

Turner heads House of Commons Committee

A week or two ago I told you about some of the work I'd be doing in Ottawa. I was assigned to sit as a member of the powerful new House of Commons committee which will monitor Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

This committee can call witnesses, hold hearings, conduct inquiries and make whole departments of the government justify their actions.

Among those, by the way, are Canada Post, the Prime Minister's Office, the Consumer and Corporate Affairs department, Canada Mortgage and Housing and a bunch more which affect our everyday lives.

The first order of business was to choose a chairman, and when the dust had settled, they chose me!

Now I have a big task ahead of me - deciding what kinds of issues we'll be tackling. It could be an investigation into corporate mergers and acquisitions; or hazardous products which affect the environment; or a new bankruptcy law; or maybe the direction the post office has been going in lately.

My committee will be very busy. I will likely do some travelling and I hope - really do some good for average people in this country. It's a chance to work with MPs from

other parties, to find common ground and accomplish more than just yelling at each other during question period (which is a real zoo).

As I embark on this, I'd like your input. Are there areas you think my committee should scratch away at? Are you concerned about recent corporate mergers and acquisitions? Is Canada Post doing the job you want it to? Are consumers in this country protected enough? Could CMHC be doing more to help the housing affordability problem?

Write, or call, and let me know your thoughts.

A few words of congrats are in order: I think the Caledon Chamber of Commerce did a terrific job in putting together the Home and Industry Show last weekend.

I was honored to be a part of the opening ceremonies, and then to wander through all the exhibits. Everybody involved has much to be proud of.

Also proud are the members of POWER - the environmental watchdog citizens' group from the Acton and Georgetown area. These folks have been relentlessly opposing the idea there should be a mega-dump established in a gigantic quarry south of Acton.



On The Hill
With
Garth Turner

As we all know, southern Ontario has a garbage crisis. But the thought of millions of tons of waste being dumped into a limestone pit which serves as the aquifer for thousands of people is shocking. There just don't seem to be the assurances needed that groundwater will not be contaminated - let alone the effects of a steady stream of truck traffic through this beautiful area.

I oppose this dump, and will do what I can to help. And I'm delighted POWER was named Citizen of the Year - it's the kind of recognition which is truly deserved. Shortly after I finish writing this, by the way, I'm off to

POWER's big garage sale in Georgetown. There's no telling what I might find for my new office in Ottawa...

Last week I wrote about the federal budget which Michael Wilson will be unveiling this week.

I had lunch with the man a few days ago and, while not revealing the changes he'll make, Wilson did impress on me that the budget will be very tough.

That means the feds will take a direct attack on the deficit which is putting Canada \$80 million more in debt every day. I support Wilson as he tries to do that, because the way Canada is being auctioned off now to lenders (many of them foreign) makes me cry for the future. We

have \$320 billion in debt, which is virtually unrepayable, and growing every hour.

It strikes me that if we're not going to turn into an Argentina - where the middle class is wiped out - that politicians have to face the music.

Part of that is taking criticism from people who don't want to have less services or more taxes, or both. Those who know me, know that I hate the idea of ever-riding taxes; and they know I've been building support for other ideas - like those Debt Freedom Bonds I mentioned recently.

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