

Top Issues for February 21, 2017

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Date: Tue, 21 Feb 2017 09:12:31 -0500
Attachments: 2017.02.21.docx (72.74 kB)

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Issue: Hospital CEO's Hidden Expenses Questioned

Issues of interest:

OPP Investigation Into ORNGE Set to Wrap Up

Editorial: The Province Must Deliver

Electricity Rates Expected to Dominate Debate in Legislature

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these summaries are those of the media cited and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Ontario Public Service.

CALENDAR

February 21, 2017

PC Leader Brown to hold a session opener press conference

9:00 a.m. / Toronto: Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown holds a session opener press conference. (Media Studio, Queen's Park)

Minister Sousa to provide an update on Ontario's economic performance

9:30 a.m. / Toronto: Minister of Finance Charles Sousa provides an update on Ontario's economic performance. Minister of Research, Innovation and Science Reza Moridi and Minister of Economic Development and Growth Brad Duguid will also be present. (MaRS Main Atrium, First Floor, 101 College Street)

March to demand immediate action on overdoses and better drug laws and policies

11:00 a.m. / Toronto: Drug user advocacy organizations, first responders, service providers, and supporters to march in solidarity to demand immediate action on overdoses and better drug laws and policies from federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. (Bay Street at Wellesley Street)

Attorney General Naqvi to deliver an address to the Empire Club of Canada

11:45 a.m. / Toronto: Attorney General Yasir Naqvi will deliver an address to the Empire Club of Canada. (Arcadian Court, 401 Bay Street)

Premier Wynne to attend a Caucus Meeting

12:00 p.m. / Toronto: Premier Wynne attends a Caucus Meeting. (Queen's Park)

Premier Wynne to meet with Daughters of the Vote

4:30 p.m. / Toronto: Premier Wynne meets with Daughters of the Vote. (Queen's Park).

Premier Wynne to deliver remarks at the Liberal Caucus Black History Month Reception

6:00 p.m. / Toronto: Premier Wynne delivers remarks at the Liberal Caucus Black History Month Reception. (Queen's Park)

TOP ISSUES

Issue: OPP Investigation Into ORNGE Set to Wrap Up

☐ According to Ontario Provincial Police spokesperson Peter Leon, the five-year-old criminal investigation into kickback allegations involving ORNGE air ambulance is set to wrap up.

☐ However, Leon would not say whether charges will be laid or provide any explanation for the unusually lengthy probe. "The criminal investigation is still ongoing and anticipated to be completed soon," said Leon.

☐ The investigation of ORNGE's former CEO, Chris Mazza, began in 2012 after a series of Toronto Star stories broke that probed safety issues and allegations of connections between Mazza and suppliers.

☐ According to that story, ORNGE received a payment of \$4.7 million and the

promise of \$2 million more after it bought \$144 million worth of helicopters from the Italian company, AgustaWestland. The Italian firm has said it did nothing wrong and is trying to retrieve some of that \$4.7 million payment in court.

When the matter was raised at a provincial committee probing the ORNGE scandal, a former ORNGE executive revealed that ORNGE paid AgustaWestland \$7 million more than it was obligated to.

Following that revelation, police detectives were asked to probe the deal and find out if the money was a kickback.

In the aftermath, Mazza and many other top officials at ORNGE lost their jobs and a new board of directors was put in place.

Although the OPP has refused to discuss the case, sources have told the paper that one factor which stalled the investigation was the difficulty in obtaining information from Italian authorities. AgustaWestland has been embroiled in other scandals, the paper notes.

Newspapers: "ORNGE investigation set to wrap up," Toronto Star, Kevin Donovan, A1

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Hospital CEO's Hidden Expenses Questioned

In a front page story, The Hamilton Spectator reports St. Joseph's Healthcare CEO Kevin Smith has hidden expenses claimed through the hospital's fundraising foundation - the same controversial practice Rob MacIsaac used when he was Mohawk College president.

The expenses - totalling between \$1,800 and \$2,800 a year - raise questions about accountability and transparency. The issue has come to light since The Spectator revealed that current Mohawk president Ron McKerlie has a secret contract, second salary and shielded expenses with the entity that raises funds for the school.

The college board says it will revisit McKerlie's \$109,000 salary as president of the Mohawk College Foundation when it institutes provincially-mandated new caps on executive pay by September. McKerlie's combined college and foundation salary was roughly \$369,000 in 2016. McKerlie did not respond to requests for comment last week.

Smith says the foundations should pay for work done to raise funds or thank donors. "If they are purely fundraising expenses... we don't want to use resources from the hospital," he said, noting that the expenses do not need to be in public view because the money comes from donors not taxpayers.

However, NDP leader Andrea Horwath says donations should go to improving schools and hospitals, not paying CEO's expenses. "I would wonder whether people who make donations see that as an appropriate way to spend the funds," she said. She also calls the practice a "back door" that allows executives to get around the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act and freedom of information requests.

Deputy Premier Deb Matthews has voiced concern about McKerlie's secret contract and second salary. However, she does not take issue with expenses claimed through the foundations. Asked where to draw the line considering presidents and CEOs are expected to do work for the foundation as part of their job, she said, "We have to leave something for their judgment."

Democracy Watch says it has long called for foundations to be more publicly accountable. "It's a systemic problem and the provincial government's fault that they haven't extended the disclosure law and the public accountability laws to institutions like the foundation that serve a public purpose," said organization cofounder Duff Conacher.

"It is only through transparent practices and procedures that the public can make an informed judgment about the legitimacy of these practices," said Robert Shepherd, associate professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University in Ottawa. "Whether those involved believe they were acting rightly is immaterial: the perceptions left by their actual behaviours raise uncomfortable questions."

Newspapers: "CEO's hidden expenses questioned," The Hamilton Spectator, Joanna Frketich, A1

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Ottawa LRT Report Offers Lessons on Public-Private Partnerships

A report on the lessons the city learned from planning the first phase of rail construction in Ottawa has found a number of shortcomings in the rules around public-private partnerships.

According to the report, the system pushes for cheap over good, and gives bidders an incentive to squeeze as many costs as they can out of construction budgets and into decades-long maintenance agreements, where they will get much less attention.

The report is a co-production of consulting firms Deloitte and Boxfish Group, part of a number of studies laying out the city's plans for the next, \$3.6-billion stage of rail and related projects.

Ottawa Citizen columnist David Reevely notes Boxfish's proprietor Brian Guest is a former aide to Minister Bob Chiarelli and Paul Martin. He is also the brother of Robyn Guest, a senior city official who is married to Chris Swail, head of the rail planning office. "So keep in mind that this assessment is in part an inside job," he writes.

The report says the city's biggest foul-up in the project is its error in handling the price of electricity, forgetting that big power consumers are charged based on the maximum electricity they demand at once, not just the total amount they use in a day.

The report also makes clear the work it takes to scrape together funding for such a project, largely because federal and provincial governments have way more money, but they will not pay for any expenses the city incurs before they have formally agreed to contribute. The city has to get its request in as early as possible.

As a result, "On the Confederation Line project, the initial estimate of \$1.8 billion was developed and submitted without allowance for inflation, and appropriate amount of contingency ... This estimate was then used as the basis for the federal and provincial funding announcements."

The report also found that one thing that worked well in the Ottawa project is the requirement for bidders to assume construction risks, "like unexpected ground conditions that led to cave-ins in the downtown tunnel."

In the case of Ottawa's LRT, the consultants think the city got a good deal.

“However, it is possible for a bid that is far more expensive on the capital cost to have the lowest cost overall,” the report says, and the financing system would not handle such a case well.

Columnist David Reevely notes that “Ontario is deeply in love with public-private partnerships like this one but it's still learning how to do them well. These are multibillion-dollar lessons, so the sooner we grasp them, the better.”

Newspapers: “Ottawa’s LRT experience offers lesson in perils of public-private partnerships,” The Ottawa Citizen, David Reevely, A2

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Electricity Costs at Timmins Hospital Could Threaten Medical Services

In a front page story, The Timmins Daily Press reports while electricity prices was the top of the agenda on PC leader Patrick Brown’s visit to Timmins last week, there was little mention of the situation the Timmins and District Hospital finds itself in as its energy costs continue to rise uncontrollably.

At the hospital, the situation has become so dire that the hospital's board of directors has recently raised the specter of medical service cuts unless funding is increased or energy costs are brought under control.

“We continue to have difficulty meeting all the demands imposed on us. Some of the costs include the carbon tax which is in addition to the increasing price of hydro which affects us quite drastically,” said trustee Leon Laforest. “Unless we start getting increased funding from the province, we're going to have to start cutting somewhere to balance the budget.”

The hospital consumes about 9.17 million kilowatt-hours per year. In contrast, the average Ontario home uses 9,000 kilowatt-hours every year. Over the past five years, the cost of each kilowatt-hour has risen by 44 per cent. Chief financial officer, Bryan Bennetts said that this has translated into hundreds of thousands in extra spending for the hospital.

“Our current annual cost for hydro is approximately \$1.2 million,” said Bennetts. “At our current consumption rate, our hydro cost would have been \$825,000 five years ago.”

Minister Thibeault said the TADH should learn from Health Sciences North in Sudbury and find ways to save energy by retrofitting the building. “They actually instituted a program in which they are conserving their energy... they've done many, many things. And the savings they are making on their energy bill now is \$400,000 a year. They are seeing those dollars go directly back into health care costs,” he said.

However, according to Bennetts, the Timmins hospital has already been doing retrofit work. In the past five years, those changes have cut the hospital's energy needs by 6 per cent or about 550,000 kilowatt-hours. He said this saved the hospital about \$100,000 per year.

Asked what the PC Party's plan would be to help the hospital, Brown said he was made aware of the hospital's concerns when he last toured the facility. However, he offered no policies ideas that would help the hospital specifically. Instead, he said it was more reason why the general energy policy he was in Timmins promoting was so important.

“Here's another human side of [Premier] Kathleen Wynne's hydro crisis: it's putting hospitals on the brink,” said Brown. “If there's ever more reason to stop the fire sale of hydro one, rip up the Green Energy Act, and rein in exorbitant executive salaries, it's that even hospitals can't afford them.”

Newspapers: "Few solutions for hospital energy bill," The Timmins Daily Press, Alan S. Hale, A1

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Tomato Growers Want Details of \$3M Grant to Cannery

☐ A \$3-million provincial grant announced in 2014 for Thomas Canning to build a "new state-of-the-art fruit and vegetable processing facility" did not have to go toward a new building, says the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

☐ Farmers say millions of dollars' worth of tomatoes rotted in the fields in Essex County and Chatham-Kent last fall when the old Maidstone processing plant could not schedule enough deliveries of the tomatoes it had contracted farmers to grow.

☐ Farmers, who had agreed to grow significantly larger crops for Thomas Canning than in past years, said they were reassured by the grant announcement but are now confused as to what happened to the money.

☐ Instead of going toward a new building, the ministry said the money was used as intended for equipment, marketing, consulting and professional services under a conditional grant agreement that expires December 31. The ministry confirmed the full \$3-million had been granted, but would not say how much the money went to each area.

☐ The "grant money was used for the eligible expenses originally intended," ministry spokesperson Charles-Antoine Dubois said in an email. He said it helped the company create and retain 27 jobs, rebrand its Utopia brand and enter international markets in Nigeria and China.

☐ A Feb. 21, 2014 ministry press release had stated: "Ontario is helping Thomas Canning build a new state-of-the-art fruit and vegetable processing facility that will support local farmers and create 40 new full-time jobs" and that "the province is providing \$3 million for the construction of the new facility."

☐ Dubois confirmed that the family business applied for funding under the Rural Economic Development Program to "increase production capacity in their Maidstone plant" with the overall costs to the company at about \$16 million including the grant. He said a new building was not part of the eligible funding.

☐ "The overall project itself evolved over the course of the funding agreement, and Thomas Canning made a decision to expand its existing facility instead of building a new facility," Dubois said.

☐ "I'm frustrated to say the least," said Chatham-Kent tomato grower Frank Furlan. "They're spending \$3 million, if it was that much, and what do we have to show for it?" Furlan said he has lost close to \$400,000. Growers are waiting to hear what company CEO Bill Thomas will say at a meeting expected this week about compensation for the unprocessed tomatoes.

Newspapers: "Growers want details of \$3M grant to cannery," The Windsor Star, Sharon Hill, A3

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Every Inmate at Kenora Jail Has Addictions, Mental Health Issues

☐ Renu Mandhane, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, says 90 per cent of inmates at the provincial jail in Kenora, Ontario, are Indigenous and all of them are suffering from mental illness, cognitive impairment or addictions. Mandhane toured the jail last week and said there are reasons for concern.

☐ Mandhane notes that many of the inmates come from remote First Nations north of Kenora and may have never left their home communities before their arrest.

☐ “This is a very unique population. Many of the people I spoke to, English is not their first language,” Mandhane said. “Their families are sometimes hundreds of kilometres away, so they weren't able to have regular visits with family. So the cultural disruption was a big issue.”

☐ Mandhane notes that the Kenora jail does a good job at limiting the use of segregation, or solitary confinement, to about 10 per cent, which is one of the lowest rates in the province. “That's a positive thing, but many of the people I did speak to in segregation, had obviously serious mental health disabilities and a lack of treatment support,” she said.

☐ Mandhane said the visit to Kenora presented an eye-opener regarding poverty and homelessness and illustrated the need for affordable housing. She said hearing from people at a public forum at the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre also provided insight into the despair that could contribute to the high rate of suicide in northern First Nations.

Newspapers: “Every inmate at Kenora, Ont. jail have addictions, mental health issues: human rights commissioner,” CBC News (online), Jody Porter

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Editorial: The Province Must Deliver

☐ The editorial board for the Toronto Star is agreeing with Toronto Mayor John Tory's calls for more freedom in implementing its own revenue-generating tools and for more funding from the two upper levels of government.

☐ According to the editorial board, while the city may have recently adopted a \$10.5 billion operating budget, it is obvious that more funds will be needed to address the city's crumbling infrastructure and social housing stock, as well as its unfunded capital projects.

☐ “The city badly needs substantive and stable financial support from the provincial and federal governments if it is to be able to do any kind of long-term planning and fulfil its ... potential,” writes the board.

☐ It applauds Mayor Tory for his persistence in implementing new revenue tolls, such as road tolls, and says that it's especially necessary given that both the provincial and federal governments have downloaded costs like social housing and infrastructure onto cities.

☐ In particular, the board notes the cost of social housing. Three years ago, Toronto approved a 10-year, \$2.6 billion plan to address the backlog of repairs for Toronto Community Housing (TCH) that was supposed to be financed jointly by all three levels of government. However, it notes that neither the province nor the federal government has stepped up to pay its share and as a result, the TCH is expected to close 425 units this year. If it does not receive more funding in 2018, it will have to close another 100 units, the board notes.

❓ “Starving Toronto of ways to pay for its needs doesn’t make financial sense for the city, the rest of the province or indeed the country,” writes the board.

❓ It also applauds Mayor Tory on his demands for the province to invest more into the city’s large transit projects and its social housing sector. “These are the kinds of big measures the city needs to get on a sustainable path to the future,” writes the board. “Tory has strong arguments to make in favour of much more significant funding for the city and this is the time to make them. A stronger Toronto will be good for all of Ontario, and all of Canada.”

Newspapers: “The province must deliver,” Toronto Star, A10

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes Within the GTA

❓ The Jewish Defence League (JDL) is set to file a hate crimes complaint with Toronto Police alleging that sermons at a downtown mosque contained “troubling” words inciting the “killing of Jews.”

❓ “We are going to speak with the police,” said JDL National Co-ordinator, Meir Weinstein. “These are anti-Semitic hate crimes.”

❓ However, before the JDL files the complaint, it will be holding an emergency meeting to decide how to proceed after bringing to light several videos taken within the downtown mosque, Masjid Toronto.

❓ Weinstein’s comments come after videos surfaced online of a 2016 sermon in Arabic that were originally posted online by Masjid Toronto.

❓ According to Cijnews co-founder, Jonathan Halevi, who reposted videos of the sermon, the sermon included the following: “Count their number; slay them one by one and spare not one of them, O Allah! Purify Al-Aqsa Mosque [a famous mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem] from the filth of the Jews.”

❓ “It’s advocating the killing of Jews,” alleged Weinstein. He added that the JDL is considering paying a visit to the mosque to “clarify what is going on.” “Is this a den of worship or ... hate?” questioned Weinstein.

❓ In response to concerns, the mosque has called language used in the prayer video “inappropriate” and said it “condemns” racism towards any race or religion.

❓ Ayman Elkasrawy, the Imam who delivered one of the sermons, has also apologized. “Neither I, Masjid Toronto or the congregation harbour any form of hatred toward Jews and so I wish to apologize unreservedly for misspeaking during prayer last Ramadan,” said Elkasrawy.

❓ Meanwhile, Toronto Police have launched an investigation into a separate incident in which notes with anti-Semitic messages were left on doors at a building in North York.

❓ According to photos shared with the Toronto Star, the notes included the following phrase: “No Jews” above a swastika written in red ink. In addition, residents confirmed that Mezuzah scrolls, bearing scripture from Torah and hung on doorposts, were vandalized or stolen.

☐ “It’s absolutely disgusting,” said a resident of the building. “In my 15 plus years I’ve lived here, I’ve never had to lock my door ... but I’ll be locking the door tonight.”

☐ In a statement on Monday, Toronto Mayor John Tory condemned the acts and said, “Anti-Semitism has no place in Toronto. Our Jewish residents should not have to face hatred on their doorsteps. These acts, and the people who carry them out, do not represent Toronto or Torontonians.”

☐ Toronto Police have also confirmed that the Hate Crime Unit was investigating several other incidents over the past few weeks that were “motivated by hate.”

☐ The incident also comes following a protest that took place on Friday in front of Masjid Toronto by about 20 people – some of whom carried signs with Islamophobia messages.

☐ “We know these incidents – either rooted in Islamophobia or anti-Semitism – have a profound effect on the entire community and not just those immediate victims,” said a statement by Toronto Police.

Newspapers: “‘Troubling’ words in sermons,” Toronto Sun, Joe Warmington, A12
“Police investigating anti-Semitic incidents,” Toronto Star, Evelyn Kwong, GT5

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Electricity Rates Expected to Dominate Debate in Legislature

☐ Electricity rates are expected to be top of mind as MPPs return to the Legislature today.

☐ Premier Kathleen Wynne is promising more relief for hydro consumers. “We’ve put the 8-per-cent decrease in place and one of the things that I have heard from some people is that that... actually isn’t enough,” she said Wednesday, adding the government will introduce “a package of changes” before Finance Minister Charles Sousa tables the budget this spring.

☐ “At this point, those decisions are just being made, but we recognize that everyone across the province has seen increases in electricity... so we recognize that there’s more that we need to do for everyone,” the premier said.

☐ Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown said the government is taking action only because an election is set for June 7, 2018. “With the new session beginning, we’re seeing an out-of-touch, self-interested Liberal government that’s desperate to cling to power,” he said Friday. Brown said he would “continue to advocate for a more affordable province.”

☐ “For 13 years, this government has created an affordability crisis in our province. They’ve driven up hydro rates, slashed health care services and made Ontario an uncompetitive place to do business,” Brown wrote in an email, stressing that “life’s harder and more unaffordable under the Wynne Liberals.”

☐ The Toronto Star notes the Progressive Conservative party is not holding its policy convention until November, meaning that it will continue to be short on details when asked for their specific plans on reducing electricity rates.

☐ NDP Leader Andrea Horwath believes the province is at a tipping point. “From hydro bills that make it impossible for families to get ahead, to soaring housing prices in some

communities, to crushing student debt levels that this government continues to profit off, it's getting harder and harder to build a good life here in Ontario, especially for young people."

☐ "It's like Kathleen Wynne hasn't had to open her own hydro bill in the past five years. The premier acts like she has no clue whatsoever of what's going on in people's lives, no clue what's happening at kitchen tables across Ontario," Horwath said Friday.

☐ Horwath, who opposes the government's partial privatization of Hydro One, also vowed to "ratchet up the pressure to stop the sell-off" of the provincial electricity transmission utility.

Newspapers: "Hydro rates will power debate in legislature," Toronto Star, Robert Benzie and Kristin Rushowy, A6

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Sault College Says Funding Formula Could Result in Deficit This Year

☐ In a front page story, The Sault Star reports Sault College will face a budget deficit this year unless the provincial government adjusts how it funds the post-secondary institution.

☐ On Thursday, college president Ron Common told the board of governors that the college is being squeezed by a funding formula better suited to large schools in major urban centres.

☐ "College presidents are very worried about the province's commitment to the sustainability of college education, particularly in Northern Ontario," said Common when discussing a PwC report created for Colleges Ontario, titled Fiscal Sustainability of Ontario Colleges.

☐ Since 2007-2008, provincial funding of colleges has decreased annually "in real dollars," resulting in an accumulated shortfall of \$900 million for Ontario's 24 colleges. Northern schools get 63 per cent of revenue from provincial grants compared to 38 per cent for colleges in the Toronto area. Sault College's budget for 2016-2017 is \$54.4 million.

☐ Sault College has already requested Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development increase its aboriginal success fund. A grant for small Northern and rural colleges has remained "static" for eight years, said Common. College assets are valued at \$196 million. Deferred maintenance totals \$40.6 million.

☐ Sault College is looking for alternative sources of revenue by recruiting more international students and recruiting out-of-region students to high demand programs with higher tuition costs. It is also looking to continue its Study North program to attract students from southern Ontario to Northern Ontario college campuses.

☐ The PwC report suggests six possible scenarios to address the anticipated financial shortfall colleges will face. Common favours an increase to grant funding and increasing additional sources of revenue. If nothing is done, the result will be job cuts at Ontario colleges.

☐ Sault College employs 600 full- and part-time staff, and teaches more than 4,000 students annually. Common notes that most cost-trimming in the last five years was done by attrition, but said that "there are limitations as to how much additional savings can realize."

☐ The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development is "aware of the financial pressures facing colleges, especially in our small, rural and Northern communities," said spokesperson Tanya Blazina, adding the government will change its funding of colleges, resulting in "more predictable and stable" support.

☐ The ministry is also working with colleges to develop strategic mandate agreements. Some funding will be based on “a college's unique strengths and their ability to deliver even more positive outcomes for students,” said Blazina.

Newspapers: “Red ink on horizon,” The Sault Star, Brian Kelly, A1

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: TTC Asked to Look Into Money Lost from Broken Presto Card Readers

☐ Toronto City Councillor Joe Mihevc is recommending the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) look into how much revenue it has lost as a result of broken Presto card readers.

☐ According to Mihevc, the TTC should develop a mathematical formula to calculate just exactly how many fares are going unpaid due to the well-documented problems with Metrolinx's Presto machines.

☐ He added that the formula needs to be right – factoring in things like the fairly low number of Presto users in the city, as well as the large number of people who pay their fares with monthly Metro passes – so there are no disagreements with Metrolinx over the eventual price tag.

☐ “We know that we are losing money ... what the bleeding rate is, we don't know,” said Mihevc. “I don't want the TTC, frankly, at the end of the day to be ripped off by Presto implementation,” he added, nothing he doesn't believe Metrolinx would do that to the city.

☐ Currently, Presto machines are available on all TTC vehicles and subway stations. However, due to a range of technical issues, fare readers can go out of service. Just last fall, Metrolinx conducted an audit which found that some 12 percent of fare readers on buses weren't working, while five percent of machines on streetcars were also out of service.

☐ Mihevc said that once the issues with Presto machines are fixed, the city will work harder to encourage riders to use Presto cards. “We want to work out all the kinks in the system before we do aggressive advertising,” he said.

☐ In response to Mihevc's recommendations, TTC spokesperson Brad Ross said that he expects the recommendations to be accepted and the issue investigated.

☐ The paper notes that issues with Presto readers have been acknowledged by Metrolinx, with its CEO saying that his organization is aiming for 99 percent or better reliability for the thousands of machines.

Newspapers: “TTC asked to look into how much money it's losing from broken Presto card readers,” CBC News, John Rieti, online

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Ontario Court Justices Point to “Crown's Failure” in Staying Charges

Two Ontario Court Justices, Andras Schreck and Kathryn Hawke, have recently called out the federal Crown office in Brampton for contributing to the “culture of complacency” in the legal system described by the Supreme Court in a landmark ruling last year.

Last year in a landmark ruling, *R. v. Jordan*, the Supreme Court found that cases in provincial court that take longer than 18 months to get to trial are considered presumptively unreasonable, and it falls on the Crown to prove that there were exceptional circumstances for the delay.

Although the Ontario government has made a move to add more judges and provincial Crown attorneys to help clear the backlog of cases at risk of being thrown out, the two cases in Brampton highlight what lawyers saw are other issues that cause delay, but get less attention.

According to Schreck, in his case, the delays were a result of the Crown’s failure to fulfil its disclosure obligations in a timely fashion. As a result, the case exemplified “the culture of complacency” condemned in *Jordan*.”

In Schreck’s case, he found the delay to be 25 months, once delay attributed to the defence was subtracted. As one reason for the delay, Schreck pointed out that it took eight months for the accused persons’ lawyers to provide their lawyers with the information to obtain (ITO). He said he found it hard to believe that it took the Crown eight months to vet the ITO before it was disclosed to defence lawyers, because the document was nine pages and the only information censored was “two small portions on the second page.”

“I find it difficult to accept that the Crown’s office was so short-staffed that it took eight months to vet nine pages,” said Schreck. “Even if it was, the Crown’s failure to allocate sufficient resources to the prosecution of serious criminal offences cannot justify delay that is otherwise unreasonable.”

Meanwhile, in Hawke’s case, the defence lawyers claim that a major source of delay was a result of the local police taking too long to provide evidence to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. “It’s not uncommon in Peel drug cases for initial disclosure ... to take months before it is given out,” said the two lawyers. “These things don’t get done faster quite simply because some Peel officer don’t care to do them faster.”

In response to allegations of delays, Peel Police Sgt. Josh Colley said that Peel Police take “the disclosure process seriously.” “We have a directive that outlines the time frame within which disclosure is required to occur, and it applies to all areas of Peel Regional Police.”

Newspapers: “Judges point to ‘Crown’s failure’ in staying Brampton drug cases,” Toronto Star, Jacques Gallant, GT1

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Concerns About Under-Reported Violence Against Paramedics

Jeannie Cubitt, a female paramedic in rural Ontario, is raising concerns regarding the grossly under-reported violence experienced by paramedics while on the job.

According to Cubitt, who launched a popular social media platform for health care workers – ParamedicJennie, paramedics experience abuse often, but it has become so widely accepted as part of the job that it goes grossly unreported. She added that it is an issue that “needs

to be addressed.”

☐ According to a survey of more than 1,300 paramedics from Ontario and Nova Scotia in 2011, 26.1 percent had been physically assaulted in the previous 12 months. Meanwhile, another 70 percent reported being verbally abused, 40 percent cited physical intimidation and 2.7 percent reported being sexually assaulted.

☐ A 2016 study from Drexel University also found that paramedics were more than 12 times more likely to be injured by a patient than a firefighter, and that gender was “not a meaningful predictor of patient-initiated violence.”

☐ Cubitt noted that by law, paramedics are not permitted to fight back. Like any other citizen however, they can defend themselves, but she notes they can also be charged with assault for touching someone who doesn’t wish to be touched.

☐ The paper notes that the increasing reports of violence against paramedics in Australia have prompted a jurisdiction there to experiment with body cameras. Although, Cubitt said she is reluctant to embrace the idea here, fearing that it could breach patient confidentiality and be used against paramedics who might be doing their best for a patient in a situation but not doing it by the book.

Newspapers: “A profession not for faint of heart,” National Post, Joe O’Connor, A3

Television: None

Radio: None

FRONT PAGE HEADLINES (GTA NEWSPAPERS)

February 21, 2017

TORONTO STAR

- * ORNGE investigation set to wrap up
- * The art of the deal (with photo)
- * Preparing for the changing of the guard
- * Trump names military strategist to replace Flynn (with photo)
- * Digital DETOX (with photo)

TORONTO SUN

- * Pot shot (with photo)
- * Livestreamed suicides on rise (with photo)

GLOBE AND MAIL

- * Banks, police following money trail to target human trafficking
- * Unsafe to drink (with photo)
- Ottawa set to renew troop training mission in Ukraine
- * Most families of Afghan vet suicides to receive military honour

NATIONAL POST

- * The AMAZING life & tragic DEATH of Toronto Blue Jays PROSPECT (with photo)
- * Refugee policy may be ‘testing limits’
- * Kremlin scoffs at ‘absurd’ peace deal
- * Syrup (with photo)

*** Oil**

TV NEWS SUMMARY (6:00 P.M. EDITION)

Stations surveyed: Global, CFTO, City TV, CJOH, CHCH, CFPL

Disclaimer

February 20, 2017

GLOBAL – 5:30 PM (Toronto)

1) A Global News reporter visits parks, skating rinks and beaches to observe how families are spending Family Day.

2) Weather.

3) Toronto police are trying to determine if anti-Semitic notes left on a number of doors in a Willowdale condo building constitute a hate crime.

4) St. Catharines community members are protesting the potential re-opening of a veterinary office that was suspended due to allegations of animal abuse.

5) One woman is in hospital after a three-alarm fire at a Toronto Community Housing apartment on Dundas and Sherbourne this morning.

6) Global News interviews veteran Toronto firefighters about the unexpected scope of the six-alarm racquet club fire at Yonge and St. Clair last week.

7) Thousands of Americans are taking advantage of Presidents' Day to protest against President Donald Trump. He continues to be criticized for incorrectly citing a terror attack in Sweden at a Florida rally.

8) A John Hopkins University study has found legalizing same-sex marriage has reduced teen suicide attempts in the U.S.

9) A San Diego company is constructing an indoor town reminiscent of the 1950s to help dementia patients relive comforting memories.

10) The Transportation Safety Board has found passengers who were injured during a Toronto-bound Air Canada flight from Shanghai in December 2015 ignored warnings to wear their seatbelts.

13) Update: Global News interviews a condo resident whose mezuzah was stolen.

18) MPPs will return to Queen's Park tomorrow to resume sitting at the Ontario Legislature. Affordable Hydro bills and a change to the global adjustment fee are expected to be a priority agenda item.

GLOBAL – 6:30 PM (National)

1) There were 452 claims of illegal immigrants entering Quebec from the U.S. in January. Montreal city council has declared Montreal a sanctuary city.

2) U.S. President Donald Trump has appointed Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster as the national

security advisor to replace Michael Flynn.

3) Thousands of Americans are participating in “Not My Presidents’ Day” rallies across the U.S. to protest President Trump’s policies.

4) Thousands of anti-Trump protesters are demanding for British Prime Minister Theresa May to revoke her invitation for a state visit in London.

5) An Angus Reid Institute survey has found 1 in 4 Canadians want a Trump-style travel ban in Canada.

6) Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has issued an apology for answering questions only in French during a town hall in Quebec last month.

7) Eleven people walked through an unscreened security lane at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York this morning.

8) An atmospheric river is prompting historic flood and flash flood warnings in California.

9) Winter clean-up efforts are continuing in Halifax, Nova Scotia after a blizzard.

10) A father, son, and friend were rescued from beneath a collapsed snow fort by their family dog in Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia.

CFTO – 6:00 PM (Toronto)

1) The Transportation Safety Board is reminding people to keep their seatbelts buckled on flights after a December 2015 flight that saw 21 people injured when the plane hit turbulence.

2) Police are investigating after reports of vandalism and anti-Semitic messages were left on doors of a North York condominium.

3) An interview with the man who saved a woman from a fire at a Toronto Community Housing building this morning.

4) Toronto Mayor John Tory visited and thanked some of the fire fighters who responded to last week’s six alarm fire at Yonge and St. Clair.

5) Mayor Tory was confronted today by a resident who accused him of not doing enough to help the city’s homeless.

6) Weather

7) Protesters marched at the still-closed Skyway Animal Clinic today, calling for harsher punishment against the veterinarian found guilty of abusing the animals in his care.

8) Toronto ranks 38th on the list of the most congested cities in the world.

9) There are renewed calls on social media tonight for Uber users to delete their Uber accounts following claims of sexual harassment from a former employee.

10) Toronto police are investigation for a man in connection with a sexual assault investigation.

City TV – 6:00 PM (Toronto)

1) Parking lanes along College Street that do not meet city size requirements have forced drivers to park in bike lanes and receive expensive fines.

- 2) Two people were injured after a three-alarm fire at a Toronto Community Housing building near Dundas and Sherbourne.
- 3) A homeless advocate reprimanded Mayor John Tory about funding cuts to shelter programs during his visit to Fire Station 311.
- 4) The Transportation Safety Board has found passengers who were injured during a Toronto-bound Air Canada flight from Shanghai in December 2015 ignored warnings to wear their seatbelts.
- 5) A 24-year-old has been charged with stunt driving after driving 203 km/h in a 60 km/h zone on Victoria Park Avenue near McNicoll Avenue.
- 6) Thousands of Americans are participating in “Not My Presidents’ Day” rallies across the U.S. on Presidents’ Day.
- 7) U.S. President Donald Trump has named General H.R. McMaster as the national security advisor to replace Michael Flynn.
- 8) U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is in Brussels to reassure E.U. leaders the U.S. is committed to working with Europe and pledges support for NATO.
- 9) Several sports, games and activities were held at Whitby’s Abilities Centre for Family Day.
- 10) Weather.
- 12) CityNews interviews a couple who has been helped by the provincially funded in-vitro fertilization program.

CJOH – 6:00 PM (Ottawa)

- 1) Businesses in the Glebe were open for Family Day today after winning an appeal and getting an exemption in their area.
- 2) Los Angeles has the worst traffic congestion in the world, according to a new study.
- 3) A look at how Ottawa residents celebrated Family Day today,
- 4) Weather
- 5) There were no injuries after a wheel detached from a truck on Highway 401.
- 6) One man is in hospital after he was struck by a vehicle in the Byward Market last night.
- 7) A Kanata father is speaking out about his daughter’s drug addiction in hopes of saving lives.
- 8) A new study says children whose mothers are prescribed opioid pain killers have a higher chance of being hospitalized for overdose.
- 9) There were many protests around the United States today on President’s Day.
- 10) U.S. President Donald Trump, in a tweet over the weekend, alluded to some kind of incident, sparking confusion.

CHCH – 6:00 PM (Hamilton)

- 1) Two families were displaced by weekend fires.

- 2) A Hamilton man died after falling through the ice at the Waterford conservation area
- 3) The mild weather has prevented Hamilton's waterfalls from freezing over
- 4) Weather
- 5) A traffic stop led to a drug bust involving fentanyl.
- 6) Police are investigating an unprovoked attack that sent a man to hospital.
- 7) The Transportation Safety Board is highlighting the importance of seatbelts after investigating a severe turbulent incident on a Toronto bound flight.
- 8) A driver was caught driving 203 km/h on Toronto street.
- 9) Police are looking for a suspect in connection with a robbery at pawn shop.
- 10) A small protest was held front of an animal hospital in St. Catharines to raise awareness about a veterinarian who worked there and was accused of abusing pets.

CFPL – 6:00 PM (London)

- 1) Residents and business owners were gathered outside of Hanover to protest rising Hydro prices.
- 2) Approximately 15 people protested the sale of Hydro One in London today.
- 3) Weather.
- 4) London police have arrested a man last night after recovering a firearm.
- 5) A woman from Huron county has pleaded guilty to animal cruelty charges.
- 6) Former Navistar workers will be finding out their pension plan details after a decade-long battle.
- 7) Canadian labour leader Bob White, who helped create the Canadian Auto Workers Union, has passed away at the age of 81.
- 8) Americans across the United States protested the Trump administration on President's Day.
- 9) Petrolia Town Council has agreed to seek a heritage designation for Sunnyside Mansion.
- 10) Many families celebrated Family Day by fishing at Westminster Pond.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these summaries are those of the media cited and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Ontario Public Service.

RADIO NEWS SUMMARY (6:30 A.M. EDITION)

February 21, 2017

CBC Radio (Toronto)

- 1) The price of electricity is expected to dominate the new session at Queen's Park today. All party leaders heard complaints from voters about hydro bills while touring the province during the winter break. Government sources tell CBC News the Liberal government is considering a plan that would

moon across the board cuts to hydro costs in the range of 8%. Premier Kathleen Wynne says there will be targeted relief for people struggling the most with electricity bills, such as rural and northern residents.

2) Peel Police are investigating a deadly shooting at a Brampton motel last night.

3) The Toronto Public Library will put its new bookmobile on city streets in May.

4) The Yonge/Dundas Business Improvement Association wants to open up a neon sign museum in Toronto.