



# Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

39th Parliament

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

Tuesday, Mar 30

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Today we find that you're asking ratepayers to pay an additional 9.6% for electricity next year. Every time you speak, it seems it's going to cost Ontario seniors and working families a lot more for basic services. This latest shock is just one in a series of ongoing increases. You're no longer nickeling and diming Ontarians to death; you are now relieving them of loonies and toonies.

Minister, when are you finally going to admit that your energy policy is strangling-

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Finance will withdraw the comment he just made.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Withdrawn.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Minister, when are you finally going to admit that your energy policies are strangling the people in Ontario who can least afford it?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** One would think, as critic for energy for the number of years that this member has been critic, that he would understand the role of the Ontario Energy Board. This is an application that is before the Ontario Energy Board. It's a very normal process to go through. It is not a 9.6% increase for all consumers. It's an increase they're applying for for their portion of the bill. That being said, it's an application. This isn't an automatic approval process. It's not unusual at all for the Ontario Energy Board to take a very good look at these increases-and often they drop them down. Sometimes they don't allow them at all. The member is absolutely jumping the gun here. I'm not sure what his motivation to do that is. But the fact is, this is not an increase; it's an application.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The minister would like to pretend that these things aren't going to happen. People out there know they're going to happen. They've been happening.

Your former colleague told us in this Legislature that-

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Nepean-Carleton will withdraw the comment. My back may be hurting, but my ears are good.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdraw.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Your former colleague told us in this Legislature that the Green Energy Act would only amount to a 1% increase in energy bills per year. What a bunch of hooey. Let's look at the facts: This latest increase, together with the 8% you're going to whack people with on July 1 with the HST, double-digit increases in the distribution rates and the sneaky \$53-million increase you put through the back door last week have brought seniors, families and small businesses to the breaking point. This amounts to an over 41% increase in electricity bills in Ontario. How much more can they take of the scam you call an energy policy?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I could respond in many ways to that last comment, but I think I'll refrain from doing it because I think it's important that the people of Ontario, after hearing what the member just said, understand what he's really talking about, because he clearly doesn't.

We're talking about an application that's before the Ontario Energy Board by Ontario Power Generation. It's not unusual for applications to come forward. The Ontario Energy Board has been put in place to ensure that any of these applications are looked at with regard to the interests of consumers and with regard to the future sustainability and reliability of energy in this province.

**1120**

We're going to let them do their job; that's what they're there to do. They've often looked at these applications and made decisions that roll them back or cancelled them altogether. We'll let them do their job.

The member can say what he wants; he can try to tell people information that may not-

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