

Parliament Hill report



**Garth Turner MP
Halton-Peel**

Happy New Year! Happy tax cut! Hey, it may not be incredible in size, but it still counts.

Federal income tax is falling by \$1.8 billion, effective January 1. And business taxes are coming down as well - a 1% reduction in the tax rate on manufacturing and processing.

In all, Ottawa has made the decision to return more than \$2 billion (that's two thousand million dollars) to the pockets of Canadian

taxpayers this year.

This makes your MP happy. A sizable tax cut is exactly what I have been trying to achieve for some time.

It strikes me that lower taxes, less government and more free enterprise is exactly what will help the economy and get more people back to work.

Of course, all this comes at a cost. Wages in Ottawa have been frozen or cut for all civil servants and politicians. Government departments have been scaled back.

The military - despite its intense peacekeeping efforts - has seen its budget slashed. Unemployment benefits will no longer be paid to people who voluntarily quit their jobs without just cause.

There are people who bitterly oppose this kind of politics and economics. They feel Ottawa should spend more money in bad times, creating jobs despite a rising deficit.

Some think UI benefits are a divine right and the feds have no justification to limit them. Others

oppose the move on January 1 to end the universality of family allowance payments - the government will now target tax-free payments only to those low-income earners who need them.

I know there are people against this, because they write me letters and call to complain.

But I tell them this: I got into politics to fight for a better deal for the middle class. And to me that means less government, not more. It means an end to government cheques to everybody.

It means returning some of our hard-earned tax money, so we can spend it and help the economy. It certainly does not mean borrowing more, increasing the deficit, so politicians can create temporary, make-work jobs while the private sector suffers.

Over 80% of all the jobs created in this country come through the efforts of small business. So I support the tax breaks announced earlier this month by Finance Minister Don Mazankowski, and the improvements to small business loans.

True, he didn't go as far as I wanted - forcing the bank to meet

certain targets for lending to small businesses. But it's a start.

So, as the new year dawns, there is some hope that these governments cuts and lower taxes will help things get better.

We need more opportunities for people to work. We need an economic climate that makes people want to invest. We need more stores. We need more orders in our local factories. Above all, we need confidence is our own ability to succeed.

As I have written here before, Canada depends on trade three times more than the U.S. does.

Our high standard of living is financed largely by trade, because our small population of 27 million people can't do it. Luckily, we're good at it. Out trading surplus with

the Americans is swelling monthly.

But to keep it up, we have to be competitive. And being competitive means keeping taxes low.

So I have a plea to make to another government, another set of politicians. Premier Bob, please don't wipe out this \$2 billion federal tax cut with higher Ontario taxes. A tax increase in this province would stall the recovery and hurt all of Canada. It would send out the signal that Ontario wants more government, higher spending and is unwilling to do what everyone else has had to: Cut, cut, cut to survive.

I think middle-class Canada wants its politicians to back off, reduce overhead, return people their money and restore some faith in the future. If I've got that wrong, then you'd better let me know.

Letters Welcomed

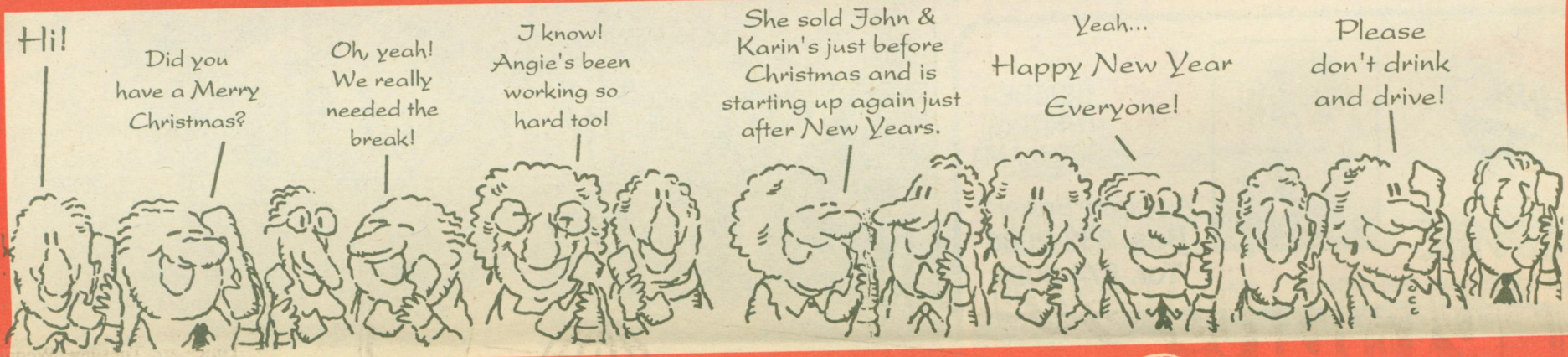
Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request.

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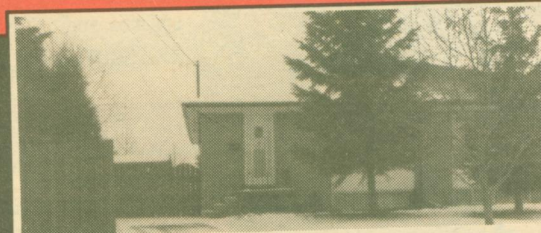
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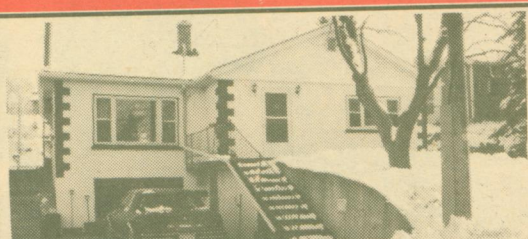
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