

Turner quits Commons committee wants to lobby for middle class

By NORMAN NELSON

Call Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner a reborn politician. After a summer of "reflection and consultation" the often outspoken MP says he may have strayed from his original calling in Ottawa.

Thus, he has handed in his resignation as the chairperson of an important House of Commons committee and instead intends to devote more time to championing the cause of the middle class.

The former Toronto Sun business editor had been chairperson of the House Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

In Ottawa, he muses, there's a power structure, and sometimes "being part of it becomes more important than the reason that led you to go for public office."

The reason he initially ran for office had nothing to do with "becoming a career politician or a committee chairman. Instead, I wanted to work for common sense and middle class values in government."

He said he hasn't spoken with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney about his decision, but that Finance Minister Michael Wilson understood.

"I hope it's not taken the wrong way," he said. "I'm not running away or quitting the team. The issue is that I came here two years ago for certain reasons."

The Ontario election also had nothing to do with his

decision, he said.

"The decision was made before that," he chuckled. "It (the election result) showed people are cynical about politicians — and that's no surprise to anyone."

Almost wearily, he fielded questions about the controversial Goods and Services Tax, slated to come onstream in January.

"I don't have a problem with the basic concept," he said, adding that making "an invisible tax visible" will never win many points with the general public.

If he had his way, however, he said he'd have gone with a tax less than the proposed seven per cent but applied more widely.

Issues that his 'middle class' crusade will tackle, he promised include:

- A constitutionally guaranteed right to own private property.
- More federal involvement in waste management "because it's a national problem. We need to have a blue box program across Canada, and to stop burying our garbage for future generations to deal with."

- A tax freeze and easier income tax forms. "Let's move closer to a flat tax. Let's knock the provincial barriers down, and have free trade within Canada. Let's attack the deficit by selling more assets, like airports and the St. Lawrence Seaway and the post office."

None of these are currently government policy, he said, "but maybe that can change."



Garth Turner, MP, Halton-Peel



The Canadian Champion, Friday, September 21, 1990

Photo by JOHN WARREN

Bonjour

Stacey Adamson looks reasonably pleased to be back at school — or is she just making the best of the situation? Here French teacher Margeret Beaudette looks on at Robert Baldwin school as Stacey brushes up on her skills.

Georgetown man is found dead

The search for a 27-year-old Georgetown man ended tragically with the discovery of his body in Georgetown on Tuesday.

Mark Dodge was reported missing by his family on

September 10, apparently depressed over personal problems.

The family had appealed to the media in their search for him. Police believe he took his own life.

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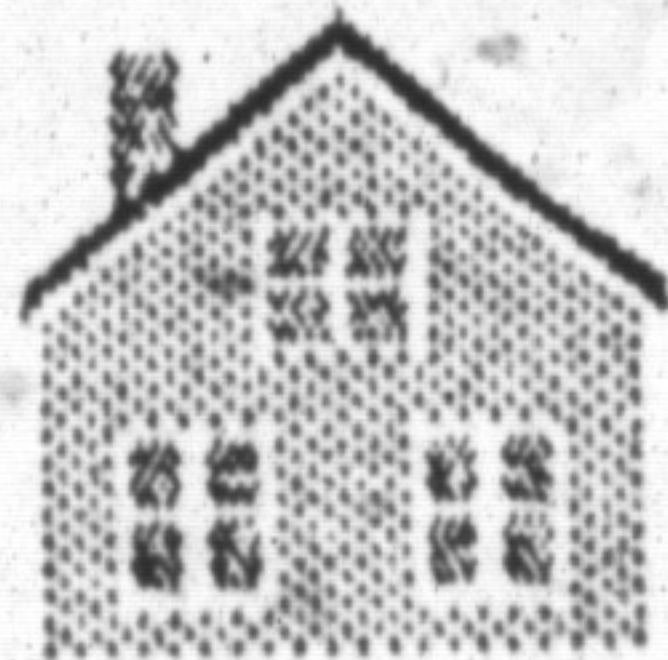
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