

Jagmeet Hopes NDP Can 'Relink' With Quebec

MONTREAL: NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh was barely a minute into his speech Monday announcing a deputy leader from Quebec when he invoked the memory of Jack Layton, who famously led the party to its 2011 sweep of the province that propelled the party to Official Opposition status.

"I share the dream of Jack Layton to unite the progressives of Quebec and the rest of Canada under the same banner," Singh said.

Since Layton's death just months after the 2011 election, the party's fortunes in the province have tumbled. The NDP is polling fourth in Quebec, Singh has so far failed to connect with voters, and high-profile Quebec MPs including former leader Tom Mulcair, Helene Lavender and Romeo Saganash will not be seeking re-election in October.

In response, Singh is relying on Montreal MP Alexandre Boulerice — who was first elected to Parliament during Layton's

2011 Quebec orange wave — to help the party recapture the imagination of Quebecers as it targets the province's 78 federal seats.

As the new deputy leader, Boulerice — a francophone and former union adviser — will be in charge of recruiting candidates and making the case for the party in Quebec.

Boulerice is known for his combative political style and strong oratory skills in the House of Commons. Singh said his decision to name Boulerice deputy leader shows his desire to "do things differently in Quebec." He told reporters to stay tuned for a series of Quebec-specific announcements in the coming months.

Singh said NDP policies to provide low-cost housing, to increase taxes on the rich and to respect Quebec cultural products make him "an ally" of Quebecers. But he and Boulerice also revealed that the environment will be a major issue the party will use to differentiate itself from the



Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh speaks at a town hall style meeting in Toronto on March 7, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Frank Gunn

Liberals, who are leading in the polls in Quebec.

Singh justified his strategy by noting the success in last October's provincial election of the left-wing and sovereigntist Que-

bec solidaire increased its seat total to 10 from three and "really captured the imagination of Quebecers when it comes to the environment," Singh said. "There is a deep, romantic connection with the idea of protecting the water, the land, the air. The young people in Quebec believe strongly we need to do more to fight climate change."

Boulerice criticized the Trudeau government's decision to purchase the Trans Mountain pipeline and what he called its inadequate action to combat greenhouse gas emissions. "We will present a plan on the environment that will clearly show the time of half measures is over," he said.

The NDP leader also hit the government on the SNC-Lavalin affair. Former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould claims she was subjected to relentless, inappropriate pressure to stop the trial of the engineering giant on bribery and fraud charges related to contracts in Libya.

Province To Fight Carbon Tax In Every Way Possible Says Ford

CAMBRIDGE: The Ontario government will fight the carbon tax with every tool and power at its disposal, Premier Doug Ford and Rod Phillips, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, announced Wednesday.

The federal government has passed a law that will force low- and middle-income seniors, workers, families and small businesses to start paying a rapidly-escalating carbon tax, starting on April 1, 2019.

"The federal carbon tax is going to hit your family's budget like a tonne of bricks," said Ford during a tour of Challenger Motor Freight. "A carbon tax will make no difference to the environment. But it will drive up the cost of gas for your car, home heating for your family and the cost of getting food to your grocery store shelf."

Ford also highlighted the damage that a federal carbon tax will cause to the Ontario economy.

"A carbon tax is not the only way to fight climate change," said Ford. "But what a carbon tax will do is chase manufacturing jobs, small business jobs and trucking jobs out of Ontario. Because it is clear you can be for jobs or you can be for a carbon tax, but you can't be for both."

Ford and Phillips highlighted



Premier Doug Ford at Challenger Motor Freight in Cambridge.

how the federal carbon tax could affect the transportation sector in particular. Close to three quarters of a billion dollars will be taken out of the long-haul trucking sector as a result of the carbon tax over the 2019-2022 period.

For a long-haul truck consuming 88,000 litres of fuel each year, this translates into more than \$3,500 in operating costs in 2019 and \$11,200 by 2022. "We know that the federal carbon tax will increase the cost to heat your home, fuel your car and feed your family," said Phillips.

The province has released for consultation a new Made-in-On-

tario Environment Plan tailored to the province's specific priorities and regional challenges and opportunities.

"While the federal government continues to scheme up ways to increase your taxes, we are going to remain focussed on protecting the things that matter," said Ford.

Beginning on April 1, 2019, Ottawa will apply a fuel charge to fossil fuels in Ontario, resulting in an estimated increase of five cents per litre for gas including the additional HST cost. This will rise to 7.5 cents in 2020, 10 cents in 2021 and 12.5 cents per litre in April 2022.

Hydro One CEO's Compensation Pegged At \$1.5 Million A Year

TORONTO: Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines Greg Rickford has released the following statement on Hydro One:

"I am pleased to report that our government has delivered on its commitment to put the People of Ontario first and bring Hydro One's executive compensation levels down to acceptable levels.

"The Hydro One Board of Directors has provided us with a compensation framework that is consistent with Management Board of Cabinet's directive issued to the Board on February 21.

"The maximum CEO compensation will now be \$1.5 million annually, which is less than 25 per cent of the former CEO's direct compensation. This includes \$500,000 in base salary, with performance-based short-term and long-term incentives making up the rest. Actual compensation could be lower than \$1.5 million if targets are not met. We have been steadfast in our commitment to the People of Ontario to rein in the excess at Hydro One.

"Most significantly, performance targets will include the CEO's contribution to reduc-



ing system costs, supporting our commitment to reduce Ontarians' electricity rates by 12 per cent.

"Other newly appointed senior executives will be able to earn no more than 75 per cent of the CEO's pay and the base, short-term and long-term incentive payment structure will be consistent with the CEO. Directors on the Board will now earn \$80,000, Committee Chairs will earn \$85,000 and the Chair of the Board will earn \$120,000.

"Hydro One's compliance with this directive allows us to move forward as a province. It sets the company on the right course for the future, proving that it can operate as a top-class electricity utility while reining in executive compensation and increasing public transparency.

"Moving forward, I am confident that Hydro One's Board of Directors will continue to act with the trust and confidence of the people of Ontario.

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