

Ottawa must cut taxes - residents

Garth Turner MP
Halton-Peel



The seventh, and final, Town Hall meeting happened a few days ago in the Elks Hall in Norval and it's not long now before I have to head back to Ottawa. In general, I really enjoyed the meetings - yes, despite the fact a number of people came to yell or to vent their frustrations.

After each meeting I went through the comment sheets people had filled out - and there are a pile of good suggestions there for ways the feds can get serious about spending cuts. As I've told you before, working towards a leaner government is going to be a priority with me this fall. The Town Hall meetings just confirmed what I'd already suspected: If Ottawa is going to ask for more taxes in order to pay down the deficit then it had better share the burden with equal spending cuts.

Now I'm writing a report for Michael Wilson on what you had to tell me and I will be calling for changes to the proposed nine per cent GST. You told me a consumption tax could be acceptable if the rate was lower and with fewer exemptions; if extra money raised was applied directly to the deficit, if a consumer protection watchdog agency was in place, and if federal spending was slashed. What you told me, I am telling Wilson.

Two more points on these tax changes:

—Over the next few days you'll be receiving a copy of the "Taxpayer's Guide to the GST," which I wrote two weeks ago. It's not a government selling job, but rather a 20-page explanation of what the proposed changes are.

Please read it. Then please take the time to tear out the page I've provided, fill it with your comments and mail it to me. I hope to get thousands of these replies, because then I can speak with a

stronger voice in Ottawa. The more people I hear from, the more weight my arguments will have there - and we can lobby for the kinds of changes we think should be made.

—As a final way we can have input into the system, the Halton-Peel Tax Committee, headed by Caledon resident Colin MacKinnon, is holding two public meetings on the GST. If you want to air your comments, then be at the Albion-Bolton community centre Sept. 26 at 7 p.m., or the Halton Hills Cultural Centre in Georgetown on the evening of the 28th. Colin and the other committee members will be making a submission to the House of Commons finance committee as it holds hearings into the tax plan.

On a completely different front, I'm happy to report that there's a new tribe of environmentalists gearing up for community action.

So far, over 60 people have signed up to join the Environment Committee which we have formed here in the area of Halton-Peel. And about 40 of those showed up for our last meeting. I can tell you it was a great evening - the air was full of ideas as we sat around the table and talked about what we can do together to make a difference.

At this point we've decided to break into 12 working groups, each with an agenda for action and a coordinator. The point is to stop talking about ways we can help the environment, and to start achieving

results. To that end, these groups will be doing a host of things - from a tree-planting program to travelling educational booths on recycling and re-use to helping me draft legislation which I can introduce into the House of Commons.

It's an exciting bunch of people - they come from all backgrounds, and from Burlington, Bolton, Caledon, Georgetown, Palgrave and Acton. When the political boundaries were changed last year and this new federal riding created, a lot of folks wondered what on earth these communities could have in common. The answer for me is easy, when I walk into the room where this committee is meeting. What we have between us is a simple bond of caring. What more do we need?

There's always room for another pair of hands, or a new set of ideas. If you'd like to become a member of our group, then please write or call. The address of the riding office is 27 Main Street South, Georgetown, L7G 3G2 and the phone number is 873-4673. Toll-free, it's 1-800-668-4322.

By the way, we're still chipping away at renovating the office - tearing out the 40-year-old walls so the committees will have a place to meet. I'd like to thank the volunteers who have returned out the last couple of Saturdays to lend a hand - people like Bob Girdwood, Bill Paterson, Marianne Creary and Bob Johnston. They've helped us avoid spending a lot of taxpayers' dollars.

Halton spends \$10,000 in mineral fight

Halton Region will put up \$10,000 for research by a citizens group opposed to a mineral company's proposal to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

The Milton-based group KEEP - Keep our Escarpment Environment Protected - appeared several times as a delegation at Halton Regional council, opposing LAC Minerals' proposal to dig for minerals in an environmentally-protected area of Milton, on the

Niagara Escarpment. LAC Minerals submitted an application to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The company presently has a mineral site near the property.

The Region estimates it will cost \$7,500 for hydrogeological information, \$2,500 for biological information and \$1,000 for "in-house" mapping to help pay for KEEP's research to determine if digging for minerals is contrary to the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Pomeroy stands firm on GTA position

Burlington Councillor Walter Mulkeiwich attacked Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy's participation in the Greater Toronto Area committee on waste disposal at a Regional meeting last week.

Halton Region is one of five members of the GTA formed this March to dispose of four million tonnes of garbage produced annually from Halton, York, Durham, Peel Region and Metropolitan Toronto. Regional chairmen are representatives at the GTA meetings.

"What are the plans for public participation within Halton Region?" Coun. Mulkeiwich asked Chairman Pomeroy. The councillor fired questions, one after another, at the Regional chairman asking if Halton Region would have input into which landfill site is chosen. Each Region must identify a contingency site as a condition of entry into the GTA. Coun. Mulkeiwich asked if the GTA was being accepted by Halton without a plan for Energy from Waste (EFW).

Chairman Pomeroy said there would be public participation at a future meeting. The date hasn't been "nailed down," he said. The GTA will look at all issues, including an Ontario Ministry of the Environment mandate to reduce waste by 50 per cent in the year 2000 until GTA is "disbanded or discontinued" by the Region.

"Peel is on board, too," said Halton's chairman. He said he can't be blamed if the Toronto media "distorts" the issues. "All the answers I've been giving here at council, I've been giving honestly."

The Region will spend \$127,000 on the GTA for the end of 1989 and into 1990, Regional council heard. That price tag caused some grimaces in council.

"I think I've lost my enthusiasm right now," for the GTA, Burlington Mayor Roly Bird said. He said he approved of Halton's entry into the GTA to "watch what (other members) are doing, and not to be a part of their problem."

"I certainly don't want to go on a treadmill to oblivion with these people, keeping in mind what we've been through ourselves," said the mayor, referring to Halton's extensive search for a Regional landfill site before the Highway 25 site in Milton was approved in February.

The GTA could be "the greatest plan or the greatest scam ever inflicted upon the people of Ontario," Milton Regional Coun. Bill Johnson said.

Halton has until next spring to choose a landfill contingency site for the GTA, Chairman Pomeroy said.

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Coun. Mulkeiwich said information in the Toronto media says that Peel Region is not committed to the GTA. The chairman said last month, that if Peel left the GTA, as that Region had threatened, there would "be no GTA."

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