

Private Members' Business

I could go on but I did want to quote from that letter. Here is a group of people wanting to help in this process. They have been shut out temporarily and I hope that the provincial government in its wisdom of preserving the Oak Ridges moraine that is vital to all of us will take into account the expertise of not only the federal government but also the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority and put together a game plan that is going to be effective for all of us and all our future generations.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for York—Simcoe for having brought this important motion to the floor of the House, the motion which says:

—the Government should commit itself to entering into negotiation with the Government of Ontario to safeguard the Oak Ridges Moraine and protect the headwater aquifers sourcing Lake Ontario from further pollution and toxic contamination.

It is an important motion and one that I am sure on reflection the hon. member will realize is but the beginning of a very long personal battle that he will have to involve himself in. I say that from personal experience.

I recall almost 15 years ago having begun the battle with many others to protect South Moresby in my constituency and ultimately there was a resolution on the floor of this House that brought that to be the national park reserve status that it has today.

It is the beginning of a long battle but I think some of the pieces that are needed are now in place. This House in June of this year for the first time passed a unanimous resolution to protect and to preserve 12 per cent of all of the lands and waters in Canada.

This area, which is some 1,500 square miles, falls well within the rubric of what we are talking about in terms of that 12 per cent. It is quite different from the traditional Canadian perspective on national parks. Back in 1985 we began, thanks to the incredible foresight of our forefathers, to set aside Banff National Park. In those days, and in most of the days since, we have looked at the perimeters of certain pieces of land and we have sort of locked them away and said: "Within those areas that is national parks and we will protect them". Similarly the provinces and territories have gone along that route.

Thanks enormously to the Brundtland commission undertaken by the United Nations, the world and in particular Canadians have a much better understanding now of what kinds of land use planning, integrated planning by regional approaches, are necessary in order to protect the ecological integrity of the land masses that we have to protect, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

This particular area which my friend from North York pointed out runs from the Niagara escarpment in the west over to the Trenton area, in fact to the Trent River, is an incredibly important chunk.

• (1140)

It provides the headwater systems for the Rouge, the Don, the Humber, the Holland, the Nottawasaga and the Ganaraska, if I have said all of those properly. Being from B.C., I am not the best on some of these names.

The water from those bodies make their way into Lake Simcoe, Lake Ontario, Georgian Bay and ultimately, of course, into the lower Great Lakes and some 45 million of us drink from those waters.

The chunk of earth that we are talking about is incredibly important. We know that not only does it act as a sponge allowing residual waters to flow at the necessary levels throughout the year to protect the ecology and all of those water systems coming from the headwater, we also know that it acts as a fantastic, organic filtration system for all of the waters in this huge area.

We heard from both the previous speakers about the problems now, the incredible lack of co-ordination between the levels of government and the private sector developers. We know that this is going to require a co-ordinated approach by Crown Canada. I think my friend from York North has very well laid out the kinds of legislative frameworks that we can operate within to assist.

There is a need for Crown Canada to appoint negotiators who can fulfil those federal roles. Today I call on Bob Rae, the premier of Ontario and Ruth Grier, the minister of the environment, to play a useful role from the provincial side in relation to these 1,500 square kilometres and also with the municipalities.