

Briefing for March 8, 2017

Your morning briefing	2
Electricity companies to tinker with time-of-use power prices as parties clash over costs.....	4

Your morning briefing

08.03.2017 Geoff Zochodne 0

Headlines

And in the end, it wasn't even close. PC MPP **Sam Oosterhoff**, the youngest person ever elected to Queen's Park, left no doubt Tuesday night about who the Tories of Niagara West want as their nominee in 2018. What made the Niagara West nomination notable was that, in an unusual turn, the socially conservative incumbent had been facing a challenge from PC party vice-president **Tony Quirk**, [who had taken shots at Oosterhoff over his age](#). Oosterhoff, however, obliterated Quirk in a 903-313 nomination victory, ensuring he'll run again for the PCs in 2018. [QP Briefing has the story](#).

In other and far less controversial nomination news, Children and Youth Services Minister **Michael Coteau** will be running again for the Liberals in 2018. The Premier, whose Don Valley West riding is near Coteau's Don Valley East stomping grounds, [even put in an appearance](#).

After Premier Wynne penned [a Toronto Star op-ed](#) about her hydro plan on Tuesday, NDP Leader **Andrea Horwath** [has done the same today](#). Horwath contrasts the New Democrat and Liberal plans thusly: "My plan helps people. Premier Wynne's plan helps bankers. And **Patrick Brown** and the Conservatives have no plan at all." Somewhere, a young Tory policy analyst begins typing faster.

Our other stories from yesterday:

- [Electricity companies to tinker with time-of-use power prices as parties clash over costs](#)
- [Minister ankles amid Tories' call for moratorium on school closings](#)
- [Happening: New Democrats add three more candidates to 2018 slate](#)
- [Province announces \\$4.9M in rebates for small distilleries, cideries](#)

A battle between the province's tomato growers and processors has gotten very bitter indeed. [The Toronto Star has the recap](#), but there have been [some new developments as well](#).

The Ontario Medical Association held a vote yesterday to elect some new leaders. Who could have predicted [it would cause conflict among doctors?](#) Everyone?

Ontario's new three-year anti-racism plan [was revealed yesterday](#).

The federal government's budget [is coming March 22](#). Ontario's will come sometime after that.

Niki Ashton [is the latest entry into the federal NDP leadership race](#). And now, your obligatory **Jagmeet** Watch update:

Well, all right then.

In the opinion pages:

- David Reevely [says](#) Ontario's liquor laws have the government subsidizing boozemakers now
- Carolyn Ferns [suggests](#) how Ontario's child-care "crisis" could be solved
- Chris Selley [notes](#) Toronto's transit dreams are but a plaything for Queen's Park
- Luisa D'Amato [claims](#) the Liberal government is giving rural Ontario "the shaft"

Bills

Debate resumes on the motion for Second Reading of Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities.

Debate resume on the motion for Second Reading of Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

Committees

9:00 a.m.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet for the purpose of report writing. Room No. 151

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills will meet for the purpose of report writing. Room No. 1.

1:00 p.m.

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly will meet pursuant to Standing Order 108(g). Room No. 1.

4:00 p.m.

The Standing Committee on General Government will meet to consider Bill 92, An Act to amend the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014 and make related amendments to other statutes. Room No. 1.

Events

8:10 A.M.

Premier Wynne to participate in the Women and Girls in Sport Strategy Launch and make an announcement, alongside Ministers McMahon and Naidoo-Harris. Varsity Centre, University of Toronto, 299 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

9:30 A.M.

Premier Wynne to deliver remarks at the National Indigenous Women's Summit, alongside Minister Zimmer. Beanfield Centre
105 Princes' Boulevard, Ballroom D, Exhibition Place, Toronto.

12:00 P.M.

Cabinet meeting. Queen's Park.

4:45 P.M.

Premier Wynne to hold a Media Roundtable for regional media to discuss Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan. Queen's Park.

Electricity companies to tinker with time-of-use power prices as parties clash over costs

07.03.2017 [Geoff Zochodne](#) 0

As Ontario's political parties debate whether the time is nigh to do away with mandatory time-of-use power prices, electricity companies are preparing to conduct experiments with the fees that could have far-reaching consequences for energy consumers.

A spokesperson for the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), which regulates the electricity industry, told *QP Briefing* Tuesday that five distribution companies have applied to do pilot projects under the province's regulated price plan (RPP), which includes the time-of-use cost structure.

"The pilot projects would, among other things, test alternative pricing options that are aimed at achieving objectives of the RPP," said the OEB spokesperson. "The results of the pilot projects would provide an objective basis to inform future decisions about RPP pricing and the design of new tools for customers to manage their electricity usage and provide for increased system efficiency."

One of the companies taking part is Hydro One, the province's largest electricity distributor. A spokesperson for the utility told *QP Briefing* that the company has applied to do a pricing pilot project, but provided no details.

Most Ontarians pay time-of-use electricity prices, which are lower in the evenings and mornings and higher during the work day. The pricing structure has grated on some electricity customers, including a Sturgeon Falls woman [who told Premier Kathleen Wynne](#) the peak time-of-use fee was a "farce." The reason for that conversation, the Liberal government unveiling a new plan to reduce hydro bills by another 17 per cent, makes no mention of time-of-use prices.

"It is important to know that time-of-use is something that we've been working on for months," said Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** during Tuesday's question period. "We've recognized that a senior couple living on a fixed income in Northern Ontario shouldn't be on the same retail price plan as a single condo dweller living here in downtown Toronto. That's why we asked, months and months ago, the [Independent Electricity System Operator] to start work on this, to start looking at bringing forward some other options besides time-of-use."

The NDP, which has proposed a plan to cut hydro costs by as much as 30 per cent, is calling for an end to mandatory time-of-use electricity pricing.

"A senior sitting at home in Sudbury shouldn't have to wring their hands, worrying about turning the lights on and turning the stove on during the day," NDP Leader **Andrea Horwath** said during question period. "That's not fair. Why didn't this Premier address the unfair time-of-use pricing in her desperate attempt to save her own political skin?"

The Liberals actually tweaked the OEB's mandate in December, allowing the regulator to set "different off-peak periods" for pilot projects involving the time-of-use power prices.

The government did so after the OEB admitted in a November 2015 report that the current time-of-use prices aren't easily understood by customers. The regulator also said that the existing structure isn't giving consumers "incentives" to actually alter their electricity use.

There are no details available yet about the proposed pilot projects by the five utilities, but the OEB has suggested ideas for time-of-use tinkering, such as moving the summer peak time to later in the day. Utilities had until last August to submit pilot project applications, according to an update.

The OEB said previously that it expected approved pilot projects wouldn't start until May 1 of this year, and that the tests could run until December 2018, past the June 2018 provincial election.

"We expect once pilot projects are in place, the individual [local distribution companies] will make the projects public as part of their recruitment process for the trials and that the duration of the pilot projects will vary, but would be expected to be in place at least a year," the regulator said Tuesday.

The experiments will be funded through a conservation fund managed by the Independent Electricity System Operator, the agency that manages the province's power grid.