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

ORAL QUESTION – FEBRUARY 22, 2010

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, in 2006—that's right; four years ago—your predecessor, Dwight Duncan, announced with some fanfare that Ontario would be building new nuclear reactors. Since that big announcement, you've been signing contracts high, wide and handsome at premium prices for energy supply based on politics and intermittency. When might construction begin on these reactors so that Ontario has a secure supply of dependable baseload energy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm delighted to respond to that question by saying that our government still is very much committed to moving forward on the new nuclear build. Recently, we've committed to moving forward in supporting Ontario Power Generation in a very significant refurbishment project that's very important in terms of moving forward with our modernization of our nuclear units.

We recognize the need to move forward with the new build as well. We're in discussions with AECL. The member may want us to just take any price that's out there without worrying about what is in the best interests of Ontarians. That's not the way we do business on this side of the House. We're here to get the best possible deal for the people of Ontario. We will do whatever we need to do to get that deal. We continue to be in discussions with AECL, and I'm confident that we will move forward with this purchase.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: The minister should know that if you want to move forward, you've got to get the transmission out of either park, neutral or lost.

Minister, we know that 3,000 megawatts of baseload energy will be leaving the system with the shutdown of Pickering by 2020. We also know that six more units at Bruce and the four existing units at Darlington will have to be taken out of service for refurbishment. While you've waited, waffled and wasted time, the clock has not stopped ticking. The success of our economy is directly related to the security of our energy supply. Thousands and thousands of jobs are at stake. You cannot shirk your responsibilities any longer.

I ask the minister: When will a real decision be made, and when will construction begin on new nuclear builds in this province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's really difficult to sit back and listen to the party opposite, who barely planned energy supply to get them through their term, let alone into future generations. Their record speaks for itself. We're taking tough decisions today to ensure not only that we plan beyond our term in office; we are planning well into the future. We are looking forward 20, 30 years with the decisions we've made. We're supporting Ontario Power Generation, as they move forward with their refurbishment plan in Darlington. That's talking about supplying power 20, 30 years down the road.

We're looking forward to moving forward with the new nuclear build. That is a decision that, if his government were in office, they'd be putting off until after the next election. We're making tough decisions today, but we're doing it in the interests of Ontarians. We're going to get the best possible-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.