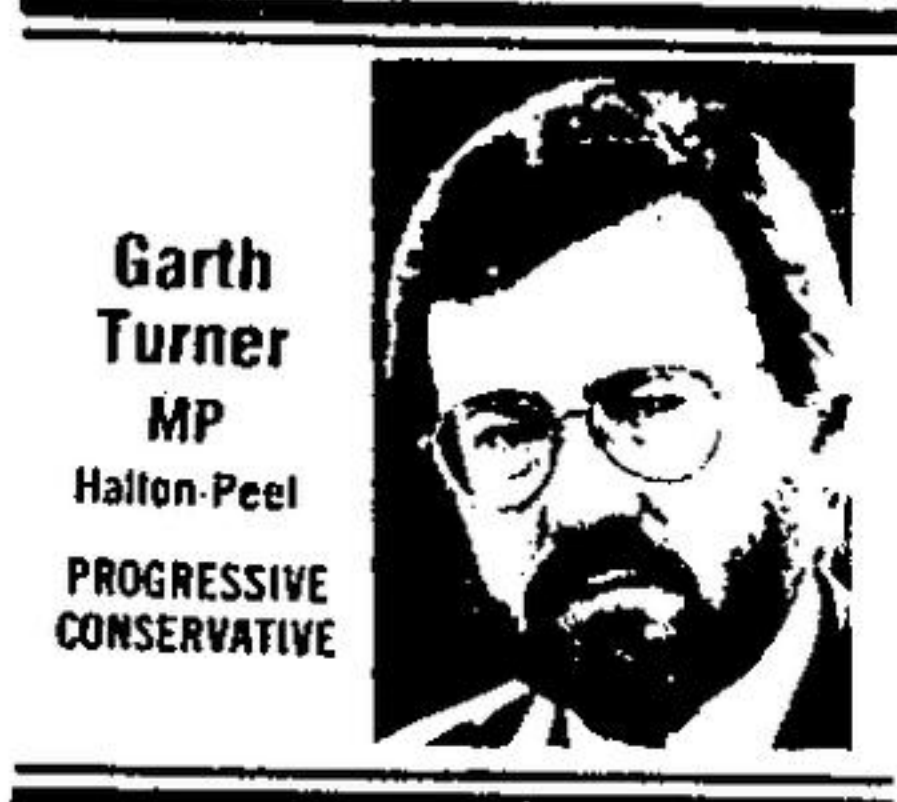


Water soaks MP's house after frozen pipes burst



Garth Turner
MP
Halton-Peel
PROGRESSIVE
CONSERVATIVE

called my office assistant in Ottawa and asked him to look in on our place.

The next morning - two days ago, as I write this - he did.

George called in the morning, and there was real emotion in his voice. In the background I could hear water splashing and, 300 miles away, I tried to visualize what he was telling me.

In the intense cold, pipes had burst in the upstairs bathroom. The kitchen ceiling had sagged, then caved in, from the weight of water running for untold days. The kitchen cupboards below had been showered and become misshapen. The flow then went into the dining room, destroying rugs and furniture; then down the vents leading to the furnace, which was extinguished.

In the basement the water was standing about six inches deep, and rising. Upstairs, the oak flooring was soaked, and popping.

Well, over the phone I got some people in to pump the place out and it will take a week of drying to know what the real damage is. Meanwhile I have so many commitments here in the riding, that I can't travel to Ottawa to see what actually happened.

Burst pipes, of course, come into many people's lives. It's just a house - and not the end of civilization as we know it. I only share this with you because the job of being an MP does not really allow for any reversals. It's hard to find time for a haircut, let alone trying to repair a house that smells like a bog.

The media lately has been full of reports of the RCMP investigating MPs because they used government phone lines to call their families back home. Proposals last week to change TV broadcasting in the House of Commons have prompted commentators to suggest how Members of Parliament don't spend enough time there. I read editorials every other day on how we are somehow ripping off taxpayers.

And I must confess, I've just about had it.

Yesterday, I opened a letter from a constituent complaining I'd sent him a Christmas card,

because that represented "government waste." But I bought my cards with my own money.

I received another letter this week complaining that I usually drive between my home and Ottawa - I should be using the VIA train instead, even though the train doesn't connect between the two. Every day I hear from people who say MPs are wrong to get a pension of 15 per cent of their wages after serving six years. But the average Member of Parliament only lasts four years and four months - never collecting a cent.

My friends, never assume that public office brings riches. It brings unending days and many personal challenges. I am proud and privileged to sit in the House of Commons and will forever recall these days with affection. Being part of your country's living history can in no way be diminished. As the "other" Mr. Turner said on TV recently, serving in Parliament is the "highest calling." I agree.

But don't believe all you read and hear. There is no country club on Parliament Hill. There's no glamor in hours on the 401, or in the airports or the hotel rooms. I see my colleagues in Ottawa at the end of a week - and the purple bags under their eyes tell the story. Then they're off to their ridings, to be "accountable" to those who sent them to the capital.

Over the past year I have learned a great deal, and I will carry that experience with me like a precious jewel. I have never felt so useful, or challenged. And I hope you can understand the pressures.

I may not get all the letters answered, or the phone calls returned.

Just blame it on the pipes.

I have written in the past of the rewards and frustrations of this job. I have not told you much about the personal and human side of being a Member of Parliament.

Some MPs choose to maintain one home, and camp out for a few days a week in Ottawa - in a hotel, or sharing an apartment. For example, the deputy prime minister, Don Mazankowski, lives with two other MPs in a three-bedroom apartment. Others sell their homes in the riding, move to Ottawa and then travel back regularly to attend to business where they were elected.

Dorothy and I made the decision to travel back and forth together after I was elected. We sold the farm outside Acton, and bought a home near my constituency office in Georgetown. Right after the election, we went to Ottawa and rented a townhouse, as I started work in the House of Commons, travelling back here on weekends.

Eight or nine months ago we bought an old semi-detached house in Ottawa, because over the course of four years it made more sense to own than to rent. It's certainly been an adjustment to live in a city for both of us, but this was the right decision. After the long days at work, it means a lot to me to come home to my wife. And to my dog.

We left Ottawa two days before Christmas, and drove back to Georgetown. Anytime the two of us return together, we drive rather than fly, because it's so much cheaper. MPs are given 64 return tickets a year to travel to their ridings, but anytime I use one of those tickets it costs the taxpayer about \$300.

A couple of days ago Dorothy called our next door neighbor in Ottawa, asking her to pick up our mail. The neighbor mentioned how cold it had been there, and that her basement had been flooded with water. A bit concerned, we

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80th birthday
By KAY WILSON
Norval Correspondent
NORVAL-Congratulations to Margaret Wrigglesworth, RR2 Georgetown, on her 80th birthday Dec. 27. The open house was held at her home when 150 family members, friends and neighbors called to offer their best wishes.
Her three daughters assisted in receiving the guests, Joan and her husband Robert Marshall, RR1 Milton, Marilyn and her husband Victor Hawtin of Calgary, and Diane and her husband Paul May of RR3 Rockwood. Her seven grandchildren and one great grandchild attended. Wayne and Lonnie, Carolyn and Patrick and Brenda and Sam, all of the Milton area, John and Gary of Calgary, and Tim and Sherry of Rockwood and great grandchild Tyler. Sister-in-laws Isobel Carney of Milton and Ruth Forgrave of Georgetown also enjoyed the party. Helping to serve were her nieces Doreen Carney, Thelma Eller and Sandra Homewood and neighbor Mary Wilson. A friend, Marion McPhail made the birthday cake.

50th anniversary
NORVAL-Congratulations to Francis and Ruth Thompson, RR2 Georgetown on their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 28. Dave and Joyce Anderson, RR4 Georgetown, entertained for the Thompsons to a family party, attended by Ruth's sister-in-law Eldred Anderson, Ray and Norma Anderson of Brampton, Don and Marlene Anderson of Nobleton, and Betty Jean and Clare Carberry of RR4 Brampton. Groomsman Fred Nurse of RR2 Georgetown also attended along with Art and Margaret McKane and Jim and Helen McKane as well as several great nephews and nieces. The family presented Ruth and Francis with a microwave oven.

Get well
NORVAL-Get well wishes to Margaret Russell of Norval who is convalescing at home following surgery for a cataract.
Get well wishes to Sam McClure of Georgetown, who is home from Peel Memorial Hospital, following a hip operation.

Pinegrove euchre
NORVAL-Pinegrove Community Euchre will be held on Jan. 8 at 8 p.m. at the school.

Best wishes
NORVAL-Get well wishes to Mrs. Ken (Velma) Ella of Hornby who is a patient in the Credit Valley Hospital for surgery on a plastic knee replacement.

Norval WI
NORVAL-Norval Women's Institute began the new year with an Agricultural meeting at the home of Jean May Jan. 4.
President Norine Van Leeuwen opened the meeting with a reading about Resolutions. Secretary Aileen Nixon read replies received to letters written by members regarding the Pioneer McNabb Cemetery. The name of Mrs. Edward Burk has been added to the Erland Lee Museum "In Memorium" book.
Two of the members will attend the W.I. Educational Workshop March 3 in Melville United Church, Fergus.
The Institute was alerted to a traffic problem in Hutonville that exists at Embleton Road and Mississauga Road. The Institute was sorry to hear of Jean Harrop's accident and that Laila Smith is ill. A speedy recovery is wished both ladies.
Continued on Page 14

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