

Queen's Park Today – Daily Report February 22, 2018

Today at Queen's Park.....	1
Today's events	5
Appointments and employments	6
Funding announcements	6
News briefs — Non-governmental	7
Question Period.....	8

Quotation of the day

“As a mom who has been here a while, that certainly makes me worry. If my daughter were to get involved in politics and be an intern, I think that people would have cause for concern.”

PC MPP Lisa MacLeod responds to questions about news that Patrick Brown has a 23-year-old girlfriend that used to be his intern.

Today at Queen's Park

On the schedule

The House will convene at 9 a.m. to begin second reading debate on **Bill 196**, the Supply Act, 2018. The legislation, which was introduced by Treasury Board President **Eleanor McMahon** on Wednesday, authorizes the government's general expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018.

On Thursday afternoon only two pieces of private members' business will be debated: A motion from Liberal MPP **Granville Anderson** calling for the proclamation of a provincial Professional Engineers Day and a new bill from Independent MPP **Jack MacLaren** called **Bill 197**, the Affordable Electricity Act.

MacLaren's bill calls for “clean energy” to be available at the “lowest possible cost” by ending subsidies for conservation programs and wind and energy projects, and by prohibiting “government measures that artificially lower electricity prices by borrowing money today that must be paid back in the future,” like those in the Fair Hydro Act.

Former PC leader **Patrick Brown** was scheduled to put forward a bill during private members' business today, but declined to use his spot.

The PC Party filed reasoned amendments on the government's **Bill 194**, Fairness in Procurement Act, and **Bill 195**, Correctional Services Transformation Act, which blocks them from being debated until next Monday. **Bill 194** was originally scheduled to be debated Thursday afternoon. Instead, the House will debate two motions put forward by the government.

The first motion will ask the House to endorse bringing in a \$15 minimum wage for workers in January 2019. The second will call on the House to "recognize that climate change is a real and present threat" by supporting international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by "putting a price on pollution to combat climate change."

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy will meet Thursday morning and afternoon for public hearings on **Bill 175**, the Safer Ontario Act. The bill was heavily debated last fall before passing second reading on December 5. Not all policing agencies are supportive of the legislative. The Ontario Provincial Police Association warned the bill risks thousands of policing jobs and represents "the largest policing transformation in years if passed."

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will also meet Thursday morning for the purpose of organization.

Wednesday's Debates and proceedings

The House convened in the morning to complete debate on the "Concurrence in Supply" for various ministries. The Supply motion passed during a vote after question period. Liberal MPPs supported the procedural motion; the PCs and NDP opposed (Ayes 51; Nays 38).

Bill 193, Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), passed second reading by unanimous vote. The bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, which was then ordered to begin an expedited review of the bill, beginning with public hearings next Monday.

In addition to MacLaren's bill and the Supply Act, a private member's bill was introduced. Liberal MPP **Ann Hoggarth** introduced **Bill 198**, Student Absenteeism and Protection Act. Hoggarth said absence and lateness to school is often an early indicator that a student is in trouble at home. **Bill 198** would make chronic absenteeism a child protection issue and would require school principles to report such issues to children's aid society.

In the Park

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario will kick off a day of media events and health-related advocacy with an MPP breakfast in the Legislative Dining Room.

Parties divide over trade bill

During a speech in the House on her government's new trade bill, **Bill 194**, Fairness in Procurement Act, Premier **Kathleen Wynne** lamented "stall tactics on behalf of the official opposition" that prevented the legislation from being debated on Wednesday afternoon. (PC MPP **Lisa MacLeod** introduced a reasoned amendment on the bill on Wednesday morning).

Calling herself "a consistent and ardent champion of free and fair trade," Wynne said, "Everyone on this side of the House would have preferred for it not to come to this, but in the face of unfair discrimination we will not blink."

The premier said **Bill 194** will ensure, no matter what happens with Buy American policies in U.S. states, "Ontario workers and businesses will be treated fairly."

PC interim leader **Vic Fedeli** responded to Wynne's trade speech to say "the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario does not support retaliation," calling it the "weakest possible response a government could have." He said the bill is an election play that shows the Liberal government does not know how business works.

NDP MPP **John Vanthof** expressed concerns about the timing of bill, saying anything to do with trade is "suspect" during NAFTA renegotiations. He said the government must look at the "collateral damage poorly drafted legislation could cost."

Flooding in Brantford

Brantford's emergency operations centre ordered an evacuation Wednesday of three neighbourhoods due to flooding of the Grand River.

Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister **Marie-France Lalonde** told reporters at Queen's Park that she knows the evacuation order is "disturbing" for residents told to head north out of the flood plain, adding that her office is involved in assisting first responders.

Lalonde also drew a connection between the flooding and the greater risk that urban areas face because of a warming climate. "Climate change is real," she said, "and we have seen sadly more and more of these instances occurring."

Speaker **Dave Levac**, who represents Brantford, sounded shaken as he told reporters he was taking time off to head back to the riding Wednesday afternoon. Premier Wynne travelled to Brantford Wednesday evening to meet with Levac and emergency staff.

PC leadership candidate **Caroline Mulroney** cancelled a meet and greet she had scheduled in the town.

Topics of conversation

- **Hartley Lefton**, chair of the PC's Leadership Election Organization Committee, confirmed late Wednesday afternoon that **Patrick Brown** and all other PC leadership hopefuls have been approved to run as candidates.
- Ontario Ombudsman **Paul Dubé** said he welcomes the introduction of **Bill 195**, Correctional Services Transformation Act, which incorporates many of his recommendations to reform correctional services, especially the placement and monitoring of inmates in solitary confinement.
 - "I am pleased to see Ontario moving to address the unacceptable practices and conditions in the correctional system that my office and others have identified in recent years," Dubé said in a statement. "This legislation is responsive and ambitious. It has the potential to create a more humane, accountable and transparent correctional system."
- Just minutes before he was scheduled to go on air, **Patrick Brown** cancelled a 10 a.m. interview with Newstalk 1010 radio host **Jerry Agar**, citing "scheduling conflicts." On Thursday evening at 8 p.m., Brown is scheduled to sit down with TVO's **Steve Paikin** for a one-on-one interview on *The Agenda*.
- PC Party leadership hopeful **Caroline Mulroney** will address the Economic Club of Canada at a luncheon on March 1 at the Hyatt Regency in Toronto.
- Borrowing a pledge from the PC Party's campaign platform, the Liberals announced Wednesday that GO trains and buses will be outfitted with free Wi-Fi, which is already available in many train and bus stations throughout the province. Metrolinx will test Wi-Fi availability on two trains and four buses in the coming months.
- A Quebec-California-Ontario carbon market auction was held Wednesday afternoon. Overall, 98,215, 920 emission units from the Current Auction and 12,427,950 emission units from the Advance Auction (2021 vintage) were made available for purchase at a price of \$18.34 CAD. The results will be made public in a week.
- Toronto's financial services sector ranks behind only New York and London's in terms of strength and ability to deliver funding and expertise on large-scale capital projects, according to a report released Wednesday by the Toronto Financial Services Alliance.
 - Written in partnership with KPMG, the TFSA report, "Knowing When to Partner," argues that Toronto's extensive experience with public-private partnerships puts it well ahead of any other North American jurisdiction for getting elaborate projects off the ground.

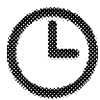
- Mainstreet Research released polling Tuesday that found the PC Party could win an election that were held today with either **Christine Elliott**, **Patrick Brown**, **Caroline Mulroney** or **Doug Ford** as leader. **Tanya Granic Allen** would be the only leader who could potentially lose to **Kathleen Wynne's** Liberals.
 - “While Christine Elliott does the best among all the leadership candidates, Patrick Brown’s performance closely mirrors Elliott’s performance with Ford following closely behind,” said Mainstreet Research CEO **Quito Maggi**. “Brown’s brand still remains strong as he is outperforming both Doug Ford and Caroline Mulroney in our poll.”
 - The poll surveyed 1,761 Ontarians between February 16 and 17th using automated telephone interviews.

Today’s events



February 22 at 8 a.m. — Toronto

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will deliver a keynote address to the Toronto Region Board of Trade.



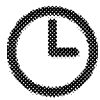
February 22 at 8:30 a.m. — Oakville

Education Minister **Indira Naidoo-Harris** will make an announcement at W. H. Morden Public School.



February 22 at 9:30 a.m. — Toronto

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario president **Carol Timmings** and CEO **Doris Grinspun** will hold a media availability at Queen’s Park to outline their legislative priorities for the coming session.



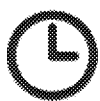
February 22 at 12:30 p.m. — Washington D.C.

Premier Wynne will participate in a panel discussion hosted by *The Atlantic* called “The Fate of NAFTA, Progressive Policy and the State of Leadership Today” at the Watergate Hotel.



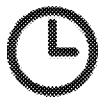
February 22 — Washington D.C.

Premier Wynne will attend the winter meeting of the National Governors Association.



February 22 at 1 p.m. — Toronto

The RAO will host a Q&A with Health Minister **Eric Hoskins**, PC health critic **Jeff Yurek** and NDP health critic **France G  linas** at Hart House.

**February 22 at 1:30 p.m. — Toronto**

National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco head **Gary Grant** will hold a press conference to push the government to take more action in preventing the sale of illicit tobacco in Ontario.

**February 22 at 6:30 p.m. — Toronto**

PC Party leadership candidate **Doug Ford** will be joined by former PC MPP **Frank Klees** and Toronto City Councillor **Michael Ford** for a fundraising dinner at the Toronto Congress Centre.

Appointments and employments

- Hydro One announced **Patrick Meneley** has been appointed the utility's executive vice president and chief corporate development officer, effective March 1.
 - Meneley comes to Hydro One from TD Bank where he served most recently as executive vice president.

Progressive Conservative Nominations

- Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas PC candidate **Ben Levitt** has had his request for a second nomination vote denied by the PC provincial nominations committee. Levitt, after winning the nomination with more than 100 votes more than his closest opponent, faced complaints and litigation from the runners-up that have subsequently been dropped.

NDP Nominations

- Sault Ste. Marie city councillor **Joe Krmpotich**, who represented the NDP in the by-election to replace Liberal Cabinet Minister **David Orazietti**, announced he will not seek the NDP nomination for the June general election.

Funding announcements

- Ottawa announced Wednesday that it and the province of Ontario will each contribute upwards of \$60 million towards the construction of a \$180 million bridge in Kingston, the third such bridge to cross the Great Cataraqui River.

News briefs — Non-governmental

PC MPPs question lack of funding for victims of sex trafficking

The provincial government has failed to appreciate how widespread sex trafficking is among minors across Ontario, Queen's Park heard Wednesday, leaving hundreds of abused women and girls without adequate supports to assist them in transitioning back into society.

PC MPP **Laurie Scott** told reporters that while the government had allocated \$72 million towards anti-human trafficking initiatives in June 2016, no more than \$18 million is going directly to victims. She called on the government to provide trauma care and appropriate housing so women removed from dangerous situations have safe places to live.

Farmtown Canada, an Elgin-based charity working with victims of sex trafficking, has been left without funding. **Kelly Franklin**, the charity's founder, said she has no idea where the remaining \$54 million promised by the Liberals has gone.

"What's in place now is a patchwork," Scott said. Without housing and counselling immediately lined up when victims are freed, she said, women will often return to abusive situations. Franklin added: "We can't put them back where they were recruited from."

Community and Social Services Minister **Helena Jaczek** told MPPs during question period Wednesday that 44 organizations have received funding through the government's initiatives, including nine in southwestern Ontario near where Farmtown Canada operates. "We take this heinous crime extremely seriously," Jaczek said, adding that Farmtown Canada did not receive funding because they did not submit a proposal during the government's open application window.

Rural groups push for investment in broadband

Ontario's strong agri-food sector is only as healthy as the communities that sustain it, and a coalition of farmers, municipal wardens and chambers of commerce say those communities require broadband access.

Robin Jones, chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, told reporters at Queen's Park Wednesday that the economic future of her region and those of many other rural regions in Ontario, depends on extensive and strong broadband connections. Businesses won't come to Eastern Ontario at three megabyte upload speeds, she said, nor will children want to remain in the community if they have to drive to Tim Hortons or McDonald's to use their Wi-Fi to file homework assignments.

The urgency extends beyond keeping young people away from big cities. Greater broadband access will benefit local hospitals, aid job creation and keep farmland from being sold to developers for subdivided housing. Farmers will benefit, too. **Keith Currie**, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, said that dairy farmers these days rely on their cell phones to monitor how much milk their cows have produced.

Election season is the perfect time to take this united message to politicians of all stripes, said **Rocco Rossi**, president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. His organization represents more than 60,000 businesses, many of whom are also affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

“You need distributed infrastructure investments,” Rossi said: Broadband, but also things like natural gas pipelines to spur business with affordable energy. This isn’t about a pastoral vision of rural Ontario, he said—this is about rural Ontario’s future economic development.

Question Period

PC lead-off

Costs of doing business in Ontario

- PC Party interim leader **Vic Fedeli** asked Premier **Kathleen Wynne** why the government will not address the fact that 62 per cent of the members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce are not confident in the economic outlook of the province.
 - Wynne and Economic Development Minister **Steven Del Duca** touted their government’s employment record, citing 800,000 jobs created since 2009 and a 17-year low in the unemployment rate.
 - Fedeli suggested the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses and Retail Council of Canada are also worried about the rising costs of doing business in the province.
- Fedeli followed up on a recent report from the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association by asking whether the government will agree to scrap the Drive Clean program and if a tax break for the purchase of winter tires could be included in the government’s upcoming budget.
 - He was followed by PC MPP **Steve Clark** who asked why the government wouldn’t allow the passage of his private member’s bill, **Bill 3**, Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, which would allow car buyers to register their vehicle at the point of sale rather than through a Service Ontario kiosk.

NDP lead-off

Hospital overcrowding

- NDP health critic **France Gélinas** asked Premier Wynne why her government was comfortable with ignoring the fact that patients are being treated for weeks at a time in hospital bathrooms.
 - “We are ignoring nothing about Ontario’s health care system,” Wynne replied. While it’s “unacceptable” that patients be treated in bathrooms because of overcrowding, the government says it has opened 1,200 new hospital beds.
 - Health Minister **Eric Hoskins**, in response, reminded the NDP that when it was in power in the early 1990s they closed 9,600 hospital beds.

Other Questions

- NDP MPP **Wayne Gates** asked how the government is keeping roads cleared after Carillion Canada's parent company collapsed. Gates said workers don't know if or when they will be paid.
- PC MPPs **Sylvia Jones** and **Michael Harris** questioned Transportation Minister **Kathryn McGarry** over what the government's plan is now that it has cancelled the environmental assessment for the GTA West Corridor highway.