

*Private Members' Business*

Chamber of Commerce, and the Chiefs of Ontario, all of which support the creation of a park in the valley.

Perhaps most significant of all for this chamber is the fact that the federal government, under the leadership of the former Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Tom McMillan, has made a \$10 million commitment to the Province of Ontario to help establish a park in the valley.

I want to read briefly from a letter that Mr. McMillan sent to the Premier of Ontario the day after I hosted the minister on a tour of the valley. He states in this letter: "Other cities of the world have preserved some of their most expensive real estate in parks despite development pressures. Central Park in New York, Hyde Park in London are but two examples. Such green spaces have attracted and delighted generations of visitors and residents, to the lasting credit of the governments that assure their preservation. For the benefit of Toronto residents, other Ontarians and all Canadians, I urge you likewise to place environmental values ahead of short-term economic gain and to put an end to any possibility of development in the Rouge."

A year after Mr. McMillan toured the valley the present Minister of the Environment also visited the area and restated our government's commitment. During that visit the minister called the area "a miracle" and stated that a dump or a freeway in the valley would be completely unacceptable to our government.

Just 14 months ago the Prime Minister of Canada reiterated his support on his visit to Scarborough. The community was most appreciative of his enthusiastic endorsement of the park and you, Sir, the Speaker of the House of Commons, joined me on a tour of the valley last fall and added your very strong support for the preservation of the this unique area.

So you ask, Mr. Speaker, why then hasn't the future of the Rouge been secured? The fate of the valley rests with the Ontario Government and Premier David Peterson. Last fall, the legislature of Ontario gave unanimous approval to the Progressive Conservative Party motion to save the valley. However, to date no concrete action has

been taken and the province has still not accepted the federal government's offer.

As members of Parliament representing all Canadians, we have an opportunity to join the thousands of people from across Scarborough and Canada who are fighting to save the Rouge. This is an urgent issue. This is not a time for half measures. This is the time for the Rouge Valley system to be saved in its entirety. It is time that the provincial Government of Ontario understood the importance and the urgency of the Rouge being preserved. Saving the Rouge Valley system is an opportunity to put talk into action because once an area like the Rouge is lost it is gone forever. As the World Commission on the Environment said: "We have not inherited the earth from our parents; we have borrowed it from our children".

I urge all members of the House of Commons to come together, united, to support this significant environmental issue. As we begin a new year and a new decade, let's prove to Canadians that we are ready to take action to save the Rouge Valley for our children and for generations to come.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River):** Mr. Speaker, since my election to the House of Commons about 14 months ago there have been many issues on the Order Paper of significance to the people of my riding, Scarborough—Rouge River. Today, the issue we debate deals directly with a large portion of land in our riding. The people of my riding recognize that the particular challenge of preserving the Rouge Valley lands is multi-jurisdictional and thankfully non-partisan.

This is not the first nor the last debate on the issue of setting aside lands for parks or conservation. All levels of government have learned the need to set aside space for recreation and parks. We have in this country a stunning array of national parks from Signal Hill to Pacific Rim, from Pelee Island all the way up to the new park on the tip of Ellesmere Island.

More recently we have had the successes of South Moresby in which our Speaker took a keen interest and other initiatives currently in relation to the Carmanah forest and Temagami in Ontario. Although each of these areas has its own special character, the Rouge Valley is in one way different from all the rest. Unlike these other areas, the Rouge Valley lies within a major growing