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THE PLAGUE OF A SCHEDULE

It's nearing the end of the month so I'm on schedule, maybe even compelled, to produce COCA's regular GR Report. The unfortunate thing is there are two very interesting events in the next few days that would have been fun to write about:

The Kitchener Centre By-election

- It's taking place on Thursday, November 30th with results made known late that night
- From this distant observer it appears to be a race between the NDP who won the riding in handily in both 2018 and 2022 and the hard charging Greens who doubled their vote share last time to about 15% and who hold the riding federally
- Based on nothing, I'll stubbornly stick with my earlier prediction
- Could the Libs continue their surge and win their 10th seat in the Ontario legislature?
- Could the Greens win their 2nd? They came close to winning a second seat in the 2022 general

Ontario Liberal Party Leadership

The winners of each successive round of voting in the ranked ballot voting system will be revealed on Saturday, December 2nd until one candidate wins more than 50% of the votes cast

There are four candidates

- Mississauga Mayor and former MP Bonnie Crombie who appears to the front runner
- MP and former minister in the Kathleen Wynne cabinet, Yasir Naqvi, who was almost single-handedly responsible for Construction Lien Act reform and the introduction of prompt payment and adjudication
- MP Nathan Erskine-Smith who seems to be a disrupter and a contrarian
- PhD (physics), former MP and current MPP Ted Tsu, who is soft spoken, articulate and if he was better known appears to have what it takes to bring people together

Although I owe Naqvi a huge debt of gratitude for his remarkable leadership advancing Construction Lien Act reform and I find Tsu's approach appealing to me personally, I think in the end the front runner, Crombie will take it

I only hope my job isn't dependent upon these predictions. My record on these things is pretty abysmal.

COCA RESPONDS TO ACCELERATED APPRENTICESHIP CONSULTATION

COCA's Skilled Trades Committee made a submission to the Ministry of Education's consultation paper which was titled "Accelerated Apprenticeship Pathway".

The Committee, with respect, rejected the two models proposed in the consultation paper in favour of an enriched Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) that operates currently in school boards across the province. The Committee recommended taking the best features from the successful programs like the Toronto District School Board's STEP to Construction and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Boards Construction Academy and replicate them wherever possible.

BILL 146 – A NUMBER OF GOOD PROVISIONS AND ONE DISASTROUS ONE

Bill 146 Working for Workers Four Act 2023 proposes amendments to four statutes:

1. DIGITAL PLATFORM WORKERS' RIGHTS ACT, 2022
2. EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT, 2000
3. FAIR ACCESS TO REGULATED PROFESSIONS AND COMPULSORY TRADES ACT, 2006
4. WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE ACT, 1997

Earlier this month we provided you with a Briefing Note from Sherrard-Kuzz LLP that summarized the Bill. In our view, many of the proposed amendments if passed into law, will provide greater fairness to employees and to prospective employees applying for work.

However, in our view, the most consequential provision in Bill 149 is the amendment to the WSIA which, if passed into law, will give the government the ad hoc power to increase benefits paid to injured workers by as much as the government wants, at any time during a year, as many times during a year as the government wants and without requiring any rationale and without any criteria.

PROVINCE EXPECTED TO END AGREEMENT WITH THE BEER STORE

The Toronto Star has reported that the province will end its agreement with The Beer Store in 2025. The agreement makes The Beer Store, jointly owned by three foreign-based multi-national brewers, the primary outlet for beer sales in the province. Over the past many years, the LCBO has increased its share of beer sales which is allowed under the agreement. It's anticipated that the expiry of this agreement will open the road for beer sales in convenience stores.

While this change has no significant impact on the market for construction services, there are more than a few beer drinkers working in and around our industry. I thought you might like to know.