

# MP to meet Mandela

**Garth Turner**  
MP  
Halton-Peel  
PROGRESSIVE  
CONSERVATIVE



Well, it's shaping up to be another one of those weeks.

In a few hours I'm off to the airport in Ottawa to greet Nelson Mandela, the black South African leader who is one of the most charismatic men in the world today. Mandela will be addressing Parliament this week, and I am looking forward to the experience of meeting him. These opportunities to come face to face with great men and women certainly make this job more interesting!

So do the constant crises in Ottawa. Meech Lake is in trouble again, as the constitutional accord grinds its way painfully through Manitoba. This week is it, friends. No matter how you feel about this bit of business, there are seven million people in Quebec expecting the deal to be passed by Saturday.

We have been agonizing over this constitutional reform for Quebec since the referendum in 1980. I don't know about you, but I'm totally Meeched out. This country has got to stop picking away at itself and get on to coping with the challenges of the future. The last time I looked we still had a growing debt and a worsening environment.

There's no question a lot of intolerant people sit on both sides of this French-English thing. French-only signs in Quebec are discriminatory. English-only resolutions in Ontario municipalities are ignorant.

Somewhere in the middle lies reason - and, left along, reasonable Canadians will find it. Meech must come and Meech must go. The country is too valuable to be submitted to this national stress.

Personally, these should be interesting days for me. This week, I am tabling in Parliament the report of the House of Commons committee I chair on the effects of GST on consumers. After two months of hearings, the conclusions are clear: Nobody knows for sure, when the GST replaces the existing federal sales tax, exactly what prices will do.

Some will rise, some fall, others stay the same. Carmakers told us a new car will be about \$800 cheaper. But realtors told us they fear higher house prices after the GST. Appliance makers said a fridge will be less. Retailers told us clothes and shoes will be more.

And everybody said the government was wrong if it led consumers into believing the feds could control prices or even properly monitor them. To do so would take a huge new bureaucracy and lots of tax dollars. So, the report will recommend that Ottawa spend only what's necessary to tell us as consumers what to expect after the GST comes in.

A year ago I felt differently - that there should be a strong-armed regulatory agency with the power to order prices rolled back if business people tried to pocket savings when the old tax came off. But not now. Today, after conducting these hearings, I think competition - especially in a weaker economy - will ensure those prices which should drop, will drop.

After being in Ottawa for about 18 months, the last thing I want to

see is another load of bureaucrats. The government has announced it will spend \$19 million on this proposed watchdog. I am recommending that amount be slashed. The government proposes to have this watchdog investigate complaints and let consumers think it would take action. I'm recommending it educate only, and not try to mess with the free marketplace.

We have enough government now. We have too many civil servants. We have too many bureaucrats who spend too much money trying to overly influence our lives.

If the GST's going to be a disaster, then let the disaster happen. If it's going to be an improvement, then that should happen. We don't need more of our tax dollars spent on a public relations exercise.

Naturally, the political gods may be somewhat upset at my report to Parliament. I am recommending the government reverse policy which it just announced a week ago. The feds, I will insist, got it wrong.

Like I said, this should be an interesting week.

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## St. Stephen's church full for Memorial Day

There was standing room only at St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Hornby, for the annual Memorial Day service on June 10. The church, located at Steeles Avenue and the Ninth Line, is a 153-year-old landmark which has been a spiritual home to many through the years, and has undergone many transformations as the congregation has gradually changed from being completely rural to now semi-urban.

Last Sunday, many former parishioners travelled up to two hours to visit the old church and pay their respects to family members interred in the cemetery. In spite of forecasts of

rain, history held true, and the sun shone briefly as the service concluded with a procession to the famous Lych Gate where prayers and hymns were offered.

The Rev. Margaret Murray officiated at the service, with Trev Jones, a priest-in-training, as Assistant, and Joy Hogarth, Choir Director and organist in charge of music. A fellowship time followed in the church hall, where a bountiful lunch was provided, and old and new members were able to mingle.

St. Stephen's is a friendly and welcoming place, with a dynamic and growing congregation, and the Sunday Service is at 11:15 a.m.

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