularly asked about what our

government is doing to protect condo owners, a question that is not only important to condo owners in Davenport but to all condo owners across Ontario. Speaker, currently there are 1.6 million people or one in ten Ontarians that are living in condos -- condos. Just last year many of my constituents were pleased to see new legislation was passed providing greater protections for condo owners in Ontario. Can the Minister please inform the House on how the protecting condo owners act. Is modernizing condo law in our province?

>> Min. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, and I want to say thank you to the member from Davenport for her question but mainly for her advocacy on condo laws. Congratulations. Our government is committed to modernizing our condo laws. We are doing so by ensuring that the condo industry has become more transparent and accountable. My ministry's establish a condo authority that will provide owners and boards with quicker lower costs and less stressful dispute resolutions. The act will also strengthen financial management rules for condo corporations to help prevent mismanagement. We will also establish a second authority that will licence condo managers to help provide further protection to owners and their homes., Mr. Speaker, I'm very confident that condo owners will have greater peace of mind knowing they are protected after making such a large investment.

>> MPP Martins: Thank you, Minister, for your response. I'm very appreciative of your ministry's efforts to protect consumers in Davenport and across this province. The Minister mentioned the creation of two new delegated administrative authorities. One of these authorities will protect condo owners and boards with a modern and efficient dispute resolution system. The other will licence condo managers and ensure their ability to effectively manage these organizations. Account Minister speak to the creation of these new delegated administrative authorities and how they ensure greater accountability and transparency within the industry?

>> Min. Lalonde: Thank you again to the member of Davenport for her Question. The creation of those who delegated administrative authorities will prove to be crucial in establishing greater accountability in the condo sector. These authorities will be self-funded not-for-profit corporations that Collect fees from their regulated industries. Combining these transparency measures and increasing owners' access to dispute resolution, condo owners will develop positive and mutually respectful relationships with their boards. Mr. Speaker, our government is taking concrete steps to ensure that the condo industry is fair to owners and all those involved.

#### MPP Harris to Minister Duguid Re: Metrolinx Transit Projects

>> MPP Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker. Question to the Premier. Premier, when I asked the transport Minister this spring about significant delays in L.R.V. Delivery for Eglinton Crosstown rewarded to Union was of course brushed off. Since then it's become clear this government has completely dropped the ball on vital L.R.T. Projects leaving commuters waiting for the train. There were indications last year Bombardier was struggling to deliver on the Metrolinx contract for 182 L.R.V.s followed by a series of warning flags government failed to heed. Today we learned the Premier's finally opened her eyes to alternatives allowing competitors for the winch west L.R.T. To include vehicle procurement in their bids. Vehicles that were to be delivered by Bombardier. Waterloo's L.R.T. Launch is only a year away and now we have an 11th-hour bid opening to replace trains that we've already paid for. Will the Premier tell us why. Her \$770 million train deal will actually put trains on the tracks?

>> Min. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to respond to this on behalf of the Minister of transportation. I can tell you that the -- it's not the Premier or it's not the government that makes these decisions. It's Metrolinx and it's part of their process as they go through and procure this work. So we respect their process. We respect what they're doing. At the same time, we recognize that Bombardier is a company that employs thousands of Ontarians here in this province. Bombardier is a company as well that has done very well by this province and done very well by this country. It competes globally. It's a global company. It's one that has had challenges of late but, Mr. Speaker, we're quite confident they'll continue to resolve those challenges and continue to be a globally competitive company in the future. I would think that the member opposite would want to -

- not want to downgrade the importance of bombardier in our economy. At the same time we respect what metrolinx is doing and the process they're going through to ensure they get best value for the people of this province.

>> MPP Harris: Back to the Premier. It's important that this government provides critical oversight for such a large infrastructure project here in the province. In fact it was the Liberal government that negotiated the terms and now delays are running right through the entire \$770 million 182-car deal. The testing vehicle for the Eglinton crosstown light rail line was supposed to arrive back in 2014. Then it was spring of 2015. And today we had wonder if it's ever coming. In Waterloo, there's growing concern that when the operator grand link is ready to launch and meet its contractual obligations there will be no trains on the tracks. Speaker, once the track is late the clock soon starts ticking on contracted operational costs. What commitment can the Premier provide to ensure that Waterloo residents, who have already paid \$92 million through the metrolinx contract won't also be pay for a train service with no trains in the station?

>> Min. Duguid: Mr. Speaker, let me respond to that by comparing our commitment to the commitment of the party opposite. We are committed to building public transit. We're making Hydro One -- your leader and your party are nowhere when it comes to infrastructure investments. You're running and hiding on the opportunity to create more revenues. We're investing \$160 billion over the next 12 years -- With absolutely no support from your party whatsoever. So everything we're doing, Mr. Speaker, we're doing because of important decision that is we're making. We would like a little support from the members opposite rather than trying to criticize every little detail along the way.

MPP Mantha to Minister Mauro Re: Ring of Fire

>> MPP Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you. My question is to the Premier. People are worried about whether there will be a future for the next generation in northern Ontario. The ring of fire can create good jobs and good lives for people in northern Ontario. The throne speech, once again, had nothing but a brief mention about the ring of fire development. Even though the Canadian chamber of commerce has asked that it be declared a national priority. People in northern Ontario have been left down -- let down over and over again by this Wynne Liberal government. They are struggling to pay their hydro bills, deserve the same job and not more promises. When will this government act and develop ring of fire?

>> Min. Bill Mauro: Speaker, thank you very much and I'm pleased to answer the question from the member on this particular topic in -- with the Minister of northern development and mines on behalf of the Minister of northern development and mines. The member references, in his words, the lack of a reference to this particular project in the throne speech, Speaker. What I can say back to the member is that I remember very clearly the commitments that were made in the 2014 election platform around the ring of fire. And the \$1 -- \$1 billion we have attached for this particular project when it begins to move forward. You know what I remember is when the leaders debate was in Thunder Bay and your leader was there, on the day of the debate there was not anything in your platform when it came to committing to the ring of fire in northern Ontario. But the day after the debate or somewhere around at that time, she finally saw the light and decided we need to do what we can. An unidentified number was attached. Whatever we need. We'll do whatever we need. Really clearly something that your party had not thought about. A very clear commitment from our government. \$1 billion.

>> MPP Mantha: Thank you. Once again, Mr. Speaker, last year the auditor general said that in six years the hand fit ring of fire secretariat spent \$13 million and nothing to show. Your Minister's mandate letter, Premier, letter said that work on roads and infrastructure in the region to connect with the future ring of fire development would start in 2018. So northerners won't even see a ring of fire for a decade or more. When will this government pass the once-in-a-lifetime ring of fire development shovel ready?

>> Min. Mauro: Speaker, you know I know that the member opposite represents a northern

community and a northern riding in Thunder Bay or in his riding in northern Ontario, and I would expect that in his questions and in his knowledge of this particular issue he would at least attach some importance and make some reference to the significant amount of work that's gone on by the Minister and the government in terms of working with our first nation partners in terms of the ability to advance this project. But on a number of occasions, as the critic for northern development and mines and on this file, he has stood in this place and asked these questions, and if that is not a significant component about -- regarding to what has to occur before project can go forward. Speaker, we know that that is significant. We know the Minister has done a lot of work in that particular regard and I would like to say to the member once again, it would be nice if your leader would actually stake out a position. In terms of what dollars she would attach if she had the opportunity to lead the province to the ring of fire in northern Ontario.