

*Private Members' Business*

dous place for families to be, to explore and to appreciate. Speaking of families, I am pleased that my two sisters, Lettice McKenzie and Shirley McAllister, have travelled some distance to be in this chamber gallery today to witness this debate.

There are alternatives to the development projects that threaten the valley. Recycling initiatives have been proposed as an alternative to the metro dump site. Improved recycling could reduce the amount of waste generated in metro by up to 25 per cent, but it is unthinkable to put garbage in this magnificent tablelands that would destroy the ecosystem of the Rouge. We want this magnificence preserved.

The SRVS has also presented the province with an alternative to the government's freeway proposal. SRVS has suggested that instead of destroying the Rouge Valley with an eight-lane freeway a number of existing roads could be expanded to ease the traffic problems in eastern Metro. For example, the extension of Morning-side Avenue to link in with Markham Road and the widening of Highway 48 farther in Pickering, Brock Road and County Road 23 in Durham region are appropriated for expansion.

There are real alternatives which need to be acted upon. The park concept proposed by the SRVS would not only protect the Rouge as a wilderness area, but it would also create new recreational and tourism opportunities for the area. The proposed park would also preserve a number of farms and agricultural areas within the valley system. Some of these farms, such as the one owned by Russ Reesor, have been part of Scarborough's history for over 100 years. The historical buildings that are there are worthy of preservation.

However, most important of all, a park in the Rouge would provide millions of Canadians with a wilderness reserve that is accessible by city transit. Where else in the world could residents of a city the size of Toronto take a bus or a subway to such a huge wilderness forest?

You may ask: Why should the federal government be involved in this issue? The Rouge River Valley represents a truly unique environmental challenge. The federal task force report on the Canadian Parks system entitled "Our Parks, Vision for the 21st Century" called for the establishment of "national heritage parks" to protect wilderness areas that would not normally fall under the criteria of a national park. The Rouge Valley fits perfectly within the heritage park concept. The

national Minister of the Environment recently called for a huge expansion of the national parks in Canada, and he included the Rouge Valley in his announcement as an example of an area of national environmental significance that should be protected.

But, is a park in this valley a feasible concept and who supports it? Yes, saving the Rouge Valley as a park is feasible and the support for this concept is overwhelming.

Over three-quarters of the land in the proposed park area is already owned by the people of Ontario through the provincial government. The plan put forward by the SRVS blends existing development with protection of the wilderness uniqueness of the valley system and the recreational uses.

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The municipal councils and those that border the Rouge have endorsed and voted for saving the valley as a park. Two of those communities, Scarborough and Markham, which contain the majority of the proposed park area, have also amended their official city plans to accommodate the proposed park.

The Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, chaired by the former Toronto mayor and federal cabinet minister, David Crombie, has fully endorsed the park proposal. I was pleased to make a presentation to the commission and bring to Mr. Crombie's attention the importance of including the Rouge Valley within the scope of his study.

Last summer Mr. Crombie released his interim report of the commission, and I would like to quote from it: "The Rouge Valley is a unique resource for the metropolitan area, the last opportunity to preserve a significant urban wilderness in the heart of the greater Toronto area. Accordingly, the royal commission recommends that the Rouge River Valley be protected as a natural heritage park. Therefore, the province should co-operate immediately with the federal government in establishing such a park as outlined in the proposal of Save the Rouge Valley System group." That is a significant recommendation and I commend the royal commission.

In addition to the royal commission, over 50 local and national organizations have added their support to saving the valley. Those groups include the World Wildlife Fund of Canada, the Western Canadian Wilderness Committee, the Canadian Nature Federation, the local chapter of the Canadian Auto Workers, the Scarborough