



Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

39th Parliament

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

Member's Statement

October 28, 2008

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. John Yakabuski: For five years, the McGuinty government has been whistling past the graveyard as jobs disappear in record numbers. They wring their collective hands, display concern for the media, tell everyone that the fault lies elsewhere and then they do what they do best: They appoint a member of the government to study the situation, hire a bunch of new staff, spend millions of dollars and present the people of Ontario with little more than a large travel and hotel bill. Nothing really changes, but that Liberal member gets a whole whack of air miles.

With the situation getting worse instead of better, the government must recognize that what it needs to do is get out of the way. The Ministry of Natural Resources must end its fixation with unnecessary and expensive regulatory burdens and help our businesses compete. When I look at what is happening in the forestry industry under the Liberals, I have to ask myself: How much more can they stand? The operators in my riding are facing the worst of times with the closure of the Smurfit-Stone pulp mill. What they need right now is the government to stand with them, not against them. There are some possible alternatives that would provide new markets for their wood residue, such as cogeneration and wood pelletization. What they don't need is a government whose *raison d'être* is, "How can we act as an impediment? How can we make it difficult?" I ask the minister today to commit to a new partnership with the province's forest industry, with a new mantra: Let's get people working again. Let's get it done.