

Daily Media note - May 15, 2017

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Good Afternoon Premier,

We have four items to update you on today:

- Hydro
- Labour law
- Jagmeet Singh
- French, Ethnic and Chinese Media Update

Hydro

Media coverage on hydro has largely continued today as it was again a hot topic at Question Period and NDP leader Andrea Horwath announced this morning her party will vote against the Liberal plan. Numerous stories have been filed to report that Horwath explained that the plan will be a "*relief for a couple of years, then, boom!*" (Ferguson, Toronto Star) and citing the Liberal cabinet document leaked to the Progressive Conservatives last week as proof for Horwath that the government is lying about hydro. The Star story emphasizes that Minister Thibeault dismissed the leaked document as "outdated".

The Canadian Press moved a story on their wire that we have included below for your reference:

Ontario NDP to vote against Liberal government's hydro bill plan

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath says her party will vote against the Liberal government's plan to lower hydro bills, calling it a ploy to buy votes for the next provincial election.

Under legislation tabled last week, Ontarians will see lowered hydro bills for the next 10 years before paying higher costs for the following 20 years.

Horwath says Ontarians can't afford the plan.

She cited a Liberal cabinet document leaked to the Progressive Conservatives last week, which contains a projection that electricity bills will drop this year, rise slightly for four years while increases are limited to the rate of inflation, and then rise quickly after that.

Premier Kathleen Wynne says the figures in that document are out of date, but the government isn't ready to release updated numbers.

Horwath is accusing the government of hiding information from the public and is calling on the government to release all of its projections about how much the hydro plan will cost in the long run.

Horwath also says the government is giving the public no time to give feedback on the plan as it's attempting to get the legislation passed before the House rises for the summer.

“I think people knew that, one way or another, they'd pay the prices for Premier Wynne's latest move on hydro, but the costs Wynne is expecting us all to take on with this plan is truly disgusting,” Horwath said.

The hydro legislation will lower time-of-use rates by removing from bills a portion of the global adjustment, a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers. For the next 10 years, a new entity overseen by Ontario Power Generation will take on debt to pay that difference.

Then, the cost of paying back that debt with interest _ which the government says will be up to \$28 billion _ will go back onto ratepayers' bills for the next 20 years as a “Clean Energy Adjustment.”

Horwath acknowledged that the Liberal majority government can implement their plan, even with her party and the Progressive Conservatives opposed.

The Toronto Sun picked up the story but changed the title into: “*NDP will vote against 'disgusting' hydro rate cut*”. The majority of TV channels (CTV, Global, CP24, City) also pick up the story for their website. CP24 ran a clip with Andrea Horwath getting angry during Question Period and the response of Minister Thibeault saying:

“Thanks to the leadership of this Premier and this government, Mr. Speaker, our province is being built up right across this province. You know what's going down, Mr. Speaker? If we get this legislation passed? 25% of everyone's hydro bills across this province”.

Labour law

The Canadian Press moved a story on [its](#) wire to report the Ontario Chamber of Commerce wrote you a letter today to share the concerns of the Ontario business community about major labour law changes. The story reports that employers are particularly concerned about potential changes to unionization that could see workers unionized against their wishes.

The story comes after CBC's Mike Crawley revealed over the weekend some reforms the government is currently discussing.

We have included the CP story below for your reference:

Ontario businesses warn against major labour law changes

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is urging Premier Kathleen Wynne against making major changes to the province's labour laws.

The business group wrote a letter to Wynne today about the province's Changing Workplaces review, a top-to-bottom look at the province's labour laws that is expected to usher in major changes.

Issues covered by the review include the process by which workers can unionize, work scheduling, sick time and sick notes, emergency leave and leave for those who experience domestic violence, and the issue of misclassifying employees as independent contractors so that they're exempt from labour laws.

Chamber of Commerce vice-president Karl Baldauf says employers are particularly concerned about potential changes to unionization.

He warned that allowing unions to use a card-based certification process to let employees to form a union, without holding a vote on the matter, could see workers unionized against their wishes.

He says businesses likely could absorb some minor changes to labour laws, but a major overhaul could have unintended economic consequences that ultimately could lead to job losses.

He also says raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour could put some businesses in jeopardy.

Labour Minister Kevin Flynn says a \$15 minimum wage isn't part of the review _ but he didn't rule out making that change down the road. He says the government will make the Changing Workplaces report public in the near future, with plans to act on it shortly thereafter.

The CP story has been picked up by some TV channel websites (CTV, CP24). So far we haven't seen stories on the topic outside the CP one.

Jagmeet Singh

Jagmeet Singh's upcoming announcement taking place this evening in Brampton, where he is expected to announce that he will enter the NDP federal leadership race, got a lot of media coverage since this morning. CP24 is expected to cover the announcement live starting around 7:30pm.

The Canadian Press moved a story very early this morning to announce the news first. We have included the story below for your reference:

Ontario politician Jagmeet Singh to shake up federal NDP leadership race

Jagmeet Singh, long a star among the NDP ranks of the Ontario legislature, embarks later today on a bid to replace Tom Mulcair as the party's leader in Ottawa _ a quest that could make him the first non-Caucasian to helm a major federal party.

Singh, who currently serves as the provincial party's deputy leader, is expected to launch his campaign tonight alongside supporters at an event at Bombay Palace in Brampton, Ont _ the same place he celebrated his 2011 provincial win.

His supporters include Manitoba legislature member Nahanni Fontaine, party youth wing co-chair Ali Chatur, Quebec organizer and former Jack Layton speechwriter Willy Blomme and Peel school board trustee Harkirat Singh.

Should he be successful, Singh _ a turbaned Sikh _ would break through a long-standing barrier at the federal level, one that really ought have been shattered long ago, said Karl Belanger, Mulcair's former principal secretary.

“Having somebody from a different ethnic background than what we have seen over the past 150 years is something that needs to be applauded,” Belanger said.

The NDP has had trouble connecting with ethnic minorities both in Ontario and at the federal level, said Queen's University labour and history professor Christo Aivalis.

Singh's leadership would send a strong signal to the party and to the Canadian public, Aivalis said.

“While some people fear that his turban, his name, his skin colour ... could hurt him in certain parts of Canada, others say that in big cities where the majority of seats are, he speaks to a new Canada,” Aivalis said.

In the run-up to the 2015 election, the NDP campaign hit a brick wall when Mulcair got caught between a political rock _ the question of whether to allow Muslim face coverings during citizenship ceremonies _ and a hard place, that being Quebec.

The NDP leader, who entered the campaign as the front-runner, saw his base of support in his home province bleed away after he came out opposing Conservative and Bloc Quebecois plans to ban the niqab during the oath of citizenship.

That controversy highlights how secularism can be used by some to promote discriminatory policies, capitalize on identity issues and create divisions, Belanger said. “Quebec has a strong movement opposed to religious symbols.”

That could be an issue for Singh, he added, but to what extent is not yet clear.

Born in the east Toronto community of Scarborough to Punjabi parents, Singh's upbringing included stints in St. John's, N.L., and Windsor, Ont.; he worked as a criminal defence attorney before making the jump to politics in 2011.

He's also known as a fashion plate _ he has graced multiple best-dressed and style-icon lists in the Toronto area over the years _ and for his prowess as a mixed martial arts fighter.

Singh's candidacy will undoubtedly bring a new dimension to the race, said Nathan Cullen, a veteran MP who sought the job in 2012 as one of several rivals to Mulcair.

“I think it will likely change the dynamic for the good,”

Cullen said in an interview. “I've always been a fan; he's a compelling speaker and has solid progressive roots and I think would be a challenge for (Prime Minister Justin) Trudeau.”

Cullen said he believes the race is shaping up well _ especially since at one point, it wasn't clear whether anyone really wanted to join what was sure to be a long and protracted race. Voting is scheduled to take place in October.

Cullen, too, said it's high time there was some diversity on display in the offices of Ottawa's political leaders.

“It will be a challenge to some people's perspective as well of what a Canadian political leader looks like and where they come from.”

The other official NDP leadership contenders are B.C. MP Peter Julian, Ontario MP Charlie Angus, Manitoba MP Niki Ashton and Quebec MP Guy Caron.

Former veterans ombudsman Pat Stogran and Montreal consulting firm founder Ibrahim Bruno El-Khoury are also running, but are not yet considered official because they haven't submitted nomination paperwork or paid the fee.

First-quarter results from Elections Canada show Angus is leading the campaign fundraising race.

Between January and March 2017, Angus brought in \$110,765, while Ashton collected \$65,521, Caron received \$57,235 and Julian raised \$19,143.

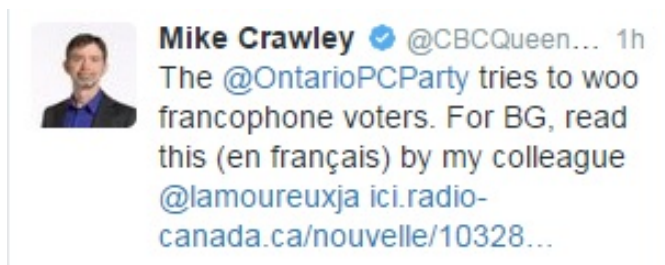
The next leadership debate is scheduled for Sudbury, Ont., on May 28.

French, Ethnic and Chinese Media Update

French

Ahead of Patrick Brown's 2nd annual Queen's Park Francophone Day today, Radio-Canada's Julie-Anne L'Amoureux filed a story that questioned the political influence of the franco-ontarians. She reported that one year before the general elections; the Tories have decided to seduce this community: Patrick Brown frequently delivers remarks in French, has visited northern French speaking communities and keeps promoting his support towards a francophone University. A number of the PC caucus members are currently learning French: Steve Clark, Sam Oosterhoff, Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek and Patrick Brown. Brown admitted that during the 2014 election there was no competition with the liberals for the francophone vote but that things will be different for the 2018 under his leadership.

Brown's Francophone Day got a lot of activities on Twitter among French media and guests stakeholders.



French Media reports this afternoon that Madeleine Meilleur has been confirmed to become the next Canada Official languages commissioner. You will be tweeting about it later today in French to congratulate Madeleine on her new role.

Ethnic

South Asian talk radio and the Canadian Punjabi Post have been reporting on the leaked document that shows hydro bills would eventually increase. The Canadian Punjabi Post published a story titled "Electricity prices to soar after four years: Opposition parties". The article reported that the average hydro bill will increase almost \$10 a month by 2022 and then \$195 by 2027 under the Fair Hydro Plan.

We have seen coverage of Bill 56 which will bring forth regulations for the home inspection industry, such as introduce mandatory qualifications and licensing for home inspectors.

We continue to see coverage on Brampton hospital wait times. Hamdard Weekly, a Punjabi-language

newspaper, published a story titled "Ontario to invest \$10.2 million more in William Osler Health System". The article reports that Ontario will invest \$10.2 million more for the improvement and expansion of various services at the William Osler Health System. Harinder Malhi, MPP Brampton-Springdale, said the investment will help reduce wait time for Brampton patients.

Chinese

The many sweeping changes to our employment and labor laws under consideration did not get much attention. Today Commercial was the only outlet that played the news as its page 6 top story. Ever money wise, the daily highlighted in its heading and introduction that two of the major proposed changes will be increasing the minimum pay to \$15 and paid sick leaves.

FYI – CBC just reported that Interim Conservative Leader Rona Ambrose is leaving federal politics. The Edmonton MP will make the announcement Tuesday in Ottawa, sources tell CBC News.

FYI – Metro News is reporting on a Forum Research poll which showed that 53 per cent of the 1,103 Ontario voters surveyed approve of the move to expand rent control to all apartment units. Twenty-five per cent disapprove, while 22 per cent don't know. A 47 per cent plurality also approved of a standard lease for tenants, while 21 per cent disapproved and the remainder did not have an opinion.

FYI – The Canadian Press reports that the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies is joining a call for a coroner's inquest into the recent deaths of **A** boriginal youth living in group homes in the province.

FYI – Toronto Star's Education Reporter Andrea Gordon filed a story after a survey of 1,000 schools by People for Education found that only 41 per cent of elementary schools have a full-time or part-time specialist music teacher this year. Longtime arts advocate Holly Nimmons calls the decline "criminal" because not having access to music robs kids of vital opportunities in the name of short-term budgets.

FYI – The Canadian Press moved a st **ory on a** Ontario-born filmmaker who identifies as neither male nor female says the province "is in a prime position" to make non-binary birth certificates happen. Joshua M. Ferguson, who wants to be referred to by the gender-neutral pronouns "they/them/their," applied on Friday to have a change of sex designation on their birth certificate from male to non-binary _ a term used to define someone who doesn't identify with either gender.

FYI – The Canadian Press report that Canada's immigration regime allows for indefinite and arbitrary detention and is therefore unconstitutional, Federal Court heard Monday. What's needed is robust process and a legal limit on how long foreigners can be held when speedy deportation is unlikely to happen, court was told by lawyers for a Jamaican man who spent five years in custody.

FYI – Local Media is reporting a man is dead after falling into Lake Ontario near the Redpath Sugar refinery on Monday. Police responded to a call of a man in the water by a witness at Sugar Beach, near Queens Quay East and Lower Jarvis Street, around 11:30 a.m.

FYI – Tomorrow evening you will be delivering remarks at the inauguration of Go Green Cricket Field flood lights at Valley Park Middle School, Ronan will be accompanying you at this event.

As always, let us know if you have any questions.

Kate, Jenn, Gurvinder and Ronan

Ronan Le Guern

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