

*Private Members' Business*

the length of the moraine, development is stripping away the trees and covering the surface of the moraine with concrete and asphalt. This effectively cuts off the water that would normally feed the aquifers.

The cumulative effect of all this activity is potentially disastrous. First of all, let us consider the damage being done by the Keele Valley dump. At present, the landfill's capacity is being reached.

There are some questionable provincial government policies being considered that may result in the expansion of the site.

Although there is a clay lining in the dump, leachate seeps through the lining and contaminates the moraine's aquifers. Every year it is estimated that 100 million pounds of leachate will reach Lake Ontario and enter our drinking water.

Along with the danger posed by waste disposal landfill, there is that of the aggregate extraction operations in Northumberland and Dufferin-Simcoe counties.

These sand and gravel operations are eating away at the moraine, and if they are not controlled, will do irreversible harm to the structure.

The principal danger is erosion. The gravel and sand pits, unlike the moraine's natural state, present an unprotected surface to the elements. Instead of filtering through the topsoil and collecting in aquifers, melting snow and rain water wash away the surface, breaking down the moraine's capacity for collecting water.

The negative result of this is twofold: First, the water which would normally be absorbed by the moraine is not absorbed and can contribute to flooding. Second, by wearing down the moraine and reducing its absorbent nature, a situation is created where worse flooding may occur the following spring.

A long-term effect is that erosion reduces the moraine's water recharge capability. This means that there is less water being channelled into the numerous rivers sourced by the moraine and less water finding its way into the water table. This means there is less clean water for the people of the greater Toronto area.

Finally, there is the two pronged assault being launched by development. First, the deforestation of the moraine contributes to the erosion I have just described. Second, building on the moraine damages it in many different ways. Development brings wells. Too many

wells lower the water pressure and deplete the water supply. Development also brings sewage from industrial and agricultural sources and from septic systems. Sewage contributes to the contamination of the water supply, especially when the ratio of pollutants to water increases.

All of these human contributions, the landfill site, the gravel pits, deforestation, wells, septic systems and agricultural activities, are more than the Oak Ridges moraine can handle. The system, which was very fragile to begin with, is now being pushed to the limit and will definitely break down unless something is done to stop the damage.

That is why I present this motion. After numerous consultations with my local advisory group on environmental issues, as well as with such environmental groups as STORM, Vaughan-Cares, and others, I have come to the conclusion that only an active intervention by the federal government in co-operation with the provincial government can give the moraine the protection it so desperately needs.

The arguments in favour of federal action are numerous and compelling and I will outline some of them in the time remaining today.

First, there are the twin issues of environmental protection and sustainable development. Many people are still unsure about what sustainable development means. I would suggest that what is happening to the Oak Ridges moraine is a good example of unsustainable development.

In the past, the Canadian government has often repeated that it is firmly committed to cleaning up the environment. It has signed the acid rain treaty with the United States and it has introduced the green plan. In fact, in the green plan the government makes a specific reference to the importance of protecting our water resources.

In the chapter entitled "Continuing Action to Protect and Restore Water", the government makes a number of very laudable commitments in this area. It promises to introduce a drinking water safety act in 1991. It promises to publish a series of guidelines and codes of practice to help local authorities deal with groundwater problems like contamination from landfill waste disposal and leaking underground tanks. It promises to establish a Great Lakes pollution prevention centre.