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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 29 August 2022 / Lundi 29 août 2022

Throne speech debate

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens.....	533
Mr. Rick Byers	535
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.....	535
Mr. Ross Romano	536
Miss Monique Taylor	536
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	536
Hon. Graydon Smith.....	536
Vote deferred	539

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 August 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 août 2022

Report continued from volume A.

1700

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Continuation of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: We're talking about the throne speech today, and in the throne speech this government didn't highlight the many crises that are happening across Ontario right now. From affordable housing to highways, to EV batteries, to mining and supply chains, so much was said, but so little—so, so little—was highlighted as direct, attainable solutions to a lot of the problems in Ontario.

In tabling the same budget as they did earlier this year, it sends a very clear message, a strong message, that despite numerous sectors being in crisis survival mode right now, they decided to not take action. Inflation rose to 8% in July—8%; think about that—the highest record inflation in decades. We are seeing workers fight to survive on minimum wage across Ontario. But wait, this government promises to raise minimum wage to \$15.50 by October, believe it or not, so I don't think workers have anything to worry about, right? No, sorry, Speaker. That extra 50 cents will certainly lift essential workers out of poverty? I don't think so. This would seem like kind of a slap in the face.

If you're an essential worker forced to work through a pandemic—maybe you are employed at a grocery store, or in the hospitality industry, or at a big box store that stayed open through all the waves of the pandemic; I think we're on our seventh or eighth wave now—you have worked for minimum wage. And I know I speak for all minimum-wage workers when, through you, Mr. Speaker, I say to this government: Stop taking advantage of virtually free labour across Ontario.

There's also a raging health care crisis happening right now as we speak: a nursing shortage of 30,000 nurses across Ontario; a crisis fuelled by a lack of respect towards essential health care workers; a crisis driven by severe burnout of those same workers; a crisis driven by Bill 124. I'm seeing a pattern here. It seems as though this government has a hard time paying workers for what they are owed—for their hard work, for their laborious work. As a result, the Niagara Health System, for example, currently has 600 nursing vacancies alone. That's Niagara Health System, may I repeat, 600 nursing vacancies.

I had the pleasure of speaking with the executives from the Niagara Health System last week for a community update, and they echoed what the Ontario Nurses' Association has been saying throughout the whole pandemic: Workers are at their limit and they're doing their best. Recruitment and retention are difficult because health care workers are either leaving the profession altogether, or leaving higher-stress clinical settings to work in more administrative roles within the system. They are also doing their best to create partnerships with organizations and universities, with medical schools, but we need to turn to internationally trained health care workers to fill these gaps quickly. I've been told that licensing of internationally-trained workers is where the holdup is right now. That's right, the licensing is where the holdup is. That's what's happening at the provincial level, but I don't hear this government talking about solutions to that problem in this throne speech.

I've highlighted this before, but residents of St. Catharines have expressed how we do not need our Garden City Skyway twinned. You know, Speaker, I've lived in St. Catharines all of my life, and my daughter now lives in Niagara Falls. I have travelled over the Garden City Skyway many times; I will not say how many, because it will state my age maybe. However, I also must say to you that I have never been stuck in a traffic jam on the Garden City Skyway. The traffic flows quite freely throughout the Garden City. However, I also must say that, instead of twinning the Garden City Skyway, I want to ask this government: Why are you are not recognizing the homelessness in Niagara, our mental health and addictions in Niagara, our opioid crisis in Niagara? We have so many other things that this government could help St. Catharines and the Niagara region with by just helping them out. I could honestly say, Speaker, that twinning the Garden City Skyway—the money they're going to be putting towards that—could rectify a lot of housing issues, as well.

I cannot believe that the Ford government feels we need to spend millions on a not-needed Bradford Bypass, as well as Highway 413, to save commuters merely 20 minutes—more money that could go towards addictions, towards mental health, towards homelessness.

Poverty: This government forgot that the number of Ontarians falling below the poverty line and struggling to make ends meet is increasing day by day. We see it in every one of our ridings, with every minute of inaction. Their budget quickly breezed by a 5% increase to the ODSP, so let me speak to that for a moment.

ODSP rates have been stagnant for decades, and you can blame the Liberal government, but we can also say that for four years this government had a chance to look at

ODSP rates. As a single person, you're receiving approximately \$1,200 per month. That's \$1,200 to pay the rent, buy your groceries, pay for medications possibly, pay for mobility devices, pay for transportation and purchase day-to-day necessities, maybe like toothpaste, toilet paper. Let me break it down for you, Speaker: Once an ODSP recipient pays the rent for the month, which they're probably already short on, they can't even get that toothpaste, because their bank account is in the negative.

I spoke to a constituent yesterday who is on ODSP, went to the food bank and received expired food—not the fault of the food bank, because there is also a shortage of donations, because people cannot afford to live in Ontario in anymore. So you're disabled, living in poverty every single day, and then you have to be further undignified by not even affording fresh food. Your 5% raise means an additional approximately \$60 a month.

Speaker, we hear it in all of our ridings that Ontario disability rates need to be doubled immediately. We need to bring people out of poverty. Like I said, that still doesn't cover basic shelter—\$1,200 a month—or your housing costs.

For recipients whose disability isn't as severe and can find ways to make extra money, their ability to earn extra income is capped at \$200 per month. If you're truly looking to make life better for those living with disabilities, this government would immediately raise the cap. It's as simple as that: Raise the cap. Bring them out of poverty.

Speaker, Ontario Works wasn't even touched, which is a shame, as it's also sitting at unlivable levels.

I spoke to a couple last week, and the fellow that was in my riding was on ODSP. They were saying that they are getting renovicted. That's another thing: renoviction. However, when they were going to look for another apartment, they felt like they were being discriminated upon. They felt like when they said that, "My husband is on ODSP. He has a disability," they were saying, "No. You know what? You live on ODSP; we already know you're in poverty. We can't rent you our unit. We already know that you don't make enough to pay your rent, let alone look after the unit that I'm going to rent you." It is a shame that this is happening in Ontario.

I spoke to so many parents who shared stories of watching their children struggle during the pandemic. Our children spent the most time out of school of any jurisdiction in all of North America, and then we returned them to the classroom without any additional supports or resources, to crowded classrooms without proper ventilation and with no supports at all to address the fact of children's mental health. That was not mentioned within this throne speech—mental health that children have suffered. Children with special needs, with learning disabilities, who are immunocompromised or living with family members who are immunocompromised, were especially left behind in this throne speech. We didn't see how we're going to help these people, these residents that live within Ontario. I've spoken to teachers and education workers who feel burnt-out and frustrated, trying to do their best to support students who are all over the map after three years of

disrupted learning. They're trying to accomplish this all while this government works against their interests.

1710

Speaker, the headline today in St. Catharines Standard is about two RNs, a mother and a father, with a daughter with a disability. She has diabetes. She takes injections daily. There are no RNs or nurses that are going to be able to go to the school, because we cannot afford them, to give this six-year-old child injections. So now the mother will have to take time off from being an RN, when our hospital is already in a crisis, to go make sure her child is safe in an education environment. That's shameful. It's shameful that we have to do that.

We should be investing in our children, not cutting their supports right now. We should be supporting our teachers, supporting our education system, supporting our education workers who do so much good to educate, to support and to care for our children, not threatening them, Speaker. We should be ensuring smaller classroom sizes so every child has supported learning with mental health supports available in each and every school across Ontario. Mental health supports across the board are so incredibly important right now. We are seeing long-lasting effects of this pandemic in each and every one of our ridings. We are seeing the growth of mental health and addictions coming across our ridings in growing numbers.

Speaker, like I said, I recently sat with the representatives from the Niagara Health system in my riding, and I asked the question, just to get a clearer view on what is really happening with mental health and what is happening with our health system. They explained to me that when the St. Catharines General Hospital was torn down in approximately 2013, they built this beautiful brand new Niagara Health system, way on the west end of the city. They built this shiny new hospital with approximately 399 beds, but they also opened up a state-of-the-art mental health unit with its own emergency where you could bring your patients or you could go when your anxiety levels were at a high, if you were having a breakdown. If you were addicted to drugs and you were having a moment, you could go to this mental health unit and you would get that help that is so needed. However, when I talked to the Niagara Health system directors, they said to me that our mental health unit has been closed down most of the time. We have approximately 130 beds, but only 20 or 30 of them are open. And this is shameful when we have such a crisis of opioid and mental health and addictions, especially within St. Catharines. We need to open up those beds.

But the problem is, Speaker, we don't have RNs or psychologists or sociologists to work with these people with such desperate needs, which is a whole other sector of our communities and our ridings. Not only people living in poverty on ODSP or living on a minimum wage of \$15 and pennies—well, we don't have pennies anymore but living on nickels, may I say—because they have to work three or four jobs to be able to put food on their table and to make sure that those children going back to overcrowded classrooms have nice shiny shoes and don't have

to rely on their parents or their neighbours to help them get through some of the hurdles, may I say, that this government is not addressing throughout the throne speech.

As I can sum up here, Mr. Speaker, I do see a clear repetitiveness here within the throne speech that was not addressed. It's affordable housing. It was mental health and addictions. They sent a clear message about trying to survive, being in survival mode, with inflation rising to 8%, and then only giving a 60-cent or a 50-cent raise, to say that they're going to bring just a general worker out of poverty, is not fair.

We also have to repeal Bill 124, which was not mentioned. By repealing Bill 124, the public sector will then be able to at least care for the patients, which they need, and care for the children within our schools. That's the public sector; they were capped as well. That sneaky Bill 124 is really being hard on many of our individuals throughout our ridings.

So, Speaker, with saying that, I would like to see a few more things done within this throne speech. As I mentioned, with the money that they're going to be spending, my residents—I spoke to many of them, from the north end to the south end, to the west and the east in St. Catharines. I knocked on many, many doors in my riding and they were all talking about the twinning of the Garden City Skyway and just going, "What is that?" And where is it going to go? Is it going to go on the Highway 8 cemetery, which is in Ripley's Believe It or Not because it's the only cemetery with a highway going through it? Or is it going to go possibly into our vineyards of Niagara?

What are we going to give up here? Precious farmlands? Or can we get the Ford government to say, "You know what? We have a crisis in homelessness. We have a crisis in mental health. We have a crisis of addictions." Can you help us help these people to be able to survive and maybe get honest help and make sure that these individuals can live a fulsome life? This government might be able to help them by spending well-needed money within those crucial areas.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Rick Byers: I want to thank the member for her comments this afternoon. I very much appreciate the whole range of issues that were raised.

I want to ask her about the ODSP that she pointed out. Certainly we're very pleased that in the budget there's a substantial increase to the amount and linking it to inflation, which is very important. But my question really is—and you heard the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services during question period today list all the other programs that are associated with ODSP or that could apply to ODSP recipients—put it that way. And you heard the list: CARE, LIFT, a dental program for seniors, Roadmap to Wellness, micro-credit strategy etc.

My question is, don't these other support programs enhance the recipients of ODSP and give them further support as they need it?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I want to thank the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for that question.

You know, I find it—I don't know how to—well, the dental plan. Let's put it this way: Of course, every senior

in Ontario would love to have the Ontario dental plan. However, I asked the question of the government two weeks ago: What happened when seniors in Ontario—when their OAS was raised or their CPP was raised by the federal government? Now seniors in Ontario don't get the Ontario dental plan anymore because they've come over that threshold of income.

I ask you—and maybe through you, Speaker, I will ask the government: Can we bring the threshold up so that all seniors in Ontario will be able to get their dental plan at a fair rate?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question to the member from St. Catharines: Thank you very much for your comments. I'm just really curious, because I'm going to get to vote on the throne speech as well as on the budget for the very first time. What I've heard through question period are all the reasons why the NDP or the Liberal government has voted against previous budgets tabled by the PC government.

1720

And yet, as I take a look at what's in this budget and the throne speech, there are some things that are highlighted and missing, such as nothing for classrooms when it comes to rapid tests for schools or smaller class sizes. We're not seeing any money for school backlog clearance. What's missing is overdose, crisis and harm reduction strategies. What's missing is additional funding for mental health and addictions. What's missing is paid sick days. There's no mention with respect to climate change. There's no new accountability measures or consequences for poor-performing long-term-care homes.

So I guess my question is: How will a new member like myself be able to support a budget such as this when there are so many things missing, and yet I know that I have no opportunity to amend it, to improve it, to work with the government to make it better?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you to my colleague for that wonderful question. Thank you for pointing out so many things that are not within this throne speech. I want to say that it was just one time in my life when I first voted on the throne speech, four years ago, and there was so much missing in that as well. There were so many things that were said in that throne speech, but there are things that we haven't seen happen yet in the four years since the 2018 throne speech.

However, classroom size, as you mentioned, and paid sick days aren't in here—smaller classroom sizes, as you said—and the shortage of nurses and how they are going to fix that. The repeal of Bill 124, which you don't see in that—those are things that I have mentioned as well.

I think these are things that when they say yes, that's why we say no. And it's not that we're saying no, that we don't want to vote. It's saying that we want to work with you. We want to work with both sides of the aisle. We want to work with each and every one of the members on the government side to make Ontario better, to make sure these solutions that we're bringing to the table—when we bring solutions, we want to know that we've been heard, solutions like repealing Bill 124, solutions like smaller

classroom sizes, solutions like making sure that ODSP is doubled instead of a measly 5%.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Ross Romano: To the member: I listened to her speech and I listened to the response, especially to the last question and this notion that they say yes and we say no. I hear a lot of “no” and then I hear a comment about wanting to work together, but then the only offer to work together is, “Why don’t you just do what we say? All these great policies we have that we’ve run on”—in I don’t know how many consistent elections now, which they continually lose on, with the greatest respect, and yet they want to continue to advance the same policies that the people of Ontario have clearly said no to.

So to the member for the party of no: What is it going to take for you to ever just say yes to the people of Ontario?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you to the member across for that wonderful question. You were in the riding of St. Catharines in the past election. You spoke to a lot of residents within my riding and they never once mentioned that they wanted the government to twin the Garden City Skyway.

I’m sure you heard the same thing I heard—on many, many hundreds of doors, thousands and thousands of doors that I knocked on—that in St. Catharines, in my riding, which reflects a lot of your ridings on the government side, we need the government to make sure that ODSP recipients are taken out of poverty, that we need to repeal Bill 124 so that our public sector workers can at least have bargaining rights. We need this government to look at increasing the minimum wage, not just by 50 cents, but bringing it to the cost of living so that people can continue to pay their rent and also put groceries on the table; to look after mental health and addictions. These are things that we and my residents in St. Catharines—which the member across the way, I’m sure, heard, and also heard in his riding, I hope—want the government to work on. Come to the table with those solutions, and the people of Ontario will be grateful for that. But we haven’t seen it yet, and we didn’t see it for four years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member for St. Catharines for such a great piece of this debate. Then, listening to the questions coming from the members opposite, it’s quite curious; New Democrats definitely have been listening to people across this province and built our platform directly on that. The people of our ridings definitely sent us here to ensure that their voices were heard.

But I just want to take us back to Bill 7 and the lack of committee to be able to hear from people who are completely invested in our long-term care and in the seniors of our province. I’m wondering if the member would like to comment on the fact that the government only seems to listen to who they want to, when they want to, and that many voices of our constituents have been cut out of the process of what happens to our seniors, between the ALC and the long-term-care process in Ontario.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I want to thank my colleague for that great question. You know, 5,000 seniors

have died in nursing and long-term-care homes across this province. That’s mothers, fathers, seniors; I hear it from my colleague from Niagara Falls all the time, who brings that forward.

But I also have to say, it’s not only seniors who live in long-term-care homes and it’s not only seniors who are going to be forced into a home without their consent; it’s young adults that actually have long-haul COVID. I have one right in my riding. He has long-haul COVID. He’s now in an ALC bed and waiting to go into long-term care. However, if this government does not give him the choice of a local long-term-care home that he can go to, his friends—he’s young; he’s 38 years old. They can’t get on a plane. They don’t have that right mode of transportation. We don’t have all-way GO trains—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the opportunity to speak in response to the presentation this afternoon by the member for St. Catharines. One of the things I think was very interesting that she just mentioned was GO train services. Now, of course, it’s important to recognize that since the Premier came down over the weekend, we are in fact seeing a return of GO train services seven days a week—

Interjection.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Oh. I have the opportunity to share my time with the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, and I will now turn it over to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka to speak.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

Hon. Graydon Smith: I thank the member, Mr. Speaker, for sharing his time, and good afternoon to you. Good afternoon to all of my colleagues. Congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your election as Speaker of the House, and congratulations to all of my colleagues on their election just a couple of short months ago. Obviously, time is moving quite quickly, and here we are, a couple of months—almost a few months—in, so it’s a real pleasure to be able to rise today and share a few thoughts with you.

But first, let me say how pleased I am to do so with my wife present. Melissa is here today in the members’ gallery. She is simply the person who stitches together all the disparate parts of my life and provides a true light and a lot of meaning to me, along with my children: my daughter, Gabby, who is 12 years old, and my son, Max, who is nine years old. They are amazing, fun individuals—too fun to be here today in the gallery, so we’ll bring them another time and give them the tour. But it has been amazing to watch them grow up over the years, and I’m so proud to be their dad and so proud to watch them become caring, generous, kind people to their friends and to the community as they get older.

1730

Mr. Speaker, as much as I do this, obviously, for the folks in my riding, I do it too for my family and for my kids, so they can live in the very best province, here in Ontario, and in the very best country in the world. We are

in a place, this place, that's absolutely stunning. It's been a dream of mine to be here, and I want to share a few words today about myself and the wonderful people around me and in my life, and about Parry Sound–Muskoka. It is simply a fabulous riding. I know many of you have had the opportunity to spend time there in the past. In fact, during my time as mayor of Bracebridge, when I said I was from Bracebridge, immediately somebody would talk about Santa's Village. Everyone has that memory of being there as a kid or they took their kids there or their grandparents are now taking their kids there. It's been around for 60 years and is a venerable institution in that community.

Certainly that is a recognizable part of Parry Sound–Muskoka, but there is so much more beyond it. It is at once a huge riding geographically, but a riding that's very tight-knit, with communities full of wonderful people, from Pointe au Baril to Barkway, Port Severn to South River and all points in between. The riding stretches from Georgian Bay on the west side to Algonquin Park in the east, and encompasses the pristine and beautiful lakes and rivers of multiple watersheds, including the Magnetawan, the Black-Severn, the Muskoka watershed and, of course, Lake Muskoka itself.

When people think of the Muskoka area, they often think of Lake Muskoka. It's renowned for its cottages and beauty, and the riding is full of people that work incredibly hard every single day and are full of an industrious and inextinguishable spirit. People want to be there because it is simply, from a standpoint of beauty, unparalleled and unmatched—and yes, I'm biased—but I'm so proud and so pleased to have the opportunity to represent the area and the people within it. They are forever in my heart every day as I do this work, every day as I come here.

Mr. Speaker and this House, please know that there are two Parry Sounds, two Muskokas. There's that very public version that people see, that we read about frequently in the newspapers. Usually it's focused on real estate and fantastical sums for fantastical properties. We welcome everybody to Parry Sound–Muskoka and the area to enjoy it and be part of it, if it's a first home, if it's a second home. In fact, it's part of what constitutes the cultural fabric and makes up the uniqueness of my riding.

But at the same time, there are those that live there every day and sometimes often struggle a bit to get by, that work very hard and often live a long way from what is perceived as the Muskoka lifestyle or the Georgian Bay lifestyle. Those folks are the heartbeat of my riding, and I want to speak to them today and say that you have a representative in me that is here for you, to carry your voice, to listen to you, to make sure that what's going on in your life and the lives of your loved ones is reflected in what I do every single day. You're fantastic people with goals and dreams, and I'll say it again: I'm so honoured to have the opportunity to help you each day.

I know that my predecessor, Norm Miller, who served with distinction for 21 years here, was honoured every single day to do the work that he did. And so he should be. I want to take a moment to recognize Norm, recognize his wife, Christine, his entire family and the sacrifices they

made for so long so Norm could be a representative of the highest quality, listening to concerns, providing guidance over the years to many, including municipal leaders. He was always a steady influence and someone to talk to about the best way to approach a variety of matters. He certainly did that for me in my time as mayor and for so many others. Many people have talked about me following in Norm's footsteps. Those footsteps are uniquely Norm's and Norm's alone—important and indelible.

Mr. Speaker, it was a long campaign this spring, and a well-fought one. I want to thank all those who put their names on the ballot and put their names forward and, of course, those that helped me, starting with members of the riding association—so many great members of that association that had helped Norm over the years and then immediately took up the call to assist me when needed. Thanks to president Andrew Struthers and past-president Tim West and all the members who got down to work right away, fantastic people who showed great dedication and continue to do so to this day.

And also a moment, Mr. Speaker, to thank an incredible campaign team that made this possible for me: my campaign manager, Landon French—I'm not sure our phones stopped being connected. I think we may have set a record for data plan usage over a few months. We just dialed each other up one day and left it going. Obviously that impacted his life and his personal time as well, so I want to thank Landon's family, his wife, Sarah, and his kids: Thank you for being able to borrow your husband, your dad for such an extended period. And thank you to all those that helped on the campaign in myriad different ways with so much goodwill, especially those that came out and walked with me on a daily basis and met the great people of the riding. It seemed to be perpetually 3 degrees and raining—that was the forecast for about six weeks straight, and then one day it was 30 degrees and boiling hot, so we, of course, all immediately complained about the weather.

To Dan, who is great at what he does and the sharpest of political minds as well as an incredibly nice person; Nathan, a powerhouse young man with a very bright future ahead of you; Gail, who is also a municipal representative—she certainly knows how to talk to people and put a smile on their face, and did so so many times and spread so much joy everywhere she went on the campaign; and Peter, who is a veteran of many, many campaigns and was really able to go out and show us how to do it effectively and efficiently, which is very much Peter's style, but with laughs along the way—thank you. Thank you all so much.

There were obviously many others, Mr. Speaker, that assisted with knocking on those doors every day and doing many, many other tasks and I want to thank all of them. But some wore the shoes out more than could have been reasonably asked, and it was really an amazing experience to get to know these people and just know that people are willing to work so hard and so intensely.

I also want to take a moment to thank the CFO of my campaign, a long-time friend, Andrew—he came in at the last minute; I needed a hand and he was there with that hand plus, plus, plus and still continues to be; the guidance

of Melanie and Diane on a regional level; and so many friends. I'm just blessed to have a great group of friends in Greg and Jamie and Sean and Tracy—so many of them willing to chip in when needed. I don't know what I did to deserve such great friends. I've had many of them for over 40 years. They're all like brothers and sisters to me now. Unfortunately, I can't name them all today, but I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, with my friends, if you can win a debate with them and withstand the ribbing and the roasting, you're well prepared for political life. So I love them a lot and, again, thank you to them.

Of course, thanks to a party and a Premier who has had an unwavering faith in me to do this job, as well as a ministerial job—thank you to you. I have equal faith in him and all my colleagues together to govern Ontario and get it done for our citizens for the next four years. Of course, I can't do that work without the help of staff at home in Emily and Karsyn and my staff in Toronto with Adam and so many others.

Mr. Speaker, I would say I've truly been blessed in life. Those blessings started early, growing up in a small village called Port Sydney located between Bracebridge and Huntsville. I had parents who were incredible and dedicated not only to their family but to their community. We owned a restaurant and a gas station. It was on Highway 11. I grew up living on top of it, on the side of the highway, and every day I got to see my parents interact with people, which was really something that shaped my life and the lives of my older sister, Gwen, and my older brother, Greg.

To this day, how I interact with people was learned from those moments at a business before there was fast food and restaurants were all about quick and easy. Our business was the local coffee shop, the local restaurant, the place where workers came for lunch, the place where passersby stopped in off the highway, the place where tourists and cottagers would come back year after year after year and see us again, and it was really that foundation for my life, observing how to be a good person and how to treat everybody, whether they had a little or whether they had a lot, with the respect and kindness that everyone very much deserved.

1740

A few words about my parents, Gord and Barb: My dad is no longer with us, and I miss him every day, but I'm fortunate that my mom is, and she continues to be an inspiration in showing me how to be a good person. They started out in business when they were 18 years old, with a young baby. Almost all their family had moved to another country. They were on their own. They did it on their own. They are truly the example for others to follow of being resilient, working hard every day to make sure that you had an opportunity to raise your family and be successful, and they were successful in both.

Mr. Speaker, for almost 30 years, they operated that business, and I started working there when I was probably 10 years old, sweeping up cigarette butts at the time in the yard, and by the time I was 12 or 13, a lot of hours in the

summertime pumping gas, interacting with people, learning just how different people can be and how wonderful people can be—sometimes not so wonderful, but generally pretty wonderful. But again, it all went into the hopper to teach me how to be the best person I could be.

There were some funny times. One of my jobs when I was younger was to fill up the pop machine out in front of our business. It was one of those old-style pop machines, and if you didn't fill it up, you knew, because that tiny little yellow light would come on. My dad would always seem to know when that tiny little yellow light came on, and it seemed like every time we went to a Sunday dinner, one of those brands would run out, and from about three miles away, he would spot it. I used to say that light burned with the intensity of a million suns, he could spot it so easily. He would turn around and say, "You didn't fill up that pop machine."

It was a good laugh for me, even though I didn't get to that pop machine all the time—I like to play the long game. It was a good laugh for me when I went to visit my dad before he passed away. He had a little room in the house where he would read the paper and watch TV, and he had a little bar fridge in there and there were always various beverages in it. I opened it up one day to grab myself a beverage and there was no pop. I was able to wheel around to him and say, "Gord, you didn't fill up that pop machine." And he said, "Good one, you finally got me."

He was a member of the Kinsmen Club in Bracebridge and my mom was a member of the Kinette Club, and again that helped lay the foundation to show me that it was important to give back and that community service should be part of your life. As I got a little bit older and into my twenties, I followed along with my brother into the club, and it really was an eye-opening experience for me to learn about the needs of the community and the opportunity to have fun while making a difference. For years, I was proud to be a member and ran several of the events that they had, including an incredible fireworks show, which goes on to this day thanks to the Rotary Club, and the Santa Claus parade.

During that time, I would bump into municipal officials, including the mayor of the day. He suggested that maybe I would be interested in giving municipal politics a try, and that stuck with me: that somebody in that position identified something in me. I think it's really important for all of us to identify those future leaders in our community and give them that tap on the shoulder and provide that encouragement, because if you're thinking about a dream, follow that dream. After he did that, I became more and more interested in the opportunity to expand my community service work and, in 2006, ran and was lucky enough to win. I was third on a seven-person ballot for district council; I just snuck in. It was certainly a day that changed my life and over the next four years, I learned about municipal politics and picked up a couple of great mentors along the way, including my mayor at the time, Don Coates, and then-district-chair Gord Adams. It was a real opportunity to learn about how municipal government impacts people

on a day-to-day basis and how government in general impacts people. I started to pick up through that time the importance of the relationship between municipalities and the provincial level as well.

In 2010, I had the opportunity to run for mayor. We had a great campaign. I was fortunate to win, and that charted a course for what got me here today, because all those things I had learned during my time on council and during my time in life became magnified and amplified and those conversations with people in the community became more frequent.

I had an incredible and great municipal experience right to the end, with so many good people around me: my deputy mayor, Rick Maloney, who has become such a great friend to this day; John Klinck, the current chair of the district of Muskoka, an amazing colleague and friend, a great politician who is retiring this fall; and our MP, Scott Aitchison, my federal colleague in Parry Sound–Muskoka, but he was my mayoral colleague for quite some time and a great friend for many decades.

Learning and listening to them was important for me. I began to seek out other ways to do that from others, joining AMO in 2014 and OSUM the same year, and eventually became a leader of both those great organizations. Being surrounded by great leaders and great people is an invaluable opportunity; you never know when you're going to call on those moments.

There were many good times, and we got a lot done in council in the 12 years that I was mayor, but there were trying times as well. In 2013 and 2019, our community went through devastating floods, and while thankfully everyone was safe on a personal level, on a property level it was quite damaging, especially in 2019, because we thought we had seen the worst of it in 2013, and it turned out that 2019 would top it. They were trying times for our communities. For days, we had been dealing with the floodwaters, and as we got through the first three or four days, it became clear to me that our volunteers were going to burn out. Our community had come together and given

everything it had in the tank, leaving nothing on the table, assisting their neighbours.

You have to understand that in Bracebridge, there are some pretty significant elevation changes. You can be in parts of the town that were completely fine, drive around the corner, and everything would be a lot less than fine. But there were a lot of people who were struggling to preserve their property and their safety—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Unfortunately, I have to interrupt the member.

Pursuant to standing order 44(a), there have been 12 hours of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. I am now required to put the question.

On August 10, 2022, Mr. McCarthy moved, seconded by Ms. Barnes, that a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

“To the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.”

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this afternoon, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1748.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	