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MP Turner says

House tax could 'wreak havoc' on Georgetown

By BRIAN MacLEOD
the Herald

Lowering the proposed nine per cent goods and services tax by taxing resale houses would "wreak havoc on the whole (real estate) market," Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner says.

Mr. Turner responded swiftly Monday to a report by the chairman of the federal Commons finance committee, Donald Blenkarn, which recommends

lowering the proposed national sales tax to seven per cent and slapping a five-per-cent tax on the resale housing market.

"This is going to just block first-time homebuyers completely from the market," Mr. Turner said. "I think the (housing) tax, if imposed would wreak havoc on the whole market."

Mr. Turner said he told federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson Monday that a five per cent tax on

resale houses is not a wise move.

According to Mr. Turner, the five per cent housing tax would work like this: a homeowner who sells a \$150,000 house and purchases a \$200,000 house would pay five per cent tax on the difference - \$50,000.

However, Mr. Turner said a first-time homebuyer would have to pay the tax on the entire purchase price of the resale house. So a \$200,000 house, not uncommon in

Halton Hills, would carry a \$10,000 tax bill.

The tax committee "didn't understand the impact (of a resale housing tax) on a community like Georgetown," Mr. Turner said.

Blocking first-time buyers out of the market would cause a "ripple effect" in the real estate market because current homeowners would find it more difficult to sell their homes, Mr. Turner said.

"It's like a fire. If you take the

fuel away from the fire, the fire goes out. First-time homebuyers are the fuel."

There are 86 recommendations in Mr. Blenkarn's report. "A bunch of them are good, but on this one (the resale housing tax) he's way off base," Mr. Turner said.

Mr. Turner acknowledged there is a chance the nine per cent figure Mr. Wilson has so sternly stuck to in the face of mounting opposition will come down to seven per cent.

"But not that way," he said of a housing tax. "Taxing food is better to me."

Mr. Turner favors a tax on groceries as a way of reducing the proposed nine per cent tax to seven per cent - a figure deemed to be more politically acceptable in national polls.

"No other country in the world

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On the march

Santa had his wooden soldiers lead the parade in Georgetown Saturday so they could send back word to him about the children of Georgetown. Judging from the playful and excited faces that populated the parade route, Santa won't be disappointed and neither will the children this Christmas. A variety of floats on Saturday included Winter Wonderland, a Baltimore, and the Three Kings. More photos on Page 10.

9% GST Bowling alley could close

By DONNA KELL
the Herald

The proposed nine per cent federal tax on most goods and services would "kill" business at the Georgetown Bowl and force the family-owned business to close after 29 years, the bowling alley's owners say.

"It might make the price of the game so high that we'd have to look at closing our doors," Rose Radyk says of the business she and her family opened on Georgetown's Mountainview Road South.

"It would kill us."

Mrs. Radyk says those who use the 20-lane bowling alley are mostly low and middle-income families, and seniors - people who would feel the bite of increased game prices, bowling shoes and snack-bar refreshments.

Mrs. Radyk said she sent a letter to Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner, but hasn't received a response.

The price of bowling games in Georgetown is \$1.85 for adults, and \$1.60 for students. The rental of bowling shoes is now 75 cents for adults and 45 cents for children.

But, this would change by nine per cent with the GST, and would cut down the number of people using the bowling lanes for recreation, said Mrs. Radyk.

The Radyks' customers are "just ordinary working-class people," Rose's daughter Chris Radyk said. "This is about the only economical recreation they can do," her mother added.

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