

*Private Members' Business*

It is through chambers such as this that we can also call on the private sector to not always be looking for the quickest, easiest way to make a buck with landfills, looking for places that are approximate to cities the size of Toronto to remove the extraordinary volumes of garbage that should not be pouring out of a city that size. We should be looking much more to the four *rs* in dealing with that garbage rather than looking for huge landfills, whether they are clay lined or not. We know that enormous amounts of leachate will eventually get out of them.

There are the growing difficulties on both Crown and on private land of the removal of forest cover and natural covers that act so importantly with such a body as the moraine which is so thinly covered by very light alluvials. I would like to quote from a paper prepared in a submission to the member for York North about the history of this incredible sponge and filter system before talking more about the aggregate problems and the tree extraction problems.

“One of the things that they point out is whether or not we will leave this area as a treasured legacy or as the scene of an ecological crime.”

It goes on to give the geologic history: “Approximately 14,000 years ago as the Lake Simcoe lobe and the Lake Ontario lobe of the Wisconsin glacier retreated, rock and sand material transported by the ice accumulated in tremendous quantities within a temporary lake formed between the two ice fronts. It was the deposition of this rock material that formed the Oak Ridges moraine, and as this material was deposited into the water column, it became well sorted with the more dense rock and rubble material settling first, and the extremely fine sand particles settling last. It is this fine sand on the surface of the moraine that makes it highly erodible when subjected to clear-cutting and other insensitive, human activities. It is the well sorted and granular nature of the moraine structure that accounts for the high permeability of its soils and the over-all lack of surface water bodies such as rivers and lakes.”

That is taken from Peter Adams et al, published in 1985. It is quite small in the context of Canada: 1,500 square kilometres. We have the different levels of government that are involved, and we have the almost unremitting pace of developments that are affecting it, some intended such as landfills but some that are unintended.

There are probably still very few private property holders within the areas of the moraine that understand the real cumulative consequences of taking down an acre of trees here, and a hectare of cover over here. It is the cumulative impact of all of this, and then the cumulative nature of the erosion that comes with that which is causing the severe surface damage to the moraine.

Add to that what my friend properly was talking about in terms of aggregate extraction. I was a bit stunned to see on one of the papers provided that despite the existing provincial guidelines for the protection of the moraine, aggregate extraction in almost 44 per cent, almost half, is going to continue unrestricted. We know from research that the deep aggregate extraction, where large amounts of the lower aggregate are being taken for construction purposes, contributes to the elevation of temperatures in the discharge of the cold headwaters to spawning streams.

We are having all of these combined effects: the forest removal and the cover removal from both private and public lands; the aggregate removal which is changing the water temperature and affecting fish populations and obviously the over-all ecology; the chronic and dangerous problems of landfills which are allowing tens and now hundreds of millions of pounds of leachates to get into this incredible aquifer. We still must be, and I have said it before, one of the only species which so often uses our own kitchen as our sewer. It is something we have to think about. Even termites have developed systems for dealing with their own excrement in a different way than we have. This aquifer is being polluted with the most toxic forms of our garbage through landfills. It is being dealt with in a completely inhuman and unconscionably counter-ecological form in terms of the ways we are using it in terms of sewage disposal. We are stripping the surface.

It is time we really expressed ourselves with the kind of will that the Parliament of Canada is expected to express. If we are going to triple the amount of protected lands in Canada between now and the year 2000, this example by the member for York North is the kind of area we should be using. Not all of it. We are not suggesting you draw a line around the 1,500 square kilometres and say there will be no more development, no more people, no more this, no more that. That is hardly what we are saying. What we are calling for is a real bi-regional approach dealing with this as a headwaters issue, and using it as a flagship, saying that here is how we will protect this land over-all.