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Your morning briefing

30.10.2017

As the world awaits with bated breath for the news of who's been indicted in the Mueller investigation, let me tell you a different story of U.S. politics and how it came to Ontario over the weekend. U.S. Senator **Bernie Sanders** gave a speech on health care in Toronto Sunday after visiting three hospitals the day before. Canada's system isn't perfect, he said in his speech, noting the lack of universal public coverage for drugs and dentistry. He was introduced by Premier **Kathleen Wynne** and **Jagmeet Singh** was spotted in the audience too.

Sanders framed the issue as one of fighting kleptocracy and oligarchy. "In my country and many parts of the world, we are moving away from democracy into kleptocracy and oligarchy. That is, in country after country, we are seeing a small handful of people controlling not only the economies but also the politics of that country," Sanders said, according to the *Globe's* report, adding, "if you want to expand and protect health care or education, there are people out there in every country in the world who think it is more important to give tax breaks to the richest people ... what we need to do is take those oligarchs on."

Meanwhile, Liberal MPP **Yvan Baker** is set to unveil his "zombie law" today. The Phones Down, Heads Up Act, if passed, would prohibiting people from using their phones as they cross the road. Walking advocates are already pushing back against the pedestrian-blaming bill, arguing that distracted walking doesn't kill people, at least not as often as distracted driving does.

Newstalk 1010 reports that the Progressive Conservatives are planning to call for the government to halt its major casino redevelopment agreement with Great Canadian Gaming, as the company is involved in a B.C.-based money laundering investigation.

Meanwhile, accessibility advocates say Ryerson University's learning centre isn't very accessible, saying the premier had promised that public money wouldn't be spent on inaccessible buildings and the three-year-old building doesn't live up to that commitment, *City News* reports.

And students at Ontario colleges are getting worried about their finances and their futures as the strike enters its third week, the *Toronto Star* reports. Both sides remain far apart, with no talks scheduled. The province has urged them to get back to the table, while the opposition parties are calling on the government to do more.

And transit fans got a sneak peek at the "dazzling" and "breathtaking" stations of the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension, which is set to open on Dec. 17, the *Toronto Star* reports.

QP Briefing's podcast is back for another week with a discussion on the Sudbury bribery trial, the long-term energy plan, confidential documents and more. Don't forget to follow along with our Question Period liveblog at 10:30 and in case you missed our stories Friday:

- With partial immunity in hand, Peter Faist testifies at gas plants trial about 'cleaning' government computers
- Hutton: In defence of Laura Miller

- In brief: Sulphur dioxide and the NDP Fair Hydro Plan plan

In other news:

Over in Alberta, the United Conservative Party has chosen **Jason Kenney** its leader. Oddly, his big moment was spoiled by the party's own website, which posted the results a good ten minutes before they were officially announced. Kenney's already battling the NDP over how the new should be defined on social issues and he used a line that should sound mighty familiar to anyone who's heard Ontario PC Leader Patrick Brown speak recently. "We don't care in this party what God you worship or who you love, what we care about as Albertans is how hard you work," Kenney said in his victory speech.

Meanwhile, the CBC finds Ontario's a lawless land when it comes to online consumer reviews, which can hurt both customer and business.

And the *Star* has a horrifying long-read about an ongoing criminal trial, in which a couple is accused of stealing another couple's baby, and imprisoning the father for decades and stealing his Ontario disability support cheques.

In the opinion pages:

- Adrienne Batra writes that the Liberals are trying to buy re-election with taxpayer money
- Chris Selley takes a look at a private member's bill aimed at the rights of criminals when it comes to employment
- The *Star* is calling on the federal government to close the "Morneau loophole"

Bills

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 25, 2017 on the motion for Second Reading of Bill 166, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts and to enact three new Acts with respect to the construction of new homes and ticket sales for events.

Third Reading of Bill 154, An Act to cut unnecessary red tape by enacting one new Act and making various amendments and repeals.

Committees

1:30 p.m.

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will meet to consider Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and to make related amendments to other Acts. Room 151.

2 p.m.

Standing Committee on Social Policy will meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 139, An Act to enact the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal Act, 2017 and the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre Act, 2017 and to amend the Planning Act, the Conservation Authorities Act and various other Acts. Room 1.

Events

9 a.m.

Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, will make an announcement. He will be joined by **Reza Moridi**, MPP for Richmond Hill, and **David Zimmer**, MPP for Willowdale. Welcome Centre Immigrant Services, 9325 Yonge St., Richmond Hill.

9 a.m.

Premier Wynne to host an Employer and Employee Bill 148, Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs Act discussion. The IRV Gastro Pub, 195 Carlton Street, Toronto.

9:30 a.m.

Yvan Baker, MPP to announce the Introduction of a Private Member's Bill, which will strengthen road safety. Media studio, Queen's Park, Toronto.

1:30 p.m.

Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services, and **Deb Matthews**, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Digital Government, will make an announcement. 339 Queen St. East, Toronto.

1:30 p.m.

Premier Wynne to meet with Volodymyr Groysman, Prime Minister of Ukraine, followed by a photo opportunity. Room 275, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto.

2 p.m.

Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi** will make an announcement in Toronto. University of Toronto, Jackman Law Building Atrium, 78 Queens Park, Toronto.

5:30 p.m.

Premier Wynne to participate in a closed roundtable discussion with Secretary General of the OECD, Angel Gurría and Canadian business leaders as part of the Toronto Global Forum. Four Seasons Hotel, 60 Yorkville Avenue, Toronto.

7:15 p.m.

Eleanor McMahon, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, will announce the laureates of the 2017 Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Arts. Canada's National Ballet School. 400 Jarvis St., Toronto.

In brief: Sulphur dioxide and the NDP Fair Hydro Plan plan

27.10.2017

Environment Minister **Chris Ballard** announced Friday that the province has opened a consultation process on a new sulphur dioxide air standard. According to the regulatory post, a phase-in period of five years is proposed and the ministry is asking for feedback on whether to apply the standards only in southern Ontario.

"Every Ontario resident deserves to breathe clean air in a prosperous and fair economy. We hear the anxieties and concerns of residents living in the Sarnia area about the impacts of industrial pollution on their health and that is why we are taking action," Ballard said in a statement. "Today, we have posted for consultation a new sulphur dioxide air standard to protect people's health. As part of our proposal to clarify modelling requirements for facilities, petroleum facilities must model emissions during start-up and shut-down operations and during acid-gas flaring. We are also committed to taking more action in the coming weeks on the cumulative effects in heavily industrialized areas of the province."

The announcement comes after bad press about the air quality in Chemical Valley and a scathing report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner.

Meanwhile, the Ontario NDP has a plan to deal with the Fair Hydro Plan, should it form government in 2018.

Energy critic **Peter Tabuns** tells *QP Briefing* that the party would discontinue to the Liberal government's Fair Hydro Plan, as it has been set out.

"We wouldn't continue this scheme to keep things off the books, to make it look good for the Wynne Liberals. We would end that borrowing by OPG. If we borrow money, we would borrow it on the provincial books, and that would eliminate a \$4 billion cost," said Tabuns. "We know that accumulating this large debt is a problem, our interest would be having a transition period over a year, year-and-a-half to move out of that system and put in place the cost savings that we've talked about on the hydro plan we put forward earlier this year."

Meanwhile, PCs have said that if they win, they plan to keep the plan in place until they can take more costs out of the system.