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

Response to Ministerial Statement

Thursday April 27, 06

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): It's a pleasure to respond to the Minister of Energy, as usual. Welcome back. I know you had a little tour this week, making some announcements – although I guess we should quantify just the significance of those announcements.

I guess we'll start with the energy one first. Six additional megawatts of generation: That's wonderful, but it pales in comparison with the 6,500 that you continue to insist you're going to shut down, and you're way off schedule on that. It's about time to call in the coroner and determine that policy as being officially dead. It's time to move on and plan, as others are, to ensure that we can create generation in this province that will ensure the lights are on and not simply to tell the people you've got a plan when there's nobody left out there who believes you but yourself. Not even your own caucus believes you.

On your energy conservation announcements today, I guess I could say, "What took you so long?" We've been telling you for two and a half years that you've got to do something to encourage conservation with regard to energy-efficient light bulbs. Finally, a light bulb must have gone off in the conservation office there. At \$300,000-plus a year, I guess you figure what everybody has been telling you people for two and a half years is a good idea: Energy-conserving bulbs will help.

Your plan for air conditioners that you announced a couple of weeks ago really amounts to handing a monopoly over to a specific group, because that's not a consumer rebate at all. It remains to be seen how much individual consumers will benefit from that announcement.

I could ask the Minister of Tourism, who no longer lifts up his book to Bob Rae, what about energy-efficient appliances? You cancelled the program two years ago – nothing. We're coming into the summer, we're filling up those old beer fridges again, but you're doing nothing. You have done

nothing in two years to encourage people to replace those appliances with energy-efficient appliances. In fact you cancelled our program, which was a very well received program, an excellent program that was paying dividends to the province of Ontario.

We keep hearing announcement after announcement. Now you're saying that you've got plans for 11,000 megawatts that will power five million homes. You're shutting down 6,500 megawatts. At that rate, you're shutting off the power to almost three million homes in this province.

Minister, get on with the program. We need energy in the future, not just announcement after announcement and promises that you can never keep.