

## **The Empire Club Presents**



**THE HONORABLE  
KATHLEEN WYNNE,  
PREMIER OF ONTARIO**

### ***WITH:* A PLAN FOR FAIRNESS AND OPPORTUNITY IN ONTARIO**

**Welcome Address, by Barbara Jesson President of Jesson +  
Company Communications Inc. and President of the Empire  
Club of Canada**

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February 26, 2018

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From the Westin Harbour Castle in downtown Toronto, welcome, to the Empire Club of Canada. For those of you just joining us through either our webcast or our podcast, welcome, to the meeting.

Before our distinguished speaker is introduced, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our Head Table Guests. I would ask each Guest to rise for a brief moment and be seated as your name is called. I would ask the audience to refrain from applauding until the Head Table Guests have all been introduced.

## HEAD TABLE

### Distinguished Guest Speaker:

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

### Guests:

Mr. Noble Chummar, Partner, Cassels Brock and Blackwell LLP; Past President, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Jean François Dionne, Bachelor of Commerce Student, Global Management, Ted Rogers School of Management; President, Ryerson Commerce and Government Association

Mr. Kent Emerson, Associate Vice President, Municipal and Stakeholder Relations, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC); First Vice President, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Paul Fogolin, Past President, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Vanessa Foran, President and Chief Executive Officer, Asthma Canada

Mr. Michael Rencheck, President and Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Power

Ms. Jane Rounthwaite, President and Managing Partner, The Osborne Group

Ms. Sue VanderBent, Chief Executive Officer, Home Care Ontario; Director, Empire Club of Canada

My name is Barbara Jesson. I am the President of Jesson + Company Communications and the President of the Empire Club of Canada. Ladies and gentlemen, your Head Table Guests.

Choosing a life in public office cannot be easy. In these days of 24/7 expectations and full-on erosion of personal privacy, it is hard to imagine anyone choosing a political career. Yet, our guest today, Ontario's 25th premier, has not only embraced a life in public service, she has put up her hand for a second term.

From her first political excursion as a teenager when she joined her friends in challenging a rule that prevented women

from wearing pants to school, Kathleen Wynne has sought out leadership. If there was one theme that is to characterize her life in public office, it would have to be fairness. Life does not offer up a level playing field, but that does not mean we should not try to mold the landscape, so that everyone shares in the opportunities and the bounty of our country.

Fair is difficult. It means compromising, negotiating and getting inside another's perspective; it means finding and sharing empathy. For Premier Wynne, the one sure path to access and opportunity has been public education. She began her career as an activist on those issues.

She first ran for office when her three children were still in school, driven by her passion for publicly funded education and her desire to give every child in Ontario the best possible start. Before becoming an MPP, she served as a trustee on the Toronto District School Board. She also led citizens' groups for a number of grassroots community projects and played a major role as an organizer, facilitator and mediator.

She has championed fairness for Ontario's First Nations peoples, for our new immigrant groups, and she has consistently advocated for Ontario's LBGTQ community.

Since taking office in 2013, Premier Wynne secured an historic national deal to improve retirement security by enhancing the Canada Pension Plan, and, more recently, she has taken a bold stand on minimum wage.

Premier Wynne's plan for building Ontario up focuses on creating new opportunities for people and businesses,

and ensuring a fairer, more secure future for everyone in the province. Under her leadership, as Ontario regained its place as an economic engine of Canada, the Premier has worked to ensure the benefits of growth are shared evenly. Her government is making tuition free for hundreds of thousands of students and created 100,000 new childcare opportunities for working families.

Early this year, Premier Wynne introduced a major change in OHIP to provide free prescription medication for young people in the province, from birth until they turn 25. These are all measures we can applaud.

At a time of global change and uncertainty, Premier Wynne is unwavering in her support for a fair and open society. She has not chosen an easy path. It has, at times, been controversial. We cannot always agree on everything. The one thing we can all agree on is that Kathleen Wynne has put fairness above politics.

Ladies and gentlemen, please, join me in welcoming this champion of ordinary people to the Empire Club podium, Premier Wynne.

## **The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario**

Thank you, Barbara. Thank you very much. It was very kind. Thank you very, very much. It is always daunting when people stand up before you speak. It can only go downhill. Thank you, Barbara. Good afternoon, everyone. Bonjour, bonjour. It is great to be back at the Empire Club. Thank you very, very much to all of the board members who continue to create this forum. Thank you for doing that. It is a very important one.

I want to begin by just taking a moment to recognize that we are gathered on the traditional territory of many Indigenous people, and they date back countless generations. They were the first to live on this land, and they continue to help shape Ontario today. I want to show my respect to all of them. Thank you. I want to say to all of you, I had a moment to walk around and talk to some of you. I just want to thank you for all that you do. There are people here, all of you who are playing such an important role in your communities—you are volunteers; you are business people; you are moms and uncles and dads and aunts, and you are strengthening communities. Some of you are elected representatives. Thank you so much for what you do.

I am going to talk about what government is doing and how I see the role of government today, but we cannot do anything without the support from people on the frontline, so, thank you, and it is a pleasure to be here with all of you. Merci. Thank you.

The last time I was here, at the Empire Club, I remember that we had a lot to talk about. The 2015 federal election was just a few days away. Neighbours and faith communities were banding together to sponsor thousands of Syrian refugees, and I know many of you in this room were part of that movement. The Jays had just ended their post-session drought and were about to give us some pretty exciting October baseball. It was a buzz. The atmosphere here, in Toronto, and right across the country, was pretty electric. You could feel the energy.

I took the opportunity, at that time, to talk about the importance of leadership and how critical it is for government to see the big picture, to identify the challenges that people are facing, and to fight for them by putting forward big ideas that will make a real difference in their lives. I am going to repeat something that I said then. That is that government should not be timid. It must be bold. We should not shy away from challenges. We must confront them because, if governments do not confront the challenges, if governments do not look to the future, then how can we expect anyone else to do that? Governments are elected to take that view.

*[Remarks in French] Cette approche prend du temps et demande effort et détermination. Ce ne pas facile mais ce le celle moyen de réalise de real progrès.*

Today, I want to talk about the big challenges that we are facing as a society and what we can do to ensure that in these very changeable times, that people can still get ahead. I know that there are people who are unhappy. I am going to talk in a minute about how well the economy is doing and the position

that we are in, but there are people who are really feeling unhappy and uncertain about what the future holds. I believe that government has a vital role to play here, a vital role in creating more fairness and opportunity in our society. I have always believed that.

I formed a pretty strong opinion early on. Barbara talked about my first political action, which was wearing pants to school. It does not sound like a big deal, but in 1966, it was a bit of a big deal. I formed that strong opinion about the role of government and a few other things, when I was growing up in Richmond Hill. I was the eldest of four girls. We were sitting there in our birth order, as it happens, at the Island on the boardwalk at Centre Island. At school, I saw people being left behind, including one of my little sisters. She was very ill as a baby. She had a learning disability. In the 1950s and the 1960s, that typically meant that you were overlooked. There were no classes for kids with special needs. What having a pretty severe learning disability meant was that you were punished. You were failed, and you were punished. That is what it meant. You were kind of forgotten, and you were left behind.

I can remember that it was hard to watch what she went through. My parents were fierce advocates. They fought for solutions and services to help her. What I learned is that solutions are much easier to find when government works with families. As I grew up, I came to understand that when governments intentionally set out to create the conditions for people to succeed, to correct injustice rather than just letting

people fend for themselves, to fight for people rather than to divide them, that actually is what good government means.

Of course, when I was growing up, I never imagined I would have the privilege of leading a government. When I go to grade 5 classes or grade 10 classes, kids say, “Did you plan to be the Premier?” No, I did not plan to be the Premier. That was not part of the plan. Now that I do, now that I am in this role as Premier, I have been focused on building a fairer, better Ontario for everyone. It is why I am in politics. It starts with getting the fundamentals right. That means focusing on economic growth and on jobs and making investments where it makes the most sense and has the most impact.

We have put billions of dollars into building and repairing our hospitals, roads, schools, transit systems, including expanding the subway to Vaughan with six new stops. I know that Sandra Yeung Racco is here from the Vaughan Council. Good things are happening in Vaughan, but all over the province we have been doing this building.

Today, after five years, the people of Ontario are seeing, and they are experiencing the benefits of that plan that we are implementing. At a time of uncertainty, our economy is doing relatively well, partly because of that investment. We are outpacing Canada. We are outpacing all the G7 countries and have done that for the last three years. We balanced the budget this year for the first time since the recession, and more people are back at work. Our unemployment rate is at its lowest in almost two decades. That means that an average of about 500 jobs were created every single day in 2017.

All of that is very good, but here is the thing. While we are very proud of all of that—and you should be, too, because you are on the ground making those things happen—and while it shows that we are on the right track, the numbers do not tell the whole story. It is what I referred to earlier about people not feeling that. They do not feel it anymore. It is not like 40 years ago or 30 years ago where if there was that kind of growth and success, people would feel it in their day-to-day lives. The truth is that people in our province are struggling. They are anxious about the future. That is something, that anxiety, is something that I hear about a lot.

Earlier this year, a woman named Lise wrote to me. She lives just east of Ottawa. She has two sons. One is 22; one is 25. They did not expect to be living at home in their twenties, but they can only find precarious work—part time, minimum wage, no benefits. I am sure that you know people who are in the same boat. This is not what she imagined for them or what they imagined for themselves. Lise said to me, “Times have changed from when I was their age. It is very sad, and it is frightening, to say the least.” I agree with her. It is scary when what you expected to happen did not happen and when you do not know what is coming next. There is no easy solution. There is no quick fix to what is a complex set of conditions. This is a new world with new challenges. As I say, they are not simple. The pace of change is unlike anything we have seen before.

I know we can go back in history, and we can look at times where there were previous industrial revolutions, and there

was a lot of change, but what is happening right now is unprecedented. Thomas Friedman, in his book *Thank You for Being Late*, writes about the way that change is accelerating so rapidly now that it is actually moving faster than our ability to absorb it, our ability to understand what it actually means.

It is a provocative theory, but it makes me even more certain that in this time, government must step up, must tackle those big problems that go with this rapidly changing economy. If ever there was a time when government had a role to play, it is in an uncertain time like this. These are problems that people cannot solve by themselves.

What that means is that every decision we make as a government has to come down to one thing: We have to ask who we are fighting for.

***[Remarks in French] Alors, tout ce que nous faisons, chaque décision que nous prenons, défini en de d'autres termes pour qui nous luttons.***

Exactly who are we fighting for? We are fighting for hard-working men and women who want to retire with greater security. Barbara referenced this in her opening. We pushed hard for better pensions. We led the way, here in Ontario. We led the way, and now the improved Canada Pension Plan is going to pay out more in benefits to millions of retirees across the country. It is a good thing. We are fighting for working families with kids. That is why we made prescription drugs absolutely free for every person in Ontario under the age of 25. We call it OHIP+, and it is already making a world of difference to so many families across our province. In Ottawa,

we recently heard from a woman named Amanda. Amanda has her own business. She is a fitness instructor. Her husband works a contract job. They love what they do, but, like a lot of people, they do not have any additional health benefits. Their daughter has type 1 diabetes, and that means insulin. It means test strips. All of that adds up to about \$6,000 a year to keep their daughter alive and healthy. Amanda talked about standing in line at the pharmacy and wondering whether she had enough money in her bank account to pay for the drugs that her daughter needs. OHIP+ has changed everything for Amanda's family. It means that Amanda can focus on her daughter and on her career and not try to balance the cost of prescription drugs. So many families across the province can live their lives with a great burden lifted off their shoulders.

We are fighting for students who are trying to start a career or are retraining for a new one. That is why we made college and university tuition absolutely free for more than 225,000 students who were struggling to pay for it. We are saying that if you get the grades, you get to go. These are men and women of all ages. It is a great thing.

Sometimes we think about students in college and university as being kids who just came out of high school, but these are men and women of all ages. They are going to help us to seize the opportunities of this changing economy. Some of those adult learners who are going back to retrain bring a wealth of life experience that is going to be extremely helpful in this economy.

I spoke, last week, with Reneisha. She told me that she had

always dreamed of going to college, but she never thought that she could afford it. She especially did not think she could afford it because she has got two kids that she is taking care of. Her youngest is just a toddler. The free tuition program has made Reneisha's dream possible. She is studying community injustice services at Humber College, and she is getting 94%. She is top of her class. She would not even be there if we had not put free tuition in place. I asked her, "What do you want to do next?" She is not sure. She was just full of energy when I was talking to her on the phone. She has not decided yet. What she said was that there are so many options open to her that she did not even know about. She has gone into one program. She is not sure what she is going to do, but she is going to be successful.

The other conversation I had with her was the difference that it is making to her son. She has a toddler, and she has a son who is in grade 10. He is watching his mom do all of this. He is watching her succeed. That means that post-secondary is absolutely within his reach, and he will not be facing the same barriers that she did. This is intergenerational change that we are fostering by putting in place these supports. Imagine the talent that is being unlocked in Ontario, all the people who are going to be able to fulfil their dreams and, therefore, take part in the economy in a way that they would not have been able to do before. It is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

We are fighting for the moms or the dads who work two jobs and are still struggling to make ends meet no matter how hard they try. That is why we have raised the minimum wage

to \$14 an hour, and it is why we will increase it again to \$15 an hour next year. CBC did a story about people here in Ontario who earn the minimum wage. The reporter went to a soup kitchen where, traditionally, you would find homeless people, but, in recent times, what they have been finding is that they are serving more and more people who work minimum wage jobs. Just think about that. These are men and women who work 40 hours a week or more, and they still cannot afford to eat. They have to go to the food bank. That is not acceptable to me, and I do not think it is acceptable to you, either. In a province as prosperous as Ontario, people who work a full-time job should not have to worry where their next meal is coming from. That is why we are raising the minimum wage, and it is why we are doing it with urgency. A fair wage cannot wait. There have been many conversations about living wage for many years. We cannot wait any longer. The time is now when the economy is doing as well as it is.

We are fighting for those working parents whose children are just starting out in the world. That is why we are helping 100,000 more children access licensed childcare, so that parents can go back to work when they choose, and more kids can have a great place to learn and grow. That is who we are fighting for. Our focus is on the people of this province, on their needs, on their priorities, on their growth goals. Even as those things continue to shift and change as new realities emerge, we will be ready to respond.

We will be ready to fight for a fair, better Ontario, no matter what the world throws our way, and the world does throw sur-

prises our way, as you all know. Earlier this month, I was at a town hall meeting in Windsor. As you can imagine, we talked about all the questions swirling around NAFTA. I told them, and I will always stand up for Ontario workers and businesses, especially in the face of U.S. protectionism. That is my job. I believe in free trade. I believe in the importance of an updated NAFTA deal because it supports good jobs for workers on both sides of the borders. That is exactly why I have met or spoken with nearly 40 U.S. governors, now. Most of those have been Republican governors. We have talked about the benefits of our partnership. I will say that—and Philippe Couillard from Québec and I were comparing notes just this week—not one of those conversations has led to a disagreement about how important NAFTA is. There is a strong understanding of how important NAFTA is.

I have also been clear that if any state takes actions to harm Ontario workers and businesses, then we would respond in kind, that we would make a proportional response. That is why, last week, we tabled legislation, which enables us to respond to the Buy American legislation that was introduced in New York and Texas. Nobody wants a trade war, but if the U.S. insists on going down the Buy American route, then we have no choice but to respond. It is my job to fight for Ontario's people and businesses. That is why I am fiercely advocating for free trade and open procurement, and it is why I will not let others dismantle it without paying a price. That is the message that I have been taking to the States.

I think it is safe to say that the NAFTA renegotiation is a

fight that none of us would have predicted when I was last here.

As I said, as a government, we have to be ready for whatever comes our way. We have to look to the horizon. Oftentimes, it is our kids who help us to do that. One of the most frequent questions that I hear from young people when I go on campus or I go to high schools is What is the government doing about climate change? It is an important question, and it may be the most important question for the planet. We cannot ignore the reality of climate change. We cannot look the other way. Young people understand that. They know that we have messed up. They know that our generation and the previous generation did not do everything that we should have done, and they are looking to us to at least get us on a footing of going in the right direction. That is why it matters that we have eliminated coal-fired power. It makes a difference to our air quality, and we have got Asthma Canada sitting right here. We can walk out of our doors. The air is clean. It matters to the health of our children, and it matters to the future.

We have to prepare our province to thrive in a very different global economy, and we have to do it now. We cannot wait. It is upon us. Some people are concerned about the cost of taking action, but there is a far, far greater cost associated with doing nothing. It is why we have put a cap on pollution, because environmental destruction is not an acceptable cost of doing business.

On January 1st, we officially joined with Québec and California in North America's largest carbon market. We chose



this system because it provides the greatest reductions at the lowest cost, both to people and to businesses. Every dollar from the proceeds goes into improving public transit systems, retrofitting our hospitals and schools, helping people reduce their greenhouse gas emissions at home with free smart thermostats and rebates; it gets plowed back into communities to help everyone to reduce pollution.

You cannot be serious about lowering emissions and fighting climate change without a price on carbon. It is just not possible. Those who pretend differently are simply being dishonest and are trying to sidestep the issue.

I look at the climate change issue not just as the Premier of Ontario, though. I look at it as a grandmother. It would be unfair and irresponsible to push the most pressing issue that we face onto the next generation. I cannot look Olivia and Claire and Hugh—who are eight and six and four—in the eye and say, “While grandma was Premier, she did not do anything about climate change, because there were people who disagreed with what should be done.” I cannot do that. It is my responsibility to say to them, “Kids, I did everything that I could,” and then to pass the baton to them.

We are fighting for them, and we are doing it in a smart, sustainable way. As pollution has fallen in Ontario, our economy has grown. We are on the right track. There is no denying it, though: This is a time of uncertainty and change in the world. I just spent three days in Washington. There is no doubt about uncertainty, my friends. It is an uncertain time. These are challenging times to govern, just as they are

challenging times to be in business or to be an educator or to be a farmer or to be an auto worker or to work in homecare. Whatever you are doing, it is an uncertain time.

If we do our job right, if we stick with our plan, then the people of Ontario will be able to look to the future, and they will be able to look to the future not with fear and anxiety, but with the hope and the confidence that really have been trademarks of who we are as Ontarians and Canadians. Ontario is a very special place. When I meet with U.S. leaders, they admire what we have built here. They do not all agree with everything that we are doing. I am meeting with a lot of Republican and Democratic leaders in the States. They look at what we are doing, and they want to understand how we are building, how we are providing the supports that we are for people. They want to understand how we are doing more and not less for people, how we are talking honestly about what change means and accepting it on our terms.

I truly believe that if there is anywhere that can figure out the best way to confront today’s challenges, it is Ontario. It is in this room. It is us. It is here. It is in all of the beautiful 444 municipalities in this province. There are great ideas. There are people who want to work together. There are partnerships waiting to happen, and we are going to continue to work with all of the folks in this province who see that the future can be as bright as it can be. I just want to thank you all for being here. Merci. Miigwetch. Thank you.

## Questions & Answers

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**Q: Thank you Premier Wynne, and you read my mind. Thanks very much for your insightful, inspirational words about trying to bridge inequality in Ontario. One of the stories you mentioned around the minimum wage and that people are working 40 hours a week and trying to make ends meet is that they are using food banks. I think, frankly, one of the reasons they are using food banks is the enormous cost of finding an affordable place to live, particularly, for some of the young people that you mentioned.**

**We applaud your government. You brought some measures last April under the Fair Housing Plan. That said, the challenge is still enormous out there, particularly, for low, modest income households. Do you have some thoughts about other measures your governments could do to add to the supply of affordable housing or increase affordability for those that are having trouble making ends meet, particularly, as we all know an election campaign is coming? Here is your opportunity to let us know what you might be thinking of doing.**

**KW:** Scoop my platform, right. Let me just say, Harvey, that I absolutely get that. When we look at the determinants of health, when we look at the factors that go into poverty reduction, housing is a huge part of that. You are right. In our Fair Housing Plan, we did put in some supports.

We brought rent control in for all buildings, not just the ones that were built before 1991. That was a hard thing to do because it is something that has been contentious for many years, but we were just seeing too many exponential increases in rent, and we are working with the federal government on the National Housing Plan, so that there can be a direct support for building of more housing and of which I know you want part of that to be co-op, and I totally agree with you. We need different models. We cannot just build the way we have always built in the past, and we need new models.

We are also moving on inclusionary zoning. I think that municipalities having the ability to put in place an expectation that when there is building, there will be affordable housing, and we will have mixed housing models. That is important.

The last one I would just tackle is you talked about young people, and that is a huge concern. I also have a huge concern about people at the other end of the generation, seniors. I do not think we have brought the discussion around housing for seniors and healthcare for seniors close enough together.

They are intimately related. Stay tuned as we work with all of the folks who are trying to provide better homecare, and, at the same time, provide housing options for people, so people who are in a bed in an acute care hospital when they should be in the community, but there is not the right housing model for them.

We are working on that as well. That is the spectrum that we are working on.

Thank you, Harvey, for all your support. Thank you.

**Q: Hello. Thank you for your conversation. My name is Justin Hein. I am the CEO of Rose Rocket, a small startup company here in Ontario, just down the road, a five-minute walk. I want to know your thoughts coming for Ontario in the next four years, eight years, ten years, whatever you would like to use as a time window of hypergrowth and small companies. What are we doing well in Ontario? What needs to improve? And how are you going to help really a huge economic driver for this province?**

KW: My understanding—and I am quite sure you know more about this than I do, and you could give me some advice, which I hope you will do—is there are a couple of things that we need to focus on. My understanding is that the sort of threshold of a business expanding, we do not necessarily support that commercialization, that next growth. I think we have gotten better on the startup, and we have got great incubation happening in the province, but we have not necessarily helped businesses to grow and stay. I think that is one of the things that we need to do. I think the other thing is we need to make sure that the people who are graduating from our post-secondary institutions, that you continue to have the labour force that you need, and that that labour force graduates with an understanding of entrepreneurialism and understand-

ing of growing a business. I think one of the things that we can do much better in this province is link education with the workforce. We have a number of great examples of that happening, so that young people get exposed to a full range of opportunities early, but we have a ways to go. I think if we can keep that great, highly educated workforce that, quite frankly, is bringing businesses here, is helping to start terrific businesses, that is great, but we have got more to do to make that work force even more ready for the 21st century, which is what you are talking about.

**Q: Hi, I am Kim Moran with Children's Mental Health Ontario. Thank you so much for speaking about the big changes that are happening to our children and what they are facing. I think that one of the big accomplishments we have made as a society is to really reduce the stigma around mental health. I think that that has then brought so many kids and so many youth out to really address mental health issues, which is really going to be positive for society, as a whole, in the long term. I think that you know we have not really had our service delivery system keep up with that demand. That is something that I would really like to get your thoughts about, because you know, from your background, that when kids have mental health issues that are not treated, it overflows into the classroom. The teachers are really struggling with kids who really need treatment.**

**They need help that they cannot access and, of course, into our colleges and universities, similarly, the kids really need to get the treatment as soon as they need it. I just wanted to ask your comments on that issue.**

KW: A couple of things on that. I said in my remarks that one of the most frequently asked questions I get is about climate change. Probably the number one question I get asked—and I just did a college and university campus tour—is about mental health. It is exactly as you have said. The terrific awareness campaigns that have happened, and it is so important, because we all know that as recently as 10, 15 years ago, this conversation was not as robust as it is now, and people were not talking about early intervention and early identification. It is a huge concern.

Let me just step back for one second and say that people say to me, “You are doing a lot of things. There is a lot of stuff going on. What are you really focused on? What do you really want to get done?” My response to that is, there is a lot that needs doing. That is why the list is long. There are a lot of concerns. I look around this room. There are not just three things that you are concerned about; there are 50 things that you are concerned about.

When people say you have done a lot, my response is, “So, ask a parent of a kid with mental health issues if we have done too much. The answer is no.” The answer is there is still more to do. What I will say to you is we

get that. We have put more money; we have put millions more into mental health services, but we have not finished, by any stretch of the imagination.

You know that the minister of health is working on a plan. You know that things like mental health hubs—that we are trying to bring an interdisciplinary approach to this, because there is not just one practitioner who needs to be involved. Kids need a wraparound of services. We need to make sure that schools have the supports that they need. We cannot expect teachers to be mental health professionals. It is not fair. They are educating our kids. They have a different job, and they need to be supported both in the school and in the community. We know that there is more to be done.

The other challenge is the navigation. I know when I am on a campus or talking to educators, that what happens in the community is not necessarily connected to the campus or to the school. We need to make sure that there is a way better coordination of services, and that is, again, top of mind for the minister of health and long-term care. Stay tuned. We are going to do more.

**Q: Premier, hello. Dr. Sara Diamond, President OCAD University. Thank you very much for the free tuition. The impacts in the college and university sector, as you have said, are really profound. Every challenge you have described requires the talent of graduates from colleges and universities. I wonder if you could speak a little bit about how you see investment in**

**post-secondary education moving forward in your next government.**

KW: In other words, when will there be more.

**Q: Yes, when will there be more? You have done some great work.**

KW: Sara, let me just say that we will never back away from the need to continue investing in post-secondary. I will just broaden that to say that that includes skilled trades. It includes colleges; it includes universities; and it includes skilled trades because, again, there is an area where I hear from business all the time, “I am looking for 20 welders; I am looking for millwrights; I am looking for tool and die.” I visited an amazing place in—okay, staff help me: Where was I? St. Clair College. I was at St. Clair College, and this program had drawn young people from a whole bunch of backgrounds. There was a young guy with a Bachelor of Science degree who was learning computer skills on the shop floor, so that he could go into an apprenticeship. He was learning millwrighting; he was doing tool and die; and he was going to go into an apprenticeship. That kind of opportunity has to be available to kids across the province. We are going to continue to invest. I know that each institution has a vision and a dream of where they want to go. Part of our job is to work with all of them and make sure that we have got the right mix of opportunities for kids, whether they live in the north, whether they live in the south part, southwest, southeast

part of the province. We have to make sure that they have access somewhere in their jurisdiction, that they have access to the right kind of education for them, and that they can transfer those skills and credits from one institution to another, because that is one of the challenges that we have faced as well. We are going to continue to work and invest and continue that advantage because, when I go to China or India or Vietnam—as I was just there this fall—they look to us for our labour force. They bring business here. They want to invest here. They want to expand their businesses here and create jobs because of our highly educated work force. I know it is our advantage, and it is exactly why when we put in the proposal for the Amazon bid—and there may be different feelings about this—we did not put on the table a whole lot of money. What we put on the table was our highly educated workforce, and we are the only Canadian province, the only Canadian city that was on that list of 20. We are on the right track.

I am getting the hook. Thank you so much for spending so much time with me. Have a wonderful afternoon. Merci. Miigwetch.

**Note of Appreciation, by Ms. Vanessa Foran, President  
and Chief Executive Officer, Asthma Canada**

Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to thank the Empire Club for hosting this event and a very special thank you to the Premier for taking the time to share her thoughts on where we are as a province and what opportunities lie ahead.

I would also like to thank all the people in the room who dedicate their time and effort to public service. These are the people who are doing all they can to make Ontario a better place to live and to raise a family.

As a province, we have been making important long-term decisions that have impacted the quality of the air that we breathe and have reduced our carbon footprint. This has helped to improve the health of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens, including those who live with asthma and other respiratory conditions.

Ontario has been a global leader in reducing GHG emissions by eliminating our reliance on coal-fired electricity generation and replacing it with non-emitting hydro and nuclear energy. As a province, we have embraced this leadership role as innovators in the new low-carbon economy, and it is vitally important that we remain committed to continuing on this path to a cleaner world.

Every step we take to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels is a positive step forward to cleaner air in this province. As we reduce carbon emissions, we increase the quality of life for our residents, especially, those with asthmas and lung issues.

On behalf of Asthma Canada, I would like to, once again, thank the Premier for joining us today and for her continued support of clean air policies. Thank you very much.

**Concluding Remarks, by Barbara Jesson**

Thank you, Vanessa. I apologize on behalf of everyone for that dull roar. A sincere thank you to our sponsors, Bruce Power and Home Care Ontario, for making this event possible. The Empire Club of Canada is a not-for-profit, and we simply could not do these events without the generous support of sponsors like you. We are very, very grateful.

I would also like to thank mediaevents.ca, Canada's online event space for webcasting today's event to thousands of viewers around the world, and also, a particular thank you to our sponsors, the National Post, and, most especially, to Toronto Life, our newest sponsor. We are just delighted with this partnership, and we look forward to doing many activities with you.

Although our club has been around since 1903, we are active on social media. Please, follow us on Twitter at @Empire\_Club and visit us online at [www.empireclub.org](http://www.empireclub.org). You can also find us on Facebook, LinkedIn and on Instagram.

Finally, please, join us again at our next event on March 1st, that is this Thursday, with Minister Bill Morneau, fresh off his budget, to talk to us about it at the Royal York Hotel.

Thank you very much for your attendance, today.

This meeting is now adjourned.