

The Empire Club Presents



THE HONOURABLE ANDREA HORWATH

LEADER OF ONTARIO'S
OFFICIAL OPPOSITION, NDP

WITH: NO SURPRISES, NO SECRETS: A GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING A STABLE, PROSPEROUS, MODERN ECONOMY

Welcome Address, by Mr. Kent Emerson, Associate Vice President at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and President of the Empire Club of Canada

November 29, 2018

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From Arcadian Court 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.

Today's topic is "No Surprises, No Secrets: A Government's Role in Supporting a Stable, Prosperous, Modern Economy."

HEAD TABLE

Distinguished Guest Speaker:

The Honourable Andrea Horwath, Leader of Ontario's Official Opposition, NDP

Guests:

Mr. Ali Badruddin, Managing Director, StrategyCorp; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Jenna Hay, Head of Policy Development and Regulatory Affairs, Lending Loop; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Kelly Jackson, Associate Vice President, Government Relations and Strategic Communications, Humber College; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. MJ Perry, Vice President and Owner, Mr. Discount; PhD Candidate in Theology, University of Toronto; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Elliott Silverstein, Manager, Government Relations, CAA South Central Ontario

Ms. Ethel Taylor, Vice Chair, CAA Club Group

Mr. Matthew Thornton, Vice President, Public Affairs and Communications, Ontario Real Estate Association

Of course, we all woke up this week to a big surprise: The announcement that General Motors is going to close down the Oshawa plant at the end of 2019. Obviously, manufacturing is a key role in a stable, prosperous economy, so we are weighing your thoughts on that. This is the third time today's speaker has been a keynote at the Empire Club of Canada. However, it is the inaugural speech in her new role as Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

One of the challenges of introducing Andrea Horwath is Ontarians believe that they know her very well.

That was evident with the polling around the last election. I tried to find something that both the Ontarians and the Empire Club members might find unique about Andrea Horwath.

I found this online questionnaire from postcity.com that she was part of, and she was asked questions like What was your favourite TV show? And she said Jeopardy! because she liked Alex Trebek. Is that still true? That is good.

If I speak too long, you can start to play the Jeopardy! music, and I will just come off the stage.

More interesting is that she was questioned about her favourite historical figure. Andrea responded, “I would say Agnes Macphail. She was one of the first female MPPs, and she fought battles that nobody else would fight for people that nobody else really cared about. And I see her as someone I very much admire.”

For those of you who do not know, Macphail was elected to the legislature in 1943. She was a trailblazer and had to endure many unpleasant things in those days, including heckling at events. There is a famous story of Macphail being confronted by a male heckler who shouted, “Don’t you often wish you were a man?” She answered back shouting, “Yes, don’t you?” Like Macphail, Andrea has a reputation as a fighter. She has fought her way up in the male-dominated world of Hamilton city politics when she was first elected to council in 1997. She became an MPP in 2004 through a by-election and, shortly thereafter, battled in a leadership campaign, becoming the NDP leader in 2009.

This catapulted her into the first general election as leader in 2011. When some individuals counted her out after the 2014 election, Andrea was not deterred. She kept fighting, and it led to incredible success. During the 2018 election, Andrea ensured that the NDP had the highest percentage of women candidates in Ontario's history at 56%.

This resulted in women being elected as MPPs in 20 of the 40 total NDP seats. Under her leadership, the NDP vote percentage rose to 33.59% of Ontarians, so that is also great. Yes, you clapped for all the other things. That is also good. You can clap for that one, too.

In terms of today's topic on the role of government, we do have some hints on Ms. Horwath's approach. In an interview she gave to rabble.ca after becoming the NDP leader in 2009, she said, "Government should not be hands off.

Government should absolutely be involved in the economy and the distribution of the wealth that the economy creates and the setting of priorities around things like education and health care." We are all eager to hear what her take on that is today, particularly, because there is a change of government at Queen's Park.

In her first speech to the Empire Club in 2013, Ms. Horwath was quoted as saying, "I know that a race to the bottom on wages is not the path to prosperity." This is evident of her position that all Ontarians deserve to earn a living wage and her belief that it is also good for the economy.

Andrea has been an advocate for many other issues, including removing HST from hydro bills, forcing an end to

a proposed cost increase on seniors' prescription drugs, and creating a Financial Accountability Office for the province.

In 2012, Andrea's work on these issues led her to win an EVE award in recognition of her public service.

Please, give a warm welcome to the Leader of the NDP and Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, MPP Andrea Horwath.

The Honourable Andrea Horwath

Thank you so much. Thanks, everyone. Good afternoon. How is everybody doing? Bonjour tout le monde.

I want to begin by acknowledging, of course, that we are meeting, today, on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, the Wendat of the Métis and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. As we meet here, today, let us renew our commitment as Ontarians to true and meaningful reconciliation that is based on respect, cooperation and action to make people's lives better and build stronger communities across our province. I want to thank Kent for that kind introduction. I just want to take a moment and say it is probably the most broad introduction and fulsome one. As you kept picking these things out from my past, I kept getting more and more uptight about what might be coming next. You did a fantastic job, Kent, and I appreciate that. Thank you.

I also want to thank the Empire Club of Canada for having me once again and, of course, the sponsors of the event, for both the luncheon as well as the VIP event earlier before lunch and for making this event possible, for making it an opportunity for all of us to get together to have a chat today. I really do appreciate it.

It has been my pleasure as both the NDP Leader and now as Leader of the Opposition to meet and work with many of you who are in the room today. As I look out, I see business owners; I see not-for-profit leaders; I see labour leaders; I see investors. All of you are vital parts and partners in building prosperity for our province.

I know that everybody in this room shares a commitment to protecting what is already working in our province and to fix what is not working. We also share an understanding of the serious challenges that Ontario faces. Let us not sugarcoat it, folks. We are certainly in some uncertain times these days.

As I speak, there are close to 5,000 workers and their families in Oshawa worried about their futures, as Kent has already mentioned. After a century of assembling GM vehicles in Oshawa, those folks are worried that they are not going to be able to keep putting food on the table for their families. My heart is with the city of Oshawa and the Region of Durham. I am sure all of you in the room feel the same way. I believe that the Province of Ontario must do much more than simply extend sympathy. The province can fight like hell to protect those jobs. I think we need to do

that. Electric and autonomous vehicles will be at the heart of the auto industry, moving forward, so let us not just sit back and let other jurisdictions lead. Let us not just wave goodbye to thousands of jobs. Let us do the hard work and put Oshawa and Ontario back on the leading edge.

For a century, Oshawa has been a leader in the auto industry. I think we can keep it that way, so let us work hard now with the workers, with the municipal leaders, with local businesses and the community to ensure the vehicles of tomorrow will be built right here in Ontario.

I think it is pretty obvious that I do not share Doug Ford's attitude that it is all over. He is throwing in the towel, but there is a year before the announced closure actually takes place. I say it is only over if we give up.

Sadly, it is not just GM workers that are worried, and it is not just GM worried about uncertain times in our province.

In the many years that I have been meeting folks from different industries and sectors across the province, one thing that everyone, regardless of their sector, has always expressed to me, has always emphasized, is the fundamental importance of predictability. Government plays a key role in providing a stable environment for business of all sizes, in all sectors to thrive because an environment where businesses have to contend with shocks and surprises only makes it harder to build a prosperous and secure economy.

Predictability, transparency, that is how we build stability for business, reliability for investors and prosperity for everyone. We do it by making sure that anything that is

coming down the pike is based on data and evidence, making sure that there is a clear plan, making sure that the government shares that plan for all to see, so that everyone, workers, businesses and investors know what to expect in the next quarter, the next year, the next five years—no surprises, no secrets. Since the election, there has been just a little bit of change, I think. There has been a lot of change since the election. I know that some of you here are probably very appreciative of some of those changes. That is no secret. It is also not a secret to you that I opposed things like rolling back the minimum wage.

I opposed taking the two sick days away from those who counted on them. I really do believe deeply in respecting working people. I feel strongly that everyone who works in Ontario should be able to build a good life here.

Now, you might not agree with me on the minimum wage issue, but you may recall that I have been calling for an increase in the minimum wage for years now.

We were calling for \$10 back in 2010. We were calling for \$12 back in 2012. Tim Hudak is getting a bit nervous over there. You remember those days. I think what we can all agree on, though, in this room and throughout the province is that for far too often decisions in Ontario these days feel like they are ill thought out, like they are being based on who has the premier's ear at any given moment instead of what is best for Ontario's people and Ontario's economy. Decisions like cancelling university campuses in Markham, Brampton and Milton, for example.

Decisions like that, which are not backed by data, which are not backed by evidence. It is short-term thinking.

When the plan is kept hidden from you, from me and from potential investors, it makes it harder for everyone to do business.

It means businesses, investors and workers are never sure about what is going to happen next.

One thing is very clear: Ripping up contracts in the green energy sector and passing laws that prevent those very businesses from suing for breach of contract, scuttling vital independent watchdogs, like the Child and Youth Advocate, the Environmental Commissioner and the French Languages Services Commissioner, watchdogs that people of Ontario depend on to hold government accountable, are not things that inspire confidence. Hopefully, this will change.

As Leader of the Official Opposition, I will be constructive. I am going to support what is working in our province, but I will also be pressing our government every day to fix what is not working because businesses should be able to trust that the contracts they sign are going to be upheld.

They should be able to plan ahead with some certainty for the next year and into the future. Investors should be able to look at Ontario as a safe bet because these are exactly the kinds of things that make it possible for all of us to build a more prosperous Ontario together. Stability and predictability in government are also essential to growth because they allow us to look forward.

They allow us to tackle the big things that we need to

move our province forward, like infrastructure planning and investments so that we can finally build more efficient, affordable transit, expand the benefits of broadband Internet to places like rural Ontario, to communities that do not have it now. It is shocking how many communities do not have it now, rural communities, farmers, businesses and schools in small-town Ontario. We need to ensure that we have safe and accessible well-maintained roads everywhere in our province, roads that allow people to get back and forth to work, allow goods to get to market. We know we have to keep on building and improving our modern workforce as well, which is essential to a modern economy. That means we have to invest in education at all levels—from taking meaningful action to fund and fix our kids' schools to making sure that the cost of college or university stops being a drag on the upward mobility of young people who are entering our workforce, young people who are hoping to buy their first homes, start their families and build a great life for themselves. Instead of cancelling the construction of those critical universities that I mentioned early on and smothering economic activity in fast-growing municipalities, like Brampton, Markham and Milton, Ontario should be seizing opportunities to become more competitive in the global economy by expanding our capacity for research, innovation and excellence.

We also have to move forward and not backward in our vision to build an economy where everyone can get quality, steady work. You can get a quality, steady job, a job where

everyone is paid fairly and can earn fair benefits, so that they can build a good life for their families, contribute to our growing economy and ensure that our province prospers. Moving forward on improving our modern workforce also means that government needs to ensure that all of us as workers, businesses, investors, Ontarians, are supported by an accessible, high-quality health care system. I believe that means safeguarding the quality of our public health care system as it is today, but it also means coming to the table and contributing to things like dental benefits for Ontarians because expanding quality health coverage will make Ontario an even more attractive place to invest and an even better place to run a business. It will make people healthier.

I am just going to go offline for a sec on the dental issue because I talk to so many people. Now, I am going to use one of Doug's lines: I talked to thousands of people during the campaign—and I did. Even business people were quite interested in the dental benefit program that we are putting forward because two-thirds of companies already provide dental benefits for their workers. The plan that we had was one that would ask those one-third that are not doing that to help contribute. Of course, the in-tandem piece, if you will, was our pharmacare program. What that would have done is a couple of things. It would have taken about \$800 million a year out of the costs of benefits for those employers that are providing benefit plans.

That would have been an assistance to employers in that regard. What it also would have done was give us a signifi-

cant bargaining power when you are representing almost 14 million people and their needs for drugs and for pharmaceuticals. When you have got that many people for whom you are bargaining with drug companies in terms of the cost of drugs, it is a big bargaining chip. We saw that, and, again, it is not something that we cooked up in the back rooms, but we were consulting with people, particularly, those from the west coast who spend their life doing work on this particular issue, to try to figure out how we move our country forward when it comes to pharmacare. Those experts showed us very clearly that we can not only save significant dollars in the cost of pharmaceuticals with the pharmacare program, but we could also then reduce the impact on our health care system in other ways—fewer people ending up in emergency for conditions that they were not able to manage with drugs. For one, in every three minutes in Ontario, there is somebody going to an emergency room or a doctor’s office to get their pain in their mouth dealt with, so the dental plan would have helped reduce pressure on doctors as well as hospitals, also.

When we talk about things like pharmacare and dental care, it is not just the socialist dream, my friends; it actually makes economic sense, and it makes sense for government to be able to reduce costs. It will help us protect our health care system for the next generations. It also means that the things that government has to do are things that are sometimes not easy. It is hard work. We have to do the hard work of maintaining, improving, and expanding services

like transit as well. These services sustain our workforce, and they are the lifeblood of our communities, making them more connected, more prosperous and more desirable to live in. That is why investments in transit are important.

Ontario's ability to provide these services at a high level makes it the best choice for skilled workers as well.

You all know very well that we have a lot of great skilled workers in our province. We have a lot of really well-educated people in our province, but their choices are global in terms of where they use their talents, where they decide to settle in terms of their careers. What we need to do is make sure we provide the infrastructure, if you will, to encourage them to stay here and to use all of that great talent to help move our province forward.

I am looking forward to hearing your insights about how we can give people and businesses the stability that they need to succeed because I believe that, together, we can make Ontario a better, more affordable place to live and to do business. We can attract the world's best—not only keep our best here, but attract the best from the rest of the world. We can create more opportunity for every Ontarian.

The people of Ontario have more in common than what divides us. We share a vision of vibrant communities no matter where those communities are, vibrant communities in urban settings, vibrant communities in small-town settings and rural settings, with world-class healthcare, more opportunity and prosperity for all and less debt for our young people. I know that we can deliver on a shared vision

to make Ontario the best place in the world to build a great business and a great life.

Thank you all very much. *Merci beaucoup*. I look forward to hearing your questions. *Miigwetch*.

Questions & Answers

KE: Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to take some questions from the floor. We have Bill and Marie with mics. I am going to ask the first question while people are getting their thoughts together. When it is time for you to do so, please, introduce yourself by giving your name and the company or organization that you represent. If it drags on a little bit too long, then Andrea may sing the Jeopardy! song, or I might start singing it, you never know. One of the questions I had was around General Motors. You had talked about an Ottawa strategy in the past. Is that something you are still emphasizing? If so, in this new context, what does that look like and how might that be applied?

AH: Thanks Kent, for the question. Yes, we have talked about an Ottawa strategy for some time so not just during the campaign as part of our platform, but for a number of years now.

People may know this about me. I am an autoworker's daughter. I grew up in Stoney Creek, which is

now part of Hamilton thanks to Mike Harris. My dad had a great job. There were four kids in the family, and we were able to afford the things that we needed. We had a nice lifestyle. Although we did not have the kind of money that he could put all four kids through university, we still did very, very well. My sister and brothers and I had a pretty good life. When I say that, it is because I know how important those kinds of jobs are.

I also know that there are many changes that are happening globally that we have to be cognizant of, but we also have to realize that these jobs and this investment in terms of the new kinds of cars or automobiles that are coming online in the future are not going to come here by accident. We are not going to get the autonomous vehicle manufacturing or the electric automobile manufacturing opportunities here, in Ontario, as a fluke.

Part of what we need to do is not only sit down with industry and the other orders of government and labour, frankly, but also with universities and colleges and with the innovation sector. We have so much in terms of what we can offer when you look, particularly, around the Innovation Corridor and the engineers that we have here and the people that are doing such great work when it comes to innovation. These are the pieces that we need to have at the table to develop a strategy to help us make sure that those investments are coming here and that

those products are being manufactured in our communities because one of the other things that we have, which is kind of the very big disappointment, I think, about Oshawa, is a really skilled workforce when it comes to automotive. The disappointment in Oshawa was that, of course, that plant, particularly, had done a whole reskilling of their workforce to deal with their dual plant which can produce both cars and trucks. Those folks worked really hard to make sure that they were top notch.

It is one of the apparently highest quality plants in the entire GM family. To lose a plant like that should never happen. What we also have to make sure is that we get GM and the other big three, if you want to call them that, as well as Toyota and others. I have a brother that works at Toyota, by the way, so I had to put that plug for Toyota in there, but we cannot just expect that we are going to continue to have those good auto jobs without a proactive strategy. That proactive strategy has to have all the players at the table, so that we can map out how it is that we are going to get these investments and these products here in our province.

Q: Thank you. Michael Kobzar from Siemens Canada. You briefly made mention of the university cancellations that just took place in, I think, Brampton, Milton and where I live in Markham. I am not a student, so it does not affect me, but what effect

will it have on communities and the economies of those communities? If you could elaborate on that, that would be great.

AH: Sure. Thank you for that question. I think we were all pretty shocked when we saw the middle-of-the-night, dead-of-the-night announcement that these universities were being cancelled. Of course, since then, Ryerson's law school has been cancelled as well as the francophone university. I talked in my speech about the fact that we have an economy that is changing.

We have some of the most rapid and increasingly rapid changes in technologies that we have seen in our history. It is, I think, backwards to imagine that we are going to be able to take advantage of being at the cutting edge of the changing technologies and economy if we get rid of our post-secondary institutions or if we do not expand opportunity for young people to be able to engage at the post-secondary level.

Just for an example, in Brampton, a young person who would have taken advantage of the Brampton campus, would have saved about \$800 or more per semester as well as 800 hours of time in traveling back and forth to university to downtown Toronto.

That is pretty major. When you look at, I think it was, the Markham campus, that was literally about to turn sod.

Within two weeks from the announcement was the sod turning that was supposed to happen. The hours that went into building the partnerships that led to the vision for that campus—you cannot even count how much effort was put in. That campus was one that was bringing together business, bringing together, of course, the academic side with the college and university involved, bringing together community, and it saw itself as a real hub for innovation and for scaling of companies, so taking not only the innovators, but translating that into the innovation and into marketable products or ideas that then could be scaled.

All of these partnerships were part of what this particular hub was all about. Now, all of that activity is gone, and all of that excitement about the future is gone. It really has a dampening effect on the community.

Similarly, when you think about Milton, again, there was a real opportunity there for the connection into the Innovation Corridor, and they really saw this as their way of bringing innovation and opportunity.

The other thing that we see is—and I used to hear this in Brampton, and I am sure I am going to start hearing it again—the frustration when people have to send their children far away, or at least on a journey to get to university and sometimes those kids do not come back. Sometimes they do, but sometimes they

do not. Sometimes they stay in Toronto and do not come back to Brampton. When you have an opportunity to make Brampton the centre where you can start building innovation in Brampton and start building job opportunities that come from that innovation and that investment in Brampton, then there is opportunity for those young people, as well, to stay in their own community and help that community thrive.

When you think, particularly, about these particular cancellations, these are fast-growing communities.

Brampton, I think, is the second fastest growing community in the entire country. Why would we not provide the kind of infrastructure, education-wise, that we need to make sure that the young people in Brampton have opportunity for the future?

Again, this is, for me, why I really feel strongly that those decisions were made on a whim and for the wrong reasons. The folks here who are businesspeople, you know this as well. You have to invest. You have to invest to continue to move your company forward, bring new products to market. You have to invest in R&D. Things do not just keep rolling along without any thoughtful investment in the future. That is what I think government needs to do as well, particularly, when it comes to the changing economy that we have and the realities that we are facing in terms of global competitiveness.

Q: MJ Perry, semi-retired, back at school, loving it.

My question is an academic one also. I remember when so many of our schools were made public. That was when I did my first degree. I think Bill

Davis was very instrumental in ensuring that post-secondary education would be available to all people. I am seeing our public schools becoming less and less accessible to my colleagues. I cry for some of them as I see them struggle and know that they are going to be burdened with debt well into their forties because of the cost of going into schools these days.

The support is coming from the private sector, which is good for STEM courses, but if you are in the fine arts, the liberal arts, the humanities, social sciences, it is different because we do not have—you can tell where I am—we do not have those immediate results. It is usually 25–50 years before you see results of our work, and they are not as attractive for return on investment. I am really, really concerned about our post-secondary students and our institutions not being as public and then also the fact that there are not more opportunities for these students when they graduate because there are not other areas.

AH: You have raised a very important question. I have been touring around for a couple of years now on university campuses. There are a couple of very worrisome trends

that I am hearing when I engage young people in a discussion about where they are at. They are reflecting exactly the kinds of things that you are saying. I have met young people who are telling me—maybe they are 24 years old, 23—they have no interest whatsoever in even having a serious relationship with anyone because they do not think they are going to get anywhere near being in a position to start their adult life until well after the age of 30.

They are putting off those kinds of life-building milestones that we all expect at certain points in time because the debt that they are carrying is significant, and it is holding them down. I did speak about that in my remarks very briefly, but those remarks do not come from statistics; they come from really hearing what young people are saying and how worried they are about the future and how worried they are about being able to have the kind of future that they had hoped for and that they wanted. That burden of debt also creates a lot of stress and anxiety. That concern about being able to actually work in the field that you were studying in is another big piece of the puzzle.

One of the things that we had in our platform and one of the things we believe in firmly, and it actually comes from work that has been done over the years by my MPP—possessive as I am, “my MPP”—from London West, Peggy Sattler. She did a whole bunch of work

on work integrated learning, about how we take our post-secondary institutions and make sure that the young people are graduating with some experience under their belt where they have actually been in the workplace, and they have made some connections and some networks in the workplace. Work integrated learning—I know the federal government has been talking about it as well recently, but it is something we believe we need to build into our education system, so this means there should be co-op opportunities as well as work integrated learning. In fact, one of the universities that was cancelled spoke particularly about ensuring that every single graduate would have a co-op placement, because the universities are realizing as well that this is something that young people need.

Of course, the other benefit of that is when young people then graduate, the employer gets a new worker who has got some understanding of the workplace, who has got some skills in how to translate their education into the workplace. It really is a win-win. There is that piece. I just want to say, in terms of the affordability, one of the challenges that I have seen for our province is that we are seeing the opposite in Ontario as to what we are seeing around the country.

In many other provinces, government has been stepping up their investments in post-secondary and relying less on private investment. In our province, we have

gone in the opposite direction. In other provinces, government has recognized that we need to invest in post-secondary because that is what is going to be able to make us competitive in the future in the global economy as well. It is disappointing to see us go in the opposite direction because I think that puts even more stress on our young people and more challenge when it comes to the growing fees and costs of tuition and other ancillary fees that go along with education at the post-secondary level. One of the, I think, unintended consequences that we are seeing with all of these subtle changes, if you want to call them that, or changes that are just kind of piling up over time, is massive levels of anxiety with our young people. When I meet with kids on campus, oftentimes it is the students' association that is responsible for the management of the drug plans that students have. I do not know if any of you may have kids that have gone to school, but they come back with forms. You can opt out of the insurance plan if your parents are already insured.

If not, that is what covers young people at university for prescription drugs. I was shocked—and this started probably five or six years ago already—to hear from the young people that are responsible for those drug plans through these students' associations about the spike in the amount of prescriptions that are being submitted for coverage for anxiety medication, for de-

pression and anxiety medication. We do have to solve these problems. I believe part of that is government stepping up. Now, in Ontario, we do not even call it public education anymore at the post-secondary level. We do not call it publicly funded post-secondary education.

We now call it what it is, which is publicly supported education, because it is no longer 50%. No longer do we cover 50% of the cost of public education at the post-secondary level from the province which, again, is the opposite trend of what is happening around the country. I talked earlier in the speech about some of the big things that we need to tackle. Yes, we need to tackle transit, absolutely. Yes, we need to tackle health care. We need to tackle making sure that we have a workforce that is ready for the changes that are coming in the economy and in technology. We also have to take care of making sure that we have the educational opportunities there and that they are accessible for folks. We have to also, of course, deal with the need to make sure that folks have an opportunity to work, because those young people are bouncing now between college and university. I have been to the Y a couple of times in Hamilton, and those moms that are my age kind of commiserate about the fact that they paid for four years of university; their child, their young person, their son or daughter could not get a job in their field,

so they went to college to try to get some extra skills, and then they are still working in the hospitality industry. Not that there is anything wrong with the hospitality industry, but that is certainly not why they went to college and then university. That was a very long-winded response, but I am glad you asked the question, because it is extremely important and complex. Thank you.

KE: Last question will go to a former Queen's Park colleague and fellow Niagara boy also, Tim Hudak.

Q: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition.

It is an outstanding speech, and I enjoyed your presentation today. Can I ask you a behind-the-scenes personal question? Would that be cool?

AH: Sure.

Q: I am generally interested in this. You have been the second most successful NDP leader in the history of the province. You have won more seats than any other leader, aside from the 1990 election. Congratulations, on that. You have got Percy Hatfield and Mike Mantha here, but you have got a whole bunch of new members, so you more than doubled your MPPs. As somebody who had the job, maybe you can share with the audience what that is like to have so many new MPPs, a lot of whom are joining us here today.

My other question is, this is the biggest change in

new members, I think, in the history of the Ontario legislature. Is the place different now with a lot more MPPs, or is the game the same old game?

AH: I would not say it is only the MPPs that are changing the game at Queen's Park. Can I ask the MPPs to rise and say hello. Thank you Tim, for the question. I appreciate it. There are a couple of things. First and foremost, yes, there are many, many MPPs on both sides of the House who are brand-spanking new and who are there to do their best and represent their constituents and to learn. If there is one thing that I think is very, very different it is that sitting in the legislature oftentimes there might only be less than a handful of people, depending on what part of the day we are in when we are debating bills, for example.

There are very few people that actually understand inside and out how the place works. You get to know that over the years, and I keep telling my folks, "Don't worry; you will get to know it over the years."

With only a handful of people that have been there in the past at any given time to kind of make sure that things are moving along and that we do not accidentally make a decision that we all regret, there are only a few people who really understand how the place works.

That is one of the things. The other thing, though, and I think it is very positive, is—and it was mentioned,

and I appreciate that—we have 50% women in our caucus. We do have a very strong opposition bench.

Our caucus is not only very diverse and has a lot of young people—one of the other benefits that we are finding, and this is not new for us as New Democrats—but we have representation from all regions of the province sitting around our caucus table.

It is important. It is really important. When we are talking about issues that are really important for urban Ontario, for example, but do not quite fit with rural Ontario or vice versa, it forces us to have the discussion about what is the best public policy going forward and how do we prevent unintended consequences from those kinds of decisions. It is important to have that kind of diversity.

The other thing that having a stronger opposition bench in terms of the number of members that we have helps us to do is provide a better official opposition.

I am not saying this in any way to say that the previous official opposition was not good, but what I can do as leader then, is take some of the intense files, health-care, for example, and instead of having a single critic for healthcare, knowing how complex and how many pieces are involved in the healthcare system, I can split that up into a couple of different critic areas.

I have France Gélinas, who is our Critic for Health

and always has been. She is fantastic. Health and Long Term Care was her previous title. Now, she is Health Care Critic. I have a separate critic for long term care and home care because we all know that area needs a lot of attention. Then, I have a separate critic for mental health and addictions because, again, that needs to have some focus. One of the things that the larger opposition helps me to do, as a leader, is not only give people things to do, but it helps us in our role as opposition because our job is to hold the government to account. As I said in my speech, it is not only about criticizing, it is also about bringing forward ideas and plans for the future that we think makes sense for Ontario.

It is quite different having so many new faces around the table, passing people in the hallway and not knowing if they are an MPP or not. That has happened to me a couple of times already. Eventually, we will get over that. It is quite different. Of course, the style of the current premier is another piece I think.

That, we would all acknowledge, is quite different than what we have seen in terms of the premier's—I do not want to say behaviour—way of operating, let us put it that way. I have to say, I am excited. I am excited about the change that we have seen in terms of new MPPs being elected in all kinds of different ridings.

I think it is obvious it was a change election.

Of course, we wanted change for the better. Let us hope we get it. Thank you.

KE: Does anyone else think it is fantastic that you guys are former rivals and get along so well? I think it is fantastic.

AH: Stoney Creek is Niagara Region, too, maybe.

KE: It is true. That is exactly true. To conclude the program, we are going to ask Ethel Taylor, the Vice President of CAA to come up and give the thank you remarks.

**Note of Appreciation, by Ms. Ethel Taylor,
Vice President, CAA**

I am Vice Chair of CAA. I just do not want anyone to get nervous at the table that I have taken somebody's job.

Good afternoon. It is my honour and pleasure to thank Andrea Horwarth, Leader of Ontario's Official Opposition, on behalf of everyone here today. Then, I will go off script. Elliott is going to stop breathing right now. I do want to say I had such an enjoyable lunch with you. It was such a pleasant opportunity for me, and I told you why. CAA is a member value organization. We represent over 2.5 million people across our province. One in four households are members of CAA. We recognize the value and importance and have done

a tremendous job working with your staff, with other people in the legislature.

It is a big part of our role for government and community relations. We appreciate the support of your caucus and of your team. You touched on a handful of issues, today, and all of them are very critical to our members and to each of the people here. We appreciate your view.

We know that solutions come from working together, and that is why we were so happy that we could sponsor today's event and know that we are supporters across the house of good government legislation that keeps our members safe.

Your vision, I would say, is exactly what all of us want. We want a better Ontario. We want a better place for our children.

For us, from CAA, we want a safer place for our members. I do want to congratulate you, and I would say not only on the 50% women in your caucus, but on the diversity of your caucus and how it represents a proper balance.

Andrea, thank you very much, on behalf of everyone here, and, personally, what a delight to meet you.

Concluding Remarks, by Kent Emerson

Thanks, everyone, for coming today. We have a few more events until the end of 2018. By the end 2018, we will have had 16 events. It has been a great season so far.

We have a number of things coming up in the new year.

Next week, we have the federal environment minister, who will be speaking with Tom Clark, former CTV journalist on our climate change issue. Presumably, she will say different things than Rod Phillips said a few weeks ago, slightly different. It is a huge topic of interest, and it is very important to Canadians.

There are a few tickets left for anyone that is interested in coming. That is a great event.

The following week, our last event in 2018, is Ralph Goodale. He will be speaking on very important topics as well. Thank you so much for coming.

The meeting is adjourned.