Infomart Newsletters

From: Infomart Newsletters
Sent: February 23, 2018 7:44 AM
To: Rosemarie Leclair
Subject: Morning News Clippings - Friday, February 23, 2018

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Morning News Clippings

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Date: Friday, February 23, 2018
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@oeb.ca)

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 7 Results

Enwin Utilities joins coalition with goal to keep power bills reasonable

Windsor Star - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Dave Battagello

Ad Value: $2,350
Reach: 54680 **Page:** A5

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Confidence drops; Sudbury businesses less sure of themselves, survey finds

Sudbury Star - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $981
Reach: 14934 **Page:** A3

Businesses in Greater Sudbury are concerned about rising costs and lack of access to skilled labour, according to a study partly commissioned by the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce. These factors have ...

Collingwood receives $410,000 refund after being overcharged for hydro | Simcoe.com

www.simcoe.com - Thu Feb 22 2018
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Paul Crawford noted on Thursday, February 22, 2018
OEB is mentioned.

The Town of Collingwood received a massive refund from Collus Powerstream after it was discovered they were overcharged for electricity for almost two decades.

Liberals force new debate on climate, minimum wage

London Free Press - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $1,442
Reach: 70995 **Page:** A6

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Brown gives PC hopefuls a rallying point

National Post - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Kelly Mc Parland

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Trudeau wrongly said Canadian energy regulation was 'broken.' Then he wrecked it

FP Comment - Financial Post - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Special to Financial Post
Reach: 607500

Prior to the 2015 federal election, when the National **Energy** Board (NEB) was subjected to unremitting pressures from local and international activists, many polls indicated that Canadians viewed NEB decisions as reflecting the national ...

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Full Articles

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Enwin Utilities has joined a new coalition in hopes it will go a long way in providing savings to help keep a lid on rising **hydro rates** for customers.

The local **utility** company announced Thursday it has joined the GridSmartCity **Cooperative** - a group of 13 **utility** companies across **Ontario**, which also includes **Essex Powerlines**.

Being part of the coalition will provide increased purchasing **power**, especially for "big-ticket items" such as **hydro** poles, transformers or **service** trucks, said Helga Reidel, CEO for **Enwin**.

"By joint purchasing - especially for things such as **hydro** poles - we know we can save money by joining the group," she said.

Reidel indicated there are "synergies" among the **utilities** involved within the coalition that along with increased purchasing **power**, can create further savings in other budget expenditures. She cited being able to research new technology innovations as a group as one example.

"Every local (**hydro**) **distribution** company is also required every two years to undertake **customer** engagement, Reidel said. "We have a firm that we retain to survey our customers. If we do that with a common consultant, something like that as a group we will be able to do for less money."

GridSmartCIty has only been around about five years, but more **Ontario utilities** are joining to keep **hydro rates** down.

The annual cost to be a member within the coalition is $10,000, Reidel said.

"One **utility** group made savings of about that on a **pole** tender they did jointly last year," she said. "We buy poles every year, so we should easily be able to recover those costs on just one tender."

Given the skyrocketing costs of purchasing **electricity** in **Ontario**, all **utility** companies are searching for any way possible to keep monthly bills reasonable for customers, Reidel said.

"We have been able to avert large **rate** (increases) for our piece of the bill," she said, noting **Enwin**'s portion equates to about 25 per cent of monthly **hydro** costs for customers. "We have had minor inflationary increases.

"We hope cost savings through this group will help. We want to keep (costs) as tight as possible and this is one tool to do that." dbattagello@postmedia.com

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The Sudbury Star

Confidence drops; Sudbury businesses less sure of themselves, survey finds

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Businesses in Greater Sudbury are concerned about rising costs and lack of access to skilled labour, according to a study partly commissioned by the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

These factors have led to an eight-percentage point decline in business confidence in Greater Sudbury's economy. Of businesses no longer confident in their own economic outlook, more than 80 per cent cited increases in the cost of inputs and more than 50 per cent cited difficulty in attracting and retaining staff.

"The rising cost of doing business and difficulty finding qualified staff are undermining business confidence in Greater Sudbury," Michael Macnamara, board chair of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, said in a release.

"If businesses can't afford to keep the lights on, or they can't find qualified staff, it becomes extremely difficult to grow or even maintain the status quo. We're working with the (Ontario Chamber of Commerce) to draw attention to these challenges and to try to develop solutions. We know that with the right policy choices, we can create a community where business continues to thrive."

The Business Confidence Survey, which was commissioned by the Sudbury chamber and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, collected the data.

The chamber said the data shows that that managing the cost and staff factors properly will not only mitigate concerns, but grow business confidence.

A total of 30 per cent of respondents said that electricity rate reductions from the Fair Hydro Plan benefited their business, and 32 per cent of confident respondents attributed it to successfully hiring new staff.

At the same time, businesses are concerned about new, growing challenges.

"Industry in Ontario is feeling the impact of the rising minimum wage, significant labour reforms, increasing global and US competition, NAFTA renegotiations, consistent overregulation, rising input costs, and challenges to accessing talent," said Rocco Rossi, president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. "This year's Ontario Economic Report indicates that these challenges are creating a climate of low business confidence that will compromise the province's future prosperity."

Ontario Economic Report findings found 68 per cent of firms say the minimum wage increase is predicted to have a negative impact on their business. Compared to last year, they are more likely to project a decline in revenue and a reduction of their workforce.

Some of the 2018 Ontario Economic Report highlights on the outlook of Ontario's economy include: n Businesses are losing confidence in Ontario's economy. In 2012, 47 per cent of businesses reported they were confident in Ontario's economic outlook. Today, that share has been halved, as only 23 per cent of businesses are confident in the economy. n Nearly two-thirds of businesses cite input costs for their lack of confidence, such as the price of electricity, taxes, and the increase in minimum wage. This is compared to only 31 per cent who name competitive barriers such as declining consumer demand or changing client behavior. n One-quarter of small businesses in Ontario project declining revenue in 2018, which is twice the rate of large firms (26 per cent vs. 13 per cent). Given that the majority of businesses in this province are small, this will likely have a net-negative impact on economic growth. n The production of goods and services represents a shrinking contributor to business prosperity. Production activities represent only 15.3 per cent of business prosperity, meaning that prosperity is increasingly becoming more dependent upon financial activities instead of productive activities. This is indicative of Ontario possessing a higherrisk operating environment. n Ontario historically low unemployment rate is a red herring, as more individuals remove themselves from the workforce or simply give up the search. The percentage of Ontarians not participating in the labour force is at a recent high of 35 per cent, contributing to employers'on-going struggle to attract talent.

In addition to new economic research, the Ontario Economic Report outlines the areas of focus for the chamber's policy and advocacy work in the year ahead. In 2018, the Ontario chamber will be looking at the potential of the health and life sciences sector, examining challenges related to urbanization and housing affordability, and studying the critical transportation needs across the province.

For more information about the Ontario Economic Report, visit: www.occ.ca/ontario-economicreport. sud.editorial@sunmedia.ca

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Collingwood receives $410,000 refund after being overcharged for hydro | Simcoe.com

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The Town of Collingwood received a massive refund from Collus Powerstream after it was discovered they were overcharged for electricity for almost two decades.

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Liberals force new debate on climate, minimum wage

London Free Press - Fri Feb 23 2018
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Ontario's governing Liberals forced a new debate on minimum wage and climate change in the legislature Thursday in an apparent attempt to back the embattled Progressive Conservatives, who are in the midst of a leadership race, into a corner on wedge issues.

Pushing the legislature to revisit the two issues, which already are passed into law, seems aimed equally at seeping support from the New Democrats, said Myer Siemiatycki, a professor of politics at Ryerson University in Toronto.

"I see it at as a political intervention directed at possibly dual targets," Siemiatycki said.

"I think the Liberals are aiming this in part at that fairly significant swath of voters who could go either NDP or Liberal and trying to shore up the perception of the Liberals as the only party that can stand in the way of a Conservative election (win) and the only party that can actually deliver a progressive political agenda," he said.

At the same time, he said, "this is kind of a provocation to require the Conservatives to take a stand that would identify them around some pretty core issues as being opposed to a progressive orientation." All candidates in the Tory leadership race but ousted leader Patrick Brown have come out against the carbon tax at the crux of the PC party's platform. The carbon tax is a proposed replacement for the Liberals' **cap-and-trade** system.

The first leadership debate, which took place before Brown announced his candidacy, also saw four candidates vow to halt or slow a planned increase in the minimum wage to $15 next year.

The Liberals brought both topics back to the legislature Thursday after their **plan** to debate proposed legislation targeting Buy American policies in the U.S. was delayed by the Progressive Conservatives.

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Brown gives PC hopefuls a rallying point

National Post - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Kelly Mc Parland

Ad Value: $13,682
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Patrick Brown won the right to run for **Ontario**'s Progressive Conservative leadership Wednesday. If recent **public** opinion soundings are anything to go by, it confers the opportunity to once again lose the job he resigned from three weeks ago.

The decision on Brown came down from a vetting committee tasked with deciding whether prospective candidates had anything that might disqualify them from seeking the leadership. Following a lengthy discussion the committee decided nothing in Brown's past was that dubious, a curious conclusion given nearly a month of allegations charging him with everything from sexual misbehaviour to fibbing about the size of the Tory membership list.

Brown quit the leadership under intense pressure after two women anonymously accused him of making unwanted advances during his years as a federal MP. He denied the allegations and mounted a fierce campaign to discredit the accusers, succeeding in poking some holes in their stories before summarily declaring himself vindicated just in time to enter the race to succeed himself.

His departure unleashed a surge of complaints from colleagues who evidently felt obliged to keep their traps shut as long as he was the leader. Interim replacement Vic Fedeli announced there was so much "rot" in the party he would devote himself to cleaning up the mess full-time, rather than seek the permanent leadership. Allegations tumbled out about dubious financial deals Brown may or may not have made, overseas trips he may have accepted (and who accompanied him), inflated membership lists and questionable nominating practices, and even the size of the house he bought in Barrie, and how a 39-year-old career politician could afford a $1.72-million mortgage.

Fellow PC legislator Randy Hillier even filed a complaint with the integrity commissioner over Brown's finances, which might have struck a more telling blow if it came from anyone but Hillier, who has a talent for attracting attention to himself by launching attacks on others.

In any sensible world - i.e. one completely outside of politics - the sheer volume of allegations might have crushed Brown's chances, but if recent votes across the Western world have demonstrated anything, it's that rational thought often has little if anything to do with how voters cast their ballots. The vetting committee might have saved the PCs nine days of embarrassment by ruling Brown out of the race, but to do so would only have encouraged his supporters to scream "fix" all the louder. Better to have him inside the tent peeing out, rather than outside the tent peeing in, as the old saying goes.

There is little sign that the publicity of the past three weeks has hurt the Tories in their larger quest, which is to select a candidate capable of defeating Premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberals. The premier appears as deeply disliked as ever: an Ipsos poll for Global News released Wednesday found that no matter who led the Tories in the June election, the Liberals would place third. Even Jim Smith, a nonexistent candidate invented for the purpose, proved five points more popular than Wynne, who had a favourability rating of just 16 per cent. Even Brown came out higher than that.

Polls, of course, are almost as reliable as voters, but recent weeks have been so full of bad news for the Liberals they must have thanked whatever gods they believe in for the distraction Brown provided. Employment numbers showed that Wynne's rushed effort to push through a 30-percent minimum wage hike over 12 months was followed immediately by 51,000 job losses. Employers complained that vacation pay changes would cost even more than the imposed wage hikes. **Ontario**'s Financial Accountability Office released a report indicating the partial sell-off of **Hydro** One, the provincial **power** **utility**, produced a short-term boost to the budget, but would add $1.1 billion to the deficit next year and $264 million every year until 2025. And the Liberals'former chief of staff was convicted of deliberately deleting documents to protect the party from political fallout during the 2011 election.

In normal circumstances, the choice of a new leader for an opposition party that's been out of **power** for 14 years draws about as much attention as a trade delegation from Upper Volta. The Tories'case seems to be different - they've drawn nothing but headlines, and may be in the process of proving there really is no such thing as too much publicity. So much attention has been given to Brown that the ruckus everyone expected from the presence of rival candidate Doug Ford, brother of the late mayor Rob Ford, hasn't materialized. Ford has been touring the province denouncing "elites" to anyone who'll listen, while claiming his four years as one of 44 members of **Toronto** city council make him the only candidate to have "governed," but like other candidates has been forced to make do with media crumbs as the spotlight remained fixed elsewhere.

Ironically, Brown's return may succeed in giving the four other candidates something they'd been lacking until now: a unity of focus. The four - former deputy leader Christine Elliott, lawyer Caroline Mulroney, Ford and fiery social conservative activist Tanya Granic Allen - have all denounced Brown in terms of varying outrage. Allen accused him of "corruption," Ford issued a stinging denunciation, Mulroney declared that "a leadership election is not the place for him to try to clear his name," while Elliott argued that unity is now key, and she is best placed to provide it.

Which means that, until the voting begins in nine days, it's Brown against everyone else. PC members will have that much time to decide whether they want a leader able to move forward against the Liberals, or are having too much fun in opposition, squabbling about the past.

National Post

Twitter.com/kellymcparland

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Trudeau wrongly said Canadian energy regulation was 'broken.' Then he wrecked it

FP Comment · Financial Post · Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: **Negative**
Byline: Special to Financial Post
Reach: 607500

Prior to the 2015 federal election, when the National **Energy** Board (NEB) was subjected to unremitting pressures from local and international activists, many polls indicated that Canadians viewed NEB decisions as reflecting the national interest. That was until Justin Trudeau, the Liberal leader then running for prime minister, asserted that the NEB was "broken" and in need of "modernization," a view held by many in the vocal NGO community. After he won, several individuals from prominent NGOs assumed senior positions in his new government. Fast forward to 2018, and we now have Bills C-68 and C-69 to "enact the Impact Assessment Act (IAA) and the **Canadian Energy Regulator** (CER) Act."

Will the proposed legislative changes increase **public** confidence in the regulated pipeline sector, enhance regulatory and investment certainty, and lead to better regulatory and policy decisions? We think not. Contrary to government assertions, the proposed legislation introduces regulatory uncertainties and may exacerbate regulatory delays. The legislation introduces untested assessment processes while deferring final project decisions to cabinet. Gone, or at least diminished, will be the ability of an **independent**, expert regulatory tribunal, such as the NEB, to determine if major **energy** projects are in the national interest. Other provisions will contribute to regulatory uncertainties, including the elimination of the standing test for intervenors that could result in swamped proceedings targeted by unaffected - but determined - opponents, and the finalization of a project list to be completed following further consultations. It is difficult to see how processes will preserve timelines if some parties abuse intervener status.

The highly qualitative language used to describe the objectives for the new legislation, to rebuild **public** trust and advance Indigenous reconciliation while advancing "good projects," and to ensure **energy** resources "get to markets responsibly," appears entirely inconsistent with the actual legislation. Critically, the new legislation arrives at a time when capital flight out of Canada from cancelled **energy** projects such as **Energy** East, **Northern** Gateway and the Pacific NorthWest LNG Projects exceeds an estimated $60 billion, and as rising provincial and international pressures work against the development of Canada's **energy** infrastructure.

The NEB has delivered to Canadians one of the safest, best-regulated and most economic pipeline systems in the world. While **public** input and environmental protection are vital to balanced decision-making for pipelines, there are also crucial, parallel considerations of engineering and economics that also protect the national interest. Environmental and socio-economic assessments are an important first step in the lifecycle process of pipeline projects. However, condition compliance, enforcement, safety and economic regulation are equally important. Regrettably, the latter considerations appear to have been forgotten in the current debate. After almost 60 years of proven regulatory performance, this government claims to have concluded that the NEB was incapable of achieving decisions based on "science-based" assessments. The contention that the NEB's assessments were not "science-based" is ridiculous.

When cabinet declined to approve the **Northern** Gateway pipeline because "we don't build pipelines in rainforests," it rendered a decision that appeared to mirror the narrow advice of many NGOs and some communities who wanted protections for the Great Bear Rainforest and a tanker moratorium for **northern** B.C. In so doing, cabinet overruled the science, evaluations and conditions previously set by the joint National **Energy** Board/**Canadian** Environmental Assessment Agency panel that had recommended approval of the project based upon years of consultations and hearings that cost the proponent hundreds of millions of dollars.

Is this an indication of how government intends to use science and Aboriginal consultation to determine the **Canadian** national interest? Or is it an illustration of a determination to arbitrarily move regulatory goalposts and not reveal critical factors until the conclusion of the regulatory processes? Arbitrary regulation produces contradictory results. As an example, tankers exporting domestic oil have been judged unacceptable on the **West Coast**, while tankers bringing foreign oil to Canada's East **Coast** are acceptable.

Jack M. Mintz: Canada can't watch pitifully from the stairs as competitive economies party (nationalpost.com)

Jack Mintz: Another NEP fiasco looms as Westerners suffer for Trudeau's **energy** follies (nationalpost.com)

The federal government has opened a Pandora's box by favouring expanded assessment processes and politically based decision-making for **energy** projects that diminish the proven value of an **independent** NEB. Dragging pipeline decisions into the political arena produces decisions, like **Northern** Gateway's, that are far from "science-based" and may result in assessments that extend well beyond the ability of any single project proponent to properly address. By diminishing **independent**, quasi-judicial regulatory processes for expert tribunals, cabinet risks drifting further into the dangerous political shoals where science and economics are eclipsed by the darker forces of opportunism and favouritism.

That environmental and Aboriginal interests are important to Canada is an undeniable fact. Regrettably, the proposed acts not only ignore the lessons of history that favour **independent**, unfettered decision-making, they introduce material uncertainties and undefined administrative measures into the highly evolved disciplines of pipeline engineering and economic assessments.

Ron Wallace has served on federal, provincial and territorial **energy** and environmental regulators and advisory boards. Jack M. Mintz is the president's fellow at the University of Calgary's School of **Public** Policy.

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PM plays sitar while Canada burns

Ottawa Sun - Fri Feb 23 2018
Tone: Positive
Byline: Lorne Gunter

Ad Value: $1,157
Reach: 45442 **Page:** A4

Not having pipelines to take Alberta oil and bitumen to the east and **west** coasts has real consequences for the national economy - not just Alberta's economy.

On Tuesday, Scotiabank put a price tag on the consequences - $15.6 billion a year.

That might not sound earthshattering. It's "just" three-quarters of 1% of GDP.

But consider this: If the entire national economy grows by 2.5% (about $50 billion), all the economists, analysts and investors are ecstatic.

And $15.6 billion is about a third of $50 billion.

In other words, getting a pipeline or two built could get Canada one-third of the way to strong, annual economic growth by itself. Before another thing happens in the entire national economy - before another assembly line opens or the foundation for a new home is dug, before another fish is caught or another load of ore is mined, before an ad or a mutual fund or a pickup truck is sold - just getting pipelines built would put the entire nation one-third of the way to a good year.

Every year. And what if other provinces built refineries along the routes, or other value-added projects? A couple of pipelines could really get the national economy humming.

Yet both the federal and B.C. provincial governments are doing their level bests to prevent that from happening.

Admittedly, the Scotiabank report said that beginning later this year there should be more rail capacity coming online to carry more oil to refineries and ports. So the long-term cost of being without pipelines will probably be closer to $11 billion a year.

Still, if green politicians and eco-activists can be stopped from holding up Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain, Keystone XL and Enbridge's Line 3 replacement, just those projects alone could put Canada one-quarter of the way to solid growth each and every year.

The entire rest of the **Canadian** economy - every other thing every **Canadian** does for money in every province lumped together - would only have to come up with another $40 billion for the country to have steady, jobcreating, business-succeeding growth.

So what is Prime Minster Selfie doing? Is he working hard to get the government of B.C. to stop delaying Kinder Morgan? Is he pushing the Montreal and Quebec governments to drop their opposition to **Energy** East? Nope, he is fiddling around in India while the **Canadian** economy slowly chokes.

Justin Trudeau is doing what he does best - posing for pictures. For all intents and purposes, Trudeau, his wife and children are on a family vacation in India paid for at taxpayers' expense.

The secondary purpose of his trip appears to be to hit as many spots as possible that have significance for Indo-**Canadian** supporters of the Liberal Party back home - the Golden Temple at Amritsar, Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram, the Akshardham Temple.

During eight days of visits on Canadians'dimes, only a total of about a day will be devoted to official visits with Indian government officials or Indian business leaders. Yet the stated purpose of Trudeau's Great Indian Adventure is to drum up trade.

The most trade Trudeau could come up with was pledges of $250 million in investments in Canada by Indian companies, and $750 million in investments by Canadians in the Indian economy.

These reciprocal investments may or may not lead to the 5,600 new **Canadian** jobs Trudeau promised. (Probably won't.)

But we know for sure that if the feds would get off their keisters and help get a pipeline or two built, that really would create thousands of jobs across the country.

Instead, Trudeau is permitting B.C. to stand in the way while he's off taking family pics (and, who knows, maybe some sitar lessons) on the subcontinent.
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