

Summary of Question Period for Tues. Feb. 20/18

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MPP Fedeli (PC) to the Premier re: January job losses

>>Vic Fideli: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. 51,000 jobs. 51,000 jobs were lost in the month of January. That is the largest number of jobs lost in one month since 2009. This is proof that the economic policies of this government are reckless and unfair. This isn't change that works for families. It's actually hurting families. Mr. Speaker, what does the government say to the 51,000 families who lost their jobs last summer?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to el one of coal everyone back and add my congratulations to the member of Nipissing being appointed the leader of the opposition and thank him for that question. Thank you very much. Because, Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the opposition knows that Ontario's economy is growing. And, Mr. Speaker, whenever there is a job loss in the province, the families that are affected, the individuals that are affected, Mr. Speaker, that is a very hard thing to deal W.I understand that, Mr. Speaker. But I know that the leader of the opposition understands that the economy is growing, that in fact our unemployment rate is at a low, Mr. Speaker, a 17-year low, and that Ontario has led the growth in g-7 countries, Mr. Speaker. We have outstripped the growth across the country, Mr. Speaker. And I recognize that, even though all of that is happening, Mr. Speaker, there are still people who are not sharing in that growth and I'll speak to that in the supplementary.

>>Vic Back to the **Premier**. Years of Liberal policy have led to the worst months for jobs since this **Premier** took office. The F.A.O. Pointed out entire regions of the province were being unfairly left behind last year. Southwestern, eastern and northern Ontario saw only 1,600 jobs combined, and just look at what economist Phillip cross had to say about these newest numbers. The January drop shows that gushing reports about a booming economy were wildly overstated. He added the underpinnings for the Ontario economy have looked increasingly shaky for some time. But this government will cherry-pick statistics and tell everyone that everything is rosy. Mr. Speaker, everything isn't rosy. Thank you, Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, everything isn't rosy. Will the **Premier** admit that the cumulative impact. Of her government policy is costing hard working Ontarians their jobs, and that's just not fair?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Well, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the leader of the opposition. We have to look at the whole picture. But we do have to look at the whole picture, so we have to look at the fact that, since the recession, Mr. Speaker, 800,000 new jobs have been -- In the province. We have to recognize since I've been **Premier** 400,000 new jobs have been -- Having said that, having said that we're seeing that growth. But it is not being shared evenly, Mr. Speaker, which is exactly why free tuition, OHIP plus, Mr. Speaker, an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, which unfortunately all of the leadership

candidates in the race for the Conservatives -- Have said they don't support, Mr. Speaker. But those, those initiatives that support people. Deal with global uncertainty, Mr. Speaker. Those are the things that we are putting in place because we're actually fighting for the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker .

>>Vic Fedeli Thank you, Speaker. Back to the **Premier**. The Liberals have been warned by experts that their too-fast too-soon antibusiness policy would put people out of work. The **Premier** was warned, warned again, warned again and warned again. Yet she ignored the warnings for purely political purposes. Though numbers are staggering. Youth lost jobs at a rate six and a half times faster than the rest of the population. Women saw their employment drop four times the rate of Ontario's men. Single moms and children trying to earn a living have been targeted by this Liberal government's too-fast too-soon antibusiness antijobs policies. Mr. Speaker, account Liberals explain how this is possibly fair for Ontario?

>> **Premier Wynne**: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I hear the leader of the opposition say when he says too fast too soon, the sub to that is the minimum wage increase, Mr. Speaker. And what I hear him say is not now. Not ever, Mr. Speaker. To say., Mr. Speaker, the people who are cleaning our institutions, Mr. Speaker, the people who are serving us, Mr. Speaker, in all of the businesses across this province, it's those people that continued to earn \$11.50 an hour they had to go to the food bank at the end of the month, Mr. Speaker. That is the reality that the leader of the opposition is supporting when he says not now, not ever. We believe that, in a province as wealthy as Ontario, in a province --In a province as wealthy as Ontario where there are so many people who are doing so well, Mr. Speaker, and corporate profits are at an all-time high, it is time, Mr. Speaker, that we make sure that people have what they need to --

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MPP Horwath (NDP) to Minister Sousa (Finance) and Minister Thibeault (Energy) re: Partial sell-off of Hydro One.

>> Andrea Horwath: Our hospitals as well. They also agree that selling off pieces of Hydro One and our hydro system is the right thing to do. But the financial accountability officer in fact disagrees. Just last week the family financial accountability officer said that the sell-off of Hydro One will be costing Ontario families nearly \$300 million a year. Now doesn't the **Premier** think that \$300 million a year would be better off in the hands of Ontario families funding things, Speaker, like hospitals and schools?

>>Minister Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question, recognizing the importance for us to ensure that we continue to support our companies and support the marketplace. Certainly the way hydro was being acted upon, it wasn't providing the

proper receipts, the proper revenues and the proper controls and mechanisms. Now we have much more discipline in the operation. We still own over 44% of the company. It still provides tremendous amounts of revenues to the province and more importantly paid down some needed debt in the system. And of course we now have proceeds to the tune of \$5 million – \$5 billion, trillium trust to invest in new opportunities to provide even greater revenues and greater opportunities for the people of Ontario. We'll continue to invest where we can produce more value and help the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the **Premier** said she sold off Hydro One to fund her many infrastructure promises, but the F.A.O. Says that the funding of infrastructure in this way will actually cost Ontarians \$1.8 billion more than had the government simply financed those projects themselves. So can the **Premier** tell Ontarians who exactly benefits from the \$1.8 billion of Liberal overspending this time?

>>Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reports that are made by agents but they also don't mention and they should with regards to what is being invested and what are the receipts coming back to the province as a result. As you know during that transaction, we have now paid down debt by \$5.1 billion. \$6.2 billion in the trillium trust to engage and to invest. Furthermore the actions of the operations are now enhanced providing even greater value for the shareholders which are the province of Ontario and the people of Ontario. But going forward we're going to continue to invest. We know that the investments we make in roads, bridges, schools hospitals bring back 7 times more value than what was initially invested. That too is critical. Furthermore the opposition make it sound as though we're selling off Niagara Falls. Mr. Speaker, we're talking about transmission and that is all we're doing. We recognize the operations of the. Power generation still continues to be held by public purse and will continue to support those initiatives for the benefit of all people of Ontario.

>> Andrea Horwath: The premier's wrong handed decision to sell off Hydro One means billions of dollars, billions every dollars less for the services that matter the most for families. Revenue from Hydro One should be going directly into patient care in overcrowded hospitals and into our children's classrooms, Speaker. But the Liberals and Conservatives won't bring Hydro One back into public hands. How can this **Premier** continue to defend the wrong-headed and financially damaging decision to sell off Hydro One?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our goal, as we've always said, Mr. Speaker, is to get the best possible value for the people of Ontario and invest billions in transit, transportation and infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, through the trillium trust. That includes go regional express, L.R.T. Projects in multiple communities and the ring of fire in the north, Mr. Speaker, just to name a few. Looking at the F.A. O.'s report it confirms that as a publicly traded company Hydro One is in a position to achieve efficiencies that will create savings for Ontario ratepayers and a boost to the province's revenues, Mr. Speaker. The NDP's biggest idea is to buy back shares of Hydro One at a cost of billions of dollars using money that would otherwise go to funding hospitals and schools, Mr. Speaker. Maybe they can explain what schools they will close, how many nurses they will fire once again, Mr. Speaker. The worst part is that won't even take one cent off of any bill, Mr. Speaker. It is this government that brought forward the fair hydro plan taking 25% off everyone's bills across the province and building infrastructure, Mr. Speaker

MPP Harris (PC) to Minister McGarry (Transportation) re: proposed transportation projects

>>MPP Harris: Speaker, to the Minister of transportation. Speaker, as the opposition transport critic I want to welcome the member from Cambridge to her new role as Minister of transportation. But now -- Now let's get down to business, Speaker. Would the Minister tell me why she used her first opportunity as Minister to go back to the old Liberal playbook and hand out another Patronage appointment to former Minister David Collenette?

>>Minister McGarry: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you very much to the member opposite and my critic in this role, another member from Waterloo region. Thank you very much for the question this morning. High-speed rail is incredibly important to the economy of Ontario. We're delighted to have David Collenette, with all of his expertise, to now be the chair of our new panel advisory committee while we continue to do some of the preliminary work in order to deliver this incredibly important role. While preparing a preliminary business case, special advisor at that point, David Collenette, met with many different stakeholders including indigenous communities, to make sure that the business case was solid for high-speed rail. We have affirmed that there is a really great business case. The high-speed rail will have an immense impact on Ontario's economy. It will be continuing to be built in the coming weeks and months. We will be continuing to --provide an initial \$15 million in a comprehensive environmental assessment to finally get some of the routes start under this very important process.

>>MPP Harris: Well, I suppose you all still agree that he is still entitled to Speaker, this is electioneering at its worst. It's the second election in a row that the Wynne Liberals have attempted to lure voters with high speed dreams at of course the taxpayer's expense. Last election they had a U.K. consultant slap together a report based on Google maps. Four years later they're back at it again. Another taxpayer-subsidized appointment for their old pal David Collenette. High-speed rail share. In fact the same David Collenette who just left his previous Liberally appointed role as high-speed rail advisor. Speaker, as the government spins its wheels will the Minister admit this Liberal high-speed rail sequel is just another taxpayer-funded desperate at the same time to hold or cling to power?

>>Minister McGarry: Thank you very much, Speaker. And in his new role, we know that Mr. Collenette will continue to provide --Thank you. We know he'll continue to provide excellent strategic advice moving forward on this landmark project. We need his experience to move forward and his skills would be very helpful to see this project through. What I would point out is that the member opposite has made sure that any time he has the ability to vote on our government budget, that provides the investments needed to bring a project forward, he is consistently with his party voted against these investments. So let me be clear. I don't believe that his party would ever support a high-speed rail. Or provide some of the infrastructure money in order to move forward with an important project like this. It takes longer than four years to do it.