



## *Message from Queen's Park*



**Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski**

**January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

It was with more than a little disappointment that I received news that Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke would not be hosting any of the consultations the province has set up to discuss the topic of endangered species. Certainly, it was no surprise that several of these consults were scheduled for Northern Ontario, but it does seem somewhat strange that the farthest east these things go is Bracebridge. As is so often the case with this government, their east is our west, and our concerns and opinions continue to be overlooked. I've written to Donna Cansfield, the minister responsible for the MNR, and indicated to her my total disbelief that this area, perhaps the area where regulations will have the greatest impact, will not be granted a consultation. I remain hopeful that the minister will come to her senses and add a site in Renfrew County so the people here may weigh in on an issue of significant importance to them.

As you're aware, there are a number of by-elections coming up to fill vacant seats in the Ontario Legislature, and as you might expect, I'm keenly interested in returning as many Progressive Conservatives as possible, and have them join Tim Hudak and our already strong caucus.

Particularly interesting will be the race in Toronto Centre, a seat left vacant by the resignation of George Smitherman, now off and running in his pursuit to be mayor of Toronto. The McGuinty Liberals, in their typically arrogant fashion, are running Glen Murray, a former mayor of Winnipeg. The thing is that, Mr. Murray, who hasn't even had time to collect his parachute yet, is being fitted with cabinet clothes, so sure are they of his impending victory and star status. To me, this is a fabulous example of the cart before the horse, and another case of the Liberals taking people for granted. As for the PC's our candidate is Pamela Taylor, a Toronto lawyer, community activist, and long-time resident of Toronto. I'll be spending some time myself in Toronto Centre assisting Pamela in her contest against the former mayor of Winnipeg, and hope to have some good news to report to you on this front after February 4<sup>th</sup>. We know that a win for us here would be an upset but people may want to send the Premier a message .

What a wonderful time Vicky and I had attending the annual New Years levee in Renfrew, where we, joined by my federal counterpart Cheryl Gallant, were able to speak to the many constituents who were able to attend. Make no mistake, in my job there are times where there is a frustration, even exasperation, dealing with a government that seems too often out of touch with the realities of Renfrew County. But, that said, it's more than compensated for

when we get the opportunity to enjoy the warmth and genuine affection we so often encounter when meeting and spending time with the people who call this place home. As it always is, the levee was a great success, a result made possible through the people we were fortunate enough to share time with.

On a much sadder note, I feel it's important to turn my attention to the human catastrophe that has fallen upon the island nation of Haiti. Never the happiest of places, even in the best of times, Haiti's crushing poverty has now been compounded by a devastating earthquake that has left hundreds of thousands dead, many thousands more missing, and hundreds of thousands seriously hurt. As a society, there is a great desperation, as even the simplest of things, such as food and water, are no longer available to the degree necessary for the situation. And though the world is responding, the people lay in the streets, dazed by a disaster on a scale that challenges my ability to describe adequately.

As many as 900 Canadians are still missing. 11 more are dead, including Mounties, nurses, relief workers, missionaries, and Haitian-Canadians.

As brothers and sisters in humanity, the Haitian disaster is our disaster as well, and we are called to offer the hand of solidarity to those who live in despair, who suffer on a scale unimaginable to most of us, and who cry out in the pain and misery of the calamity that has been visited upon them.

The people of Haiti need our help, and I encourage all of you, in the spirit of those very noblest of Canadian traditions, to do what you can for those who find themselves in a life and death struggle not of their making. There are many organizations and humanitarian groups who would be more than happy to accept any generosity you might be able to offer, and I'm most pleased that the Canadian government has pledged to match any money raised by Canadians towards Haitian relief.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the people of Haiti, to their family members and loved ones here in Canada, and to those many people, from all nations, who are making their way to that place, to selflessly offer their assistance and aid.

Warmest regards,  
John Yakabuski, MPP  
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

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