

Political Forum

Ottawa Report

House of Commons back in business

Well, the House of Commons is back to business this week and - with a ground war now in the Persian Gulf - that's probably a good thing.

I am taking back to Joe Clark the results of my Town Hall meetings. I'll be telling him that while many people in Halton-Peel are worried about the war, the majority are in support of Canada's active role in dealing with Saddam Hussein.

This week, of course, has a lot more news to it. This is budget week, when Michael Wilson tries to give us a roadmap of where the economy's going and how the feds will manage things. I am writing this column just before the budget is released, so I don't know now what Wilson has planned.

But I'll share with you what I have told him he should do: Freeze federal spending, cut back on transfer payments to the provinces, concentrate on reducing the deficit, limit civil servant salaries and expenses, make MPs fund their own pensions, link the GST to deficit reduction, and ignore the critics.

I hope he was listening to at least some of that.

Next week I'll do a budget scoreboard. And speaking of the budget:

Garth Turner

MP
Halton-Peel
Progressive Conservative



I'm hosting a Post-Budget Breakfast this coming Friday (March 1) to discuss what Wilson has done, and to get input from community business leaders. The event will take place at the North Halton Golf Club, and feature a panel of Chamber of Commerce members.

I'm pleased to report that the panel will include executives from Chambers in Halton Hills, Bolton, Burlington and Milton. I certainly look forward to their reaction, and their advice.

The admission price of \$10 gets you breakfast, and the complete budget package. Things get underway at 8 a.m. which is going to be no picnic for me. We have a vote on the budget in the House of Commons the night before - and then a five-hour

drive back with my car full of boxes of budgets. Ah, the perks of being an MP!

That same night, I'll be in Palgrave, to host a Town Hall meeting. The time is 7:30 p.m. and the location is the Palgrave Community Centre. Everybody is invited to come and have a go at me.

Once again, we'll be talking about the Gulf War, the economy and the budget, along with what on earth is going to happen to this country over the next few years.

I wrote last week about the entrenched attitudes on both sides of the "Quebec/Canada" issue. The dream merchants in Quebec are telling people they can be sovereign and still have all the benefits of being Canadian - like using Canadian dollars, Canadian passports and an economy that's strong because it's part of the Canadian economy.

That, of course, is not going to happen.

And I wrote about the dream merchants of the rest of the country who say, "let 'em go." Then they will tell you that nothing would be different if we lost a quarter of the population and a third of the economy and signalled the world that we wanted to go from being a member of the G-7 to being a provincial backwash.

That's not true, either.

There are no simple solutions to this one, and I'm going to need your help. I am sending out notices - I am not going to vote to let Quebec separate. I am going to do everything I can to make sure my country does not break apart, and my country includes Quebec. Period.

Comments?

Queen's Park Report

Consultation Paper on rent control

Rent Control Options A Consultation Paper

As I mentioned earlier this year, I serve on the standing Committee on General Government, the committee which has been holding hearings across the province for discussion on Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Residential Rent Regulation Act, 1986. The Ministry of Housing has just released its Consultation Paper on Rent Control Options in order to obtain additional comments on a long-term rent control system. The full paper runs to 70 pages and addresses nine major issue areas.

1. THE SCOPE OF RENT CONTROL COVERAGE - options on what to include under rent control and how to determine whether a unit is covered by the legislation.

2. PERMITTED ANNUAL RENT INCREASE - options on the TIMING and BASIS of an annual increase.

3. EXCEPTIONS to the permitted annual increase - whether increases above the guideline should be allowed and, if so, what should be allowed.

4. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES - how capital expenditures on repairs and renovations should be addressed.

5. MAINTENANCE - how to ensure maintenance standards.

6. RENT REDUCTION - options on tenant challenges of any increase, landlord/tenant agreements on what services and facilities rents should guarantee, and compensation for illegally charged rents.

7. RENT INFORMATION - options on a central data bank containing rent information (a rent registry).

8. DECISION-MAKING AND



Noel Duignan
Halton North
MPP
New Democratic Party

ADMINISTRATION STRUCTURE - options on dispute resolution systems, assistance to parties in dispute, enforcement and other related areas.

9. CONVERSION of rental properties - options on a system to regulate conversion, demolition and renovation of rental properties.

In presenting options for rent control, our government has three main goals. First, it wants to increase tenant protection against high rent increases and poor maintenance standards. Second, it wants tenants to have more say in the things that affect their units and buildings. Third, it wants rent control to be simple and efficient for both tenants and landlords.

To order a copy of the full consultation paper, call the following toll-free number: 1-800-461-6767. The Ministry has also produced a summary of the paper. These newsletters include a mail-back portion if you wish to comment on the options. Copies are available at my constituency offices in Milton and Georgetown. For more information about the summary, call 878-1729.

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