

# Turner says Liberal defector should do 'honourable thing'

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Newly-elected Halton MP Garth Turner is calling for Liberal defector David Emerson's resignation, saying he should run again for his seat as a Conservative in a by-election.

The local politician made the comments Thursday on Parliament Hill, where he and fellow Conservative MP Myron Thompson both said Emerson needs to go back to his constituents — who elected him three weeks ago as a Liberal — and look for their approval on his party change.

In speaking with The Champion Friday, Turner said he hopes the Vancouver MP will do the "honourable thing" and seek a by-election.

"I think anybody who is a member of the government should have to be elected by the people as a representative of the party that forms the government," he said. "How can people be accountable if they're not elected?"

Turner's call for action has caused a stir in Ottawa — something he discusses quite candidly in his on-line blog.

"This one MP came face-to-

face with the party machine in a series of unhappy meetings, including one tonight (Thursday) with the prime minister," he says on his Web site. "I think it is now safe to say my career options within the Conservative caucus are seriously limited."

He goes on to note that he's "expecting the Whip will be assigning me a renovated wash-room somewhere in a forgotten corner of a vermin-infested, dank basement in Ottawa. That should go well with my seat in the House of Commons that will be visible only during lunar eclipses."

While some on Parliament Hill may be less than impressed with Turner's suggestion of a by-election, he said he thinks "it's something people in Halton would expect."

Previously, Turner has publicly stated that Newmarket-Aurora MP Belinda Stronach should have put her name through a by-election process after crossing the floor to join the Liberal party.

Turner said he thinks Emerson was made international trade minister in Prime Minister Stephen Harper's cabinet because the Conservatives

don't have representation in British Columbia, and also because Emerson's a "pretty respected" business man.

"I can accept both of those (reasons). Reaching out for talent is never a bad thing," he said, but noted this needs to be done in a "democratic way."

While Turner's comments to The Champion on Emerson's cabinet appointment were relatively tame, he dubbed the decision a "questionable" one in his on-line blog, noting it "seemed to fly in the face of everything I had told voters about accountability and democracy."

Turner is now looking to get legislation put in place that would force an MP who crosses the floor to go back to their constituents for support. He noted if that doesn't happen he will introduce a private member's bill on the matter.

Emerson's party change has caused an uproar in his west coast riding and across the country, with several others besides Turner demanding he resign.

-With files from the TorStar News Service

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