



Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

38th Parliament

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

October 17, 2005

Yakabuski's Response to Minister's Announcement on Bruce Power

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): First, let me congratulate the new Minister of Energy on her appointment; I wish her the very best.

What a difference a week makes. A week ago, I would have been making this response to the former Minister of Energy, but the self-proclaimed expert on human evolution has decided to write his thesis on Neanderthals from seat five, so we will respond to the statement from this minister.

While we believe this is a positive move, we ask the government what took so long -- two years. While the energy situation in this province has deteriorated, they've taken two years to reach this agreement with Bruce Power. The fact that they have reached this agreement is a complete validation of the previous government's plan to enter into a private-public partnership with Bruce Power.

They're taking credit for bringing all this power on-line. I think it should be pointed out that the agreement to refurbish Bruce units 3 and 4 was done under the previous government.

One of the problems is that with their dithering over two years, this project will not be done before their self-imposed deadline to shut down 25% of our power supply in Ontario, with no plan for how to replace it. The other concern we have is that power consumption and demand in this province are growing at a minimum rate of 250 megawatts a year. By the time this work is completed, we will have eaten up 1,000 of the 1,500 megawatts this project is supposed to provide.

Under this government's policies, Ontarians are continuing to fall further and further behind. This announcement, while it is positive, will not answer the question of where we in this province are going to be in 2007 and 2009 with regard to our energy needs under the policies of this government. They have yet to answer those questions. We are awaiting those answers.

- 30 -

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