

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 22, 1990

The House met at 1 p.m.

Prayers

[*Translation*]

VACANCY

OSHAWA

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received a communication notifying me that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely:

[*English*]

The Hon. J. E. Broadbent, member for the electoral district of Oshawa, by resignation, effective December 31, 1989.

Accordingly, I have addressed on January 2, 1990 my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a new writ of election for the said electoral district.

Pursuant to Standing Order 30, paragraph 6, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of entering into negotiations with the government of Ontario to establish a wilderness reserve or heritage park to protect the environmental uniqueness and importance of the Rouge River Valley system in Scarborough.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to introduce this motion today on behalf of the people of

Scarborough and indeed all Canadians. I want to thank the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River for seconding this motion.

It is fitting that an environmental issue is debated as the first order of business for this House at the start of the 1990s. This motion signals, as the beginning of the debate for this year, the importance that Canadians have placed on the preservation of our environment.

This votable motion calls on the Government of Canada to enter into negotiations with the Government of Ontario to establish a wilderness reserve or heritage park to protect the environmental uniqueness and importance of the Rouge River Valley system in Scarborough.

The Rouge River Valley has a great history which dates back to the ancient Indian tribes that first settled in the valley some 2,000 years before the birth of Christ. The first European settlers explored what was then called the Ketchie Sepee or great river in 1793. The river was later renamed the Rouge River because of the colour that was added to the water from clay deposits along the shoreline. Today, the Rouge River Valley system is about 10,000 acres of wilderness reserve in the midst of the largest city in Canada, metropolitan Toronto.

Many questions have been raised about the Rouge and its significance to our community and to our country. As the member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre and one of the first members to have become involved in this issue I want to take this opportunity to respond to the questions and explain why this is such an important and significant national issue.

First, where is the Rouge River Valley? The Rouge River and its water system are located in the north eastern part of the metropolitan Toronto. The watershed begins north of Richmond Hill and Whitchurch—Stouffville and flows through Markham and Pickering and Scarborough before emptying into Lake Ontario. The system's many tributaries make up three main water courses: the Rouge River, the Little Rouge River and Petticoat Creek.