

MP takes exception to editorial implications



On The Hill
With
Garth Turner

"More taxes, anyone?"
Are you kidding? Nobody wants to pay more.

But that was the headline the Bolton Enterprise used last week on an editorial which talked about me.

"The last election, residents of Halton-Peel elected a man who they believed was a champion of their cause," the paper said, "someone who had the backbone to stand up to his own party and change the system to help the 'little guy,' or go down fighting.

"But the fire is gone now. Our fearless champion has fallen back from his stance. He now tows the party line like a good little camper."

These words came a week after I told you I'd written a guide to that proposed national sales tax the finance minister wants to put into place in a couple of years. In that guide I explained how I went from being a skeptic about the tax to a supporter of it - as long as it accomplished some goals - like being fairer than the system is now - like reducing income taxes - and like helping to smash the deficit.

Somewhere along the way, I guess, this got interpreted as meaning Garth Turner was now an apologist for the feds.

Well, I've only been a politician for about four months so maybe this is a good time this "little camper" made his mark in the woods.

First, let me tell you I don't mind the criticism. For weeks I've been criss-crossing the riding asking for input and feedback and comment. Good or bad, I need this to do the job of representing you in Ottawa. Besides, as a former newspaper columnist, I flung more than a little mud in the past. Now it's my turn to get muddied myself.

I decided to get into politics because I was tired of being a critic. It struck me that real change could be accomplished more by working within the system, rather than just yelling at it.

Sure, I've led protests for lower taxes. I've cried out about politicians who wear down middle class taxpayers and then try to buy them back with their own money. And for years I've warned that the greatest threat to everybody are governments who fling us into debt with neither our approval nor sometimes even our knowledge.

Today, nothing's changed.

I have the same beliefs and the same goals. I hurt for the little guy who feels like the Bolton Enterprise does, that elected officials "abuse" him.

It shouldn't be that way. And that's why I'm on this side of the fence now - as one of those officials.

I didn't get into this to be popular. You might as well know now that I'm not going to run away from tough or controversial issues. If the feds propose a national sales tax then I'm not going to staple my lips together and pretend it isn't

there. Instead I will learn all I can, and then tell you straight. I'll ask for your input and, years before it becomes law, I will tell Michael Wilson what you told me.

No crisis management at the last minute when people awake, unprepared, to find taxes changed or the government cutting back on spending to reduce the deficit. I'm not going to hide from the storm, then come up with some cute gimmick when it comes time for reelection.

I do care about the average people who elected me. I care so much that all my energies in Ottawa will be devoted to ensuring the middle class endures and prospers and is filled with incentive.

We can't have that, however; if

the country continues to flirt with Third World-style debt; if it is saddled with high interest rates as a result, or with a sick dollar. Unless we take action now we could be on a path to economic calamity and taxes which are not only rising, but on a permanent basis.

You can have an MP who gives you good news and shows up in the newspaper handing out cheques.

Or you can have me tell you up-front and honestly what comes next, and why.

You can have the angry, powerless, locked-out prophet in the backbenches - the loner who makes newspaper copy because he counters his own party.

Or you can have a guy who is working to influence the system so it can be changed. So it can be

more responsive, responsible and humane.

My eye is on the goal, not on my feet. If I "go down fighting," as the newspaper suggests, how will I have done a single thing for you?

But I am here to serve. You tell me what kind of a Member of Parliament to be. Tell me to be angry, or tell me to be effective.

I can be either; but not both.

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Canada Post Corporation

We are growing - in partnership with the community

More rural Canadians are enjoying increased access to postal products and services through retail postal outlets in their communities. This is happening in partnership with hundreds of local businesses right across the country, in a variety of ways.

Here are some examples of how we are expanding

In Whistler, British Columbia. Two new retail postal outlets, operated by local businesses, have opened this year. The new outlets complement the services offered at the Whistler corporate post office. They are the first step to improved service in this rapidly-developing community.

"The response from the customers has been fantastic. It's working out well."
— Harry McKeever, Operator, Retail Outlet, McKeever's General Store

In Rose Bay, Nova Scotia. We have another link in Canada Post Corporation's growing network of postal outlets. This time in a community where for two years, retail service was not provided through a corporate outlet. Retail postal service is now provided in partnership with a local business.

"I feel that the postal outlet here is a great step in the right direction to service the people in the area."
— Sam Emmons, President, Rose Bay area Board of Trade

In Ste-Félicité-de-l'Islet, Québec. A retail postal outlet is now offering postal services and products in a community where no post office existed before.

"In addition to the services provided by a retail postal outlet established in a local business, we now have the benefit of our own postal code."
— Jean-Paul Pellerin, Mayor, Municipality of Ste-Félicité-de-l'Islet

In Lewvan, Saskatchewan. A retail postal outlet is now open to serve customers. The outlet provides customers with access to postal products and services. These services have not been available locally for four years.

"The retail postal outlet in the Co-op convenience store is a good arrangement - they support each other and it provides all the necessary postal services."
— Larry Davis, Councillor, Rural Municipality of Wellington, Saskatchewan

More business for the merchants in your community and longer hours of service for you

Local businesses are benefiting from increased customer traffic. It means a better and stronger business base for the community. We are building local partnerships with the community and business, to provide Canadians with reliable, accessible and affordable postal service.

*Canada Post is in rural Canada to stay.
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