



**The Hon. Kathleen Wynne**

Premier of Ontario

**JOBS, OPPORTUNITY AND SECURITY FOR  
TODAY AND TOMORROW**

---

Chairman: **Noble Chummar**

President, The Empire Club of Canada

**Head Table Guests**

John Wright, Executive Director, Business Development, Northland Power Inc.; Nancy Croitoru, President and CEO, Food and Consumer Products of Canada; Ed Waitzer, Chairman, Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO); Rod Phillips, Chair, Postmedia; Barry Avrich, Partner, BT/A, and Director, The Empire Club of Canada; Paul Fogolin, Director, Government and Stakeholders Relations, Ontario Retirement Communities Association, and Director, The Empire Club of Canada; Barry R. Campbell, President and Founder, Campbell Strategies Inc.; Tim Smitheman, Manager, Government and Public Relations, Samsung Renewable Energy Inc., and Director, The Empire Club of Canada; Captain Reverend Eleanor Clitheroe, Former President and CEO, Hydro One, and Former Deputy Minister of Finance; Mohamed Dhanani, Executive Officer at His Highness Prince Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili Council for Canada; Peter Devlin, President, Fanshawe College; The Hon. David Peterson, Chair, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP, and Former Premier of Ontario; Gerry McGuire, Acting Vice-President, Finance and Investment Operations at Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited; and Professor Scott Mabury, Vice-President University of Operations, University of Toronto.

### **Introduction by Noble Chummar**

What an honour it is to have the Premier of Ontario as our guest today. The Empire Club has hosted almost every premier since George W. Ross in 1905. In fact, three premiers, George Drew, Howard Ferguson and William Hearst, served as president of this club. Today's speech comes to us just days before the Premier's government tables its budget. On Thursday of this week Minister Sousa, who I understand is here today, will deliver the speech of his life in an effort to convince all members of the legislature and all Ontarians that Premier Wynne's government is staying the course and is fit to govern this great province.

Being premier must be tough. This room is filled with many CEOs and running your companies is probably filled with unimaginable challenges. Being premier, however, involves running a \$130-billion company that isn't a corporation, but rather a society, where its shareholders are pensioners, parents, farmers, nurses, newborns and entrepreneurs. The job involves balancing the priorities of hundreds of different interests, and making decisions that can't possibly satisfy everyone. There aren't too many jobs out there that require balancing such profound human needs such as health care, education, agriculture and infrastructure.

I remember growing up in the late seventies in Toronto, and I remember my father's Ontario license plate. If you remember, back then it was "Ontario, keep it beautiful." It was a pretty simple statement, nothing fancy, just four words: "Ontario, keep it beautiful."

Premier Kathleen Wynne has spent her entire life keeping Ontario beautiful, in so many different ways. First of all, and probably most importantly, she is a mother and a grandmother. The Premier is a graduate of Queen's University and the University of Toronto, and has not one but two master's degrees. As a community activist and champion of public education, she was elected a Toronto School Board Trustee in 2000. And in 2003, she was elected to the Ontario legislature. Just three years after her arrival at the legislature as an MPP, she was appointed the Minister of Education, and subsequently held portfolios in Transportation, Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Aboriginal Affairs.

Kathleen Wynne probably didn't think she was going to be premier when she started on her journey of public life; she just wanted to make a difference. She cares so deeply about Ontario and Ontarians and is doing her best at balancing those complex priorities. Her goal for Ontario is to just keep it beautiful. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the twenty-fifth and first woman Premier of the Province of Ontario, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne.

### **Kathleen Wynne**

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you so much. Thank you for being here. It's really an honour. And I just have to say, looking at that video that was playing before we began, Noble and I suggested that neither he nor I would have been in that room all those years ago. The room looks very different, but we're grateful to those forefathers (because they were all fathers) for putting this organization together and it's an honour to be here. It's an august room. And Noble, thank you very much for that lovely introduction.

It's wonderful to be here with you all on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and I just want to acknowledge Minister Zimmer, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in the room. Today we have sent out a map, a map of all of the treaties in the First Nations in Ontario, to every school in the province along with a commitment, as we change the curriculum in Ontario, to change our collective understanding of our history and our relationship to First Nations and Aboriginal people, and understand ourselves better as treaty people. I just wanted to let everyone know that that's happening today.

It is budget week in Ontario, and today I'm really very excited to have a chance to talk to you about our province's economic future, and what it means for the people of Ontario. We're a province with a great history of accomplishment, and yet what inspires me are the possibilities that remain and the potential that is still untapped. There's more that we can achieve together, and so many of you in this room are engaged in tapping into that potential. ut you all know that that's only possible if we make smart choices.

I've been premier now for a little more than a year, and I have to tell you that each and every day my optimism is fuelled by the people of the province. I believe that there's only one good reason to be in politics and that is to help people. You do that by making government a force for good in people's lives—not an intrusive, overbearing force, but a positive force putting in place conditions that help people and businesses to thrive, and, as Noble has said, to keep it beautiful.

So in that endeavour, numbers are very important. But we need to remind ourselves that the economy isn't just one thing. It's not just one calculation. You can't look at GDP alone. Business success is important, but it's not the only outcome. It goes beyond any of those individual numbers. It goes to the heart of who we are. The wellbeing of our economy is about the wellbeing of our people, and what motivates me always is the sense that Ontario is finding its footing. We're on our way back.

We're in a tough and turbulent world, and we are rebuilding our economic strength. In the past year, we've created nearly 100,000 new jobs. Employment numbers are more than 190,000 above the pre-recession peak. Companies are hiring again and advanced manufacturing is at the forefront. And that's manufacturing that is different from traditional manufacturing, but it is manufacturing and it is at the forefront of that recovery. Stronger economic growth is forecast, and consumer and business confidence are on the rise. And these are all facts that give us cause for optimism, but also cause for vigilance. I've spoken recently about safe hands, and by that I mean that we need to continue along this positive path that we're on. We need to move forward with a balanced approach rather than risk veering off, or careening off to the left or to the right. We need a steady approach.

Today, our economy remains in transition, and I talk about that a lot, no matter where I am in the province. We are in a transition particularly in the manufacturing sector. But as new industries

emerge, we don't leave the old ones behind. They don't disappear. Agriculture, for example, once employed a good share of our adult male work force, and occupied a majority of our families. It doesn't anymore, but it still thrives, and agriculture is driven by ingenuity and the efforts of the men and women who work the land and who process our food.

Last week I visited a farm in the Chatham-Kent area, where corn, soy and wheat are grown. But a solar panel has been installed on their property through a partnership with AGRIS Solar Co-op. That's the kind of evolution that's happening in that industry.

In manufacturing our future success lies in more experts and a highly trained work force, and in many cases, trained in new skills. It lies in strong partnerships with government and new modern infrastructure that continues to allow, and will in the future allow, companies to move goods more efficiently.

So all of that is to say we're entering into a critical and decisive period. People across Ontario remain concerned about what tomorrow will bring. They know the challenges before us are real and complex, and I just want to stop there for a second, because the reality is that I think often we underestimate the ability of the public to grasp that challenges are complex. They know that confronting them requires solutions beyond sloganeering or piecemeal populism. I really believe that. But the fact is that that is what is being offered by Conservatives and the NDP—the piecemeal populism and sloganeering—and what's needed is a clear vision, a sense of purpose, and a comprehensive plan that acknowledges the complexity of what we're facing.

Over the past year, I've met with folks from all sectors of the economy, from multinational enterprises to very small businesses, from the financial sector right through to the mining sector. I've heard the stories of families and the hopes of students, and I'm so glad that there are students in the room because this is about you and it's about your children. Our budget on Thursday will

reflect the interactions that I've had with people in every corner of Ontario.

We will take nothing for granted. We will work to ensure that all parts of our province share in the economic recovery. We'll do our part to keep Ontario on track towards success that can be sustained. So to that end, we have a clear set of priorities and we offer a clear way forward. These priorities are embodied in our sixpoint plan for jobs.

First, we have to focus on talent and skills. Everyone in this room knows that our province is never going to beat the world at low-wage, low-cost production, and we don't want to. We wouldn't want to. So it's incumbent upon us to develop our best and most important resource—our people. That's why we're committed to full-day kindergarten; that's why we launched the largest apprenticeship system in Canadian history; it's why we increased access to post-secondary tuition, secondary school, with our 30- per-cent-off Ontario Tuition Grant, that last year assisted almost a quarter of a million students.

It's also what motivates our Second Career program which helps unemployed and laid-off workers retrain for new careers.

So I'm not at all shy about our ambitions here. I want Ontario to be the first in North America when it comes to talent, training, retraining and skills development. That is our greatest strength. Quite frankly, in the twenty-first century, that's how you win the race for high-wage, high knowledge jobs. That is the way to get there.

The second point in our plan is supporting key industries. We are very fortunate to have one of North America's most diverse economies, but we need to protect and build on what we have, and we need to be willing to take the initiative to attract new businesses to the province. Earlier today, our government announced a commitment of up to \$1 billion to help develop northern Ontario's Ring of Fire. The investment requires we need a matching contribution from Ottawa, which would make

available up to \$2 billion to support infrastructure and enable our northern communities to take advantage of resource opportunities. But that's an important step towards greater prosperity for Ontarians in the north, for the province as a whole, and for our First Nations partners. In fact, on Thursday I was in Thunder Bay signing an historic agreement between the province and the nine Matawa First Nations in the Ring of Fire region. Those partnerships are essential if we want to see the kinds of benefits that resource development has brought to other parts of the country. These partnerships put in place what I was talking about—those conditions for success.

So it's not about cutting a cheque. It's about smart partnerships that make sense for all sides and help create good jobs for the people of Ontario. I think of our \$3-million investment in Thomas Canning in Maidstone for a new, state-of-the art fruit and vegetable processing facility, that will help support the farmers affected by the Heinz closure and at the same time create 40 new full-time jobs. And last week you would have heard about our agreement with Canada's largest software company and home-grown success, OpenText. In the past five years, this company has almost tripled in size, but less than 1 per cent of that growth happened in Ontario. So our partnership with OpenText is about bringing those new jobs back home, creating 1,200 new jobs across Ontario. And I can tell you, OpenText could have invested \$2 billion pretty much anywhere in the world, but I'm proud to say that they're investing it in Ontario's economy, and in our prosperous future, right here. And in a fiercely competitive world we cannot be idle.

We can't be idle. We have to be willing to compete. We need to be aggressive and creative and strike partnerships that are in the short- and long-term interests of the people of Ontario. We can't simply expect to keep Ontario competitive, but then pretend that we're not in a competition. And that's why I'm pleased to announce today that our government will create a \$2.5-billion

jobs and prosperity fund, a 10-year commitment to improving Ontario's ability to attract business investment, partnerships, create good new jobs and strengthen our economic future. That is a major part of our vision of the future.

The fund will support the recommendation of the Jobs and Prosperity Council to bolster innovation, to increase our reach into the global market, and secure those key investments in our province and in our future. This is a real point of differentiation between my government and Tim Hudak's Conservatives, and I need to make this point, because we believe in working actively to help create the conditions for companies to succeed.

That doesn't mean endless subsidies, but it does mean targeted, strategic efforts that produce a real and lasting result—good, well-paying jobs in the industries of tomorrow. It means playing to our strengths, those investments that I just mentioned, and those partnerships. Above all, it's about understanding that a company staying instead of going can make all the difference to an Ontario community.

The third point in our jobs plan is building modern infrastructure. The 2013 budget committed to \$35 billion over three years to build schools and hospitals and highways and bridges, and these investments will support more than 100,000 jobs and, at the same time, make our province more competitive and a better place—an even better place to live and to work and to raise a family.

A big part of quality of life comes down to transportation, and that's why I am so committed to improving transit. Our "Moving Ontario Forward" plan will invest an additional \$29 billion in transit and transportation infrastructure, on top of the \$35 billion, over the next decade. This will mean introducing train service every 15 minutes on all GO lines. My Minister of Transportation is applauding there. Way to go, Glen! What that will mean is less congestion on the roads and less time spent on the train platform. And that in turn means that parents will be getting home faster to

their kids at the end of the workday, and for businesses it means more efficient delivery of goods. And all of that is critical for our economic growth.

The fourth point is a youth job strategy. We all know talented, smart, young people in our families and our neighbourhoods who are struggling to find and to get that first break. We know from our own experience the importance of getting a foot in the door. So to date, our Youth Employment Fund has helped more than 11,500 young people find job placements. It brings a real focus to those who face multiple barriers to finding employment and helps them navigate that first foray into the work force, which is so important. It's a great example of a program of partnership—an example where government working in partnership with the private sector has increased opportunities for those who need it the most. And it's been very successful. Of those who have participated and completed their placements so far, 84 per cent have either been retained, or have gone on to further employment elsewhere. That's a pretty good attainment rate. That's why our government will build on its youth job strategy by extending the Youth Employment Fund through to the end of the summer of 2015. We've increased the amount of funding that we have available for this program, because our target is 30,000 young people—helping 30,000 young people to find that placement that can lead them to a job, because the pursuit of opportunity begins with that first, single step.

The fifth point in our plan is support for small businesses. The success of small business, and you know that in this room, is critical to the success of the province as a whole. And that's why it's so important that we give our innovators and our entrepreneurs the right tools, including access to resources through our Small Business Enterprise Centres, our Regional Innovation Centres, but more than that, the framework within which to work with competitive tax rates. And we know that all of that combined

with hard work and good ideas helps to create the new jobs and the growth that we are so committed to.

The sixth and final point in our jobs plan is balancing the budget, and it's something we're on track to do by 2017–18. Now, make no mistake, this is an important goal for us, and it's one that we are committed to, but it's not one that we will achieve on the backs of Ontarians. We won't give up on the services that people need, nor will we endanger new jobs and our future prosperity. Instead, we'll take a measured and a moderate approach. We'll continue to spend less per capita on government programs than any other province, and I just want to reinforce that. We are the leanest government in the country in terms of per-capita spending on programs. We'll keep working to get our debt-to-GDP ratio back to prerecession levels, and we will invest in the creation of good new jobs.

We will continue to approach the federal government— and this is an important part of our economic health. We're going to continue to approach the federal government to encourage it to enter into a real partnership with Ontario, investing in jobs and the economy in this province. Our economy needs a boost, and we have a federal government, quite frankly, that is doing more to hurt than to help at this moment. That is absolutely not helpful for the people of the province.

This year, Ontario will receive \$641 million less in major transfers from the federal government at a time, quite frankly, when we can least afford it. Over the last four years, the federal government paid a total of \$2.2 billion to other provinces that otherwise would have seen their transfers reduced. But this year, when Ontario was the only province facing a decline, the federal government ended the practice of transfer protection payments. That's how we ended up with a \$641-million cut.

So I will continue to stand up for Ontario in demanding fair treatment from the federal government, which I believe is a basic requirement, and is one that this particular federal government

seems unable or unwilling to uphold. But I will continue to make that case.

So that's our approach—our plan to help create jobs, strengthen our economy, and ensure a steady balance in Ontario. But even as we all work to further boost employment, we have to work together to look ahead to life after work, and move forward to confront the issue of pension reform. You know you have heard me talk about this. You have heard Minister Sousa talk about this. People in our province should not discover that their reward for a lifetime of hard work is a retirement defined by financial insecurity.

A new report by David Dodge, a former governor of the Bank of Canada, puts it all too clearly: “Even with the Canada Pension Plan and other programs, many of today's workers will find themselves with inadequate pension income in retirement.” So collectively, we're struggling to set enough aside to preserve our standard of living once we stop working. And fewer and fewer Ontario workers have access to the kind of private pensions that were common in our parents' day, although I know we're all different ages here. You know what I'm speaking of. Those plans are not as prevalent and as a government we'd like to see improvements to CPP. That is our first choice. Other provinces want the same thing. The CEO of CIBC gave a speech last year, saying millions of younger Canadians are on track to suffer what he described as a “real and meaningful decline in living standards in retirement.” And he calls for changes to allow increased contributions to CPP. But the federal Conservatives keep renegeing on their obligation to help Canadians prepare for retirement. In doing so, they talk about the costs, but they ignore the costs of inaction—a future in which Canada's economy is actually burdened by seniors who have reduced spending power and who require greater public assistance.

So we cannot wait any longer for leadership from Ottawa. We have an opportunity and an obligation to act now to help the

people of Ontario better prepare for retirement. That's why we will create the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan to bring greater financial security to Ontario families.

Before I conclude, I just want to step back a bit and make a more general observation. The decisions that governments make matter in our lives. They make a difference. Declaring war on labour, as the Conservatives would choose to do, will make a difference in people's lives. It will roll back the clock. It will hurt Ontario families. Combine that with Tim Hudak's refusal to cooperate with business in creating new jobs in Ontario, and the Conservatives would take us along a path towards a low wage economy. Cut health and education, as the Conservatives would choose to do, and that too will make a difference in people's lives. It will undermine the wellbeing of our people at a time when we need to be moving forward in order to compete in this global economy. If we entrust the government to the NDP, we'd be burdened with an incoherent set of tactics that are hostile to business, and reckless financial decisions.

So today, across the province, the economic recovery is taking hold. We are getting traction and we're gaining steam. There's optimism out there. I feel it, I can see it and there's growing confidence in what we can do together. But that momentum could be lost. If there's an election this spring—and I do not have a crystal ball; I cannot tell you whether there will be—the campaign will come down to a choice between our balanced approach to building on Ontario's success and the risky, unproven tactics of the parties on the Right and on the Left. I can promise you this: Our plan will be very clear and very detailed. It will be there for all to see in the budget that we will be bringing forward later this week. We will pursue a policy of investment and growth, opportunity and security. We will strive to protect and support Ontario's hard-working individuals and families. We will work together in partnership with business and with labour.

Over the past year, I've had the great good fortune to travel

across this province. I have met so many remarkable people. I know what some are going through. I've heard from them about the obstacles and pitfalls that they face. And at the same time, I've been struck by their resilience, their creativity, their pride, and their optimism. They are up to the challenges that confront us. Ontario is up to the challenge. Together, we can move forward with pride and with purpose. Our best days lie ahead.

Thank you so much for being here.

The appreciation of the meeting was expressed by The Hon. David Peterson, Chair, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP, and Former Premier of Ontario.