



Message from Queen's Park



Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski

November, 2005

Over the past couple of months there has been a renewed discussion surrounding the practice of harvesting timber in Algonquin Park. Every so often we see this issue being raised by the various groups representing environmentalists and naturalists who claim that logging in Algonquin Park is simply no longer supportable and that its continuance constitutes a threat to the park's eco system and is inconsistent with the concept of a provincial park. I recall almost 35 years ago this battle was fought. At that time my father, Paul Yakabuski, along with others, vigorously defended the multi use concept of the park being able to sustain both the naturalist and the logger. The improvements in harvesting practices over the past 40 years have made the multi use concept more sustainable than ever. I have seen first hand the practice of controlled systematic cutting and am absolutely certain that the natural resource we are responsible for has never been better cared for. The practice of harvesting timber in Algonquin Park has existed since before the park itself. It has provided thousands of direct and indirect jobs for the people surrounding the park for generations. Any attempt to alter the practice and therefore threaten the livelihoods of those who depend on it will be met by the same commitment to protect them that my Dad gave many years ago. They will be in for the fight of their lives.

Recently, the government introduced Bill 21 which deals with conservation initiatives. Among these is the controversial issue of smart meters. There are many who feel that the installations of so called "smart" meters will not pay their own cost in an average home which Tom Adams of energy probe suggests could go as high as eight dollars a month tacked on to one's hydro bill. While it's almost certain that none of the 800,000 meters to be installed by 2007 will be in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, those who do have one in their homes will be charged varying rates of power during different periods of the day ranging from 2.9 ¢ /kWh to 9.3 ¢ /kWh. The government has stated that by 2010 all homes and apartments will have one installed and we will all be subjected to variable rates. It is clear that while this is likely to encourage people to shift their load demands, it will not result in less energy being used. If the goal of conservation is to reduce consumption, smart meters will not accomplish it.

The papers of last week would have contained much coverage of Remembrance Services throughout the riding where people make special effort to thank our veterans and pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the preservation of freedom. As your member of Provincial Parliament it is an honour for me to be able to participate in many of these ceremonies and to share some time with our veterans. As it is only possible to attend one

ceremony each year at the eleventh hour, I have made it my practice to visit a different community each year on November 11th. There are also communities that hold ceremonies on alternate dates. This year I was able to join the people of Arnprior for their parade and ceremony as well as Douglas and Calabogie on earlier dates. While each community Ceremony has its common elements it is clear that each has its own stories of commitment, heroism, sacrifice and loss. I thank the veterans, the branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, community volunteers and military personnel from CFB Petawawa for their tremendous efforts in making these ceremonies so significant. I consider myself blessed to be able to join the communities in their commemoration celebrations. As the son of a veteran of world war two I feel a special attachment to them. I am particularly pleased with the interest and participation of our school children. It is wonderful to see that the account of the sacrifices made on our behalf are being integrated in the school programs so that our children will know about the price that was paid to allow us the freedom we enjoy today. We shall not forget our veterans in this the year of the veteran or any other. Thank you and may God bless you for all you have given us.

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