



# Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

38th Parliament

## JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P. - RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE

October 20, 2005

House Question

### Government Spending

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** My question is also for the Premier. Apparently these Liberals here are no better than their cousins in Ottawa. Incredibly, disgraced former Liberal minister David Dingwall, forced to resign from his patronage post at the Canadian mint, feels entitled to his expenses and a half-million-dollar severance. Now we see, given your answers today, that your standards are regrettably the same. All Liberals seem to read from the same book: *The David Dingwall Guide to Ratcheting Up Expenses*. What else could explain your former Minister of Energy's gall in feeling entitled to charge taxpayers for six \$70 steaks at one lunch? How can you possibly justify these expenses, Premier? How can you do it?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think it's important to again understand the nature of the challenge before all of us. We're talking about 25,000 megawatts that need to be replaced, renewed or refurbished over the course of the next 15 years. It would have been nice had this work begun some eight or 10 years ago, but it did not. So what we have undertaken to do is tackle that head-on. We already have brought on 2,200 megawatts of new energy; there are another 9,000 megawatts in the pipeline. We are in the process of expanding capacity at Niagara Falls, we recently entered into a new agreement with Bruce Power and we are doing other things to ensure that the people of Ontario can rely on a decent electricity supply.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You know, if we could build the right kind of generator, Premier, we could probably fire it for a while just on the table scraps from that minister's lunch.

My supplementary: First, former Liberal minister David Dingwall says he is entitled to his entitlements. Now we see your Liberal ministers living large by the same rule. One expense claim by your former energy minister's top political aide shows he charged \$4.95 for a magazine listed as "for the minister." Premier, at a time when energy customers are struggling to pay their hydro bills and receiving a too-little, too-late one-time credit from you, do you think it's justified that your former energy minister, now your most senior minister, feels he is entitled to have taxpayers pick up the tab for a \$5 magazine?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, I think what is important here is that Ontarians understand that they have a government that is prepared to take responsibility for expanding capacity and supply of electricity in Ontario. By way of specifics, we are bringing 9,000 megawatts on-line. That's in the pipeline at present. Pickering A, unit 1, will provide us with 515 more megawatts, and Bruce A, units 1 and 2, 1,540 more. Niagara tunnel will give us 200 megawatts of additional supply. We have in excess of 1,500 megawatts coming from renewables. We've got co-generation to the tune of 1,000 megawatts. We have demand-side management and demand response initiatives that will result in 250 megawatts being saved. Now, I think that is very important information for the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I saw the former Chair of Management Board mouth to the Premier, "People don't care about that stuff." Well, they do care about that stuff. They care deeply about that stuff. You know, in my riding most people have never been and will never be able to go out and afford a \$70 steak. It does matter to them.

Premier, the culture of entitlement that exists among Liberal politicians is truly shocking: David Dingwall, Dwight Duncan, dining delectably. Your former Minister of Energy racked up \$49,262 in expenses for just over one week in Europe. He traveled with a four-person entourage; that works out to \$5,500 a day for 9 days. Included in that is a magazine for \$5, a \$1.69 Twix chocolate bar, a lunch that cost --

**The Speaker:** Thank you. The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'm not sure it was a question, Speaker, so much as a rant.

I think the important thing here is that the Integrity Commissioner is charged with the special responsibility of reviewing expenses submitted. Those have been submitted and they have been approved. The member opposite is, by nature of his responsibilities, necessarily partisan and I appreciate the way he places the argument that he makes today, but I think Ontarians are entitled to rely on the judgment of an objective, impartial third party; that is, the Integrity Commissioner. He has reviewed these expenses and he has deemed them to be appropriate.