

MP Turner says he's unsure whether he'll run again

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By JANET BAINE
Special to The Champion
 Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner's name may not be on the ballot in the next election.
 "I don't know if I'm going to run again," he said recently. "I said at the beginning (of the term) if I haven't made a difference in four years, I'm not going to run again."
 So far, he feels he hasn't made a difference. "I'm still irrelevant and irrelevant."

is that they feel blocked out of the system. If we open up the system, they will have more ways to participate." Allowing referendums on some issues, for example, might make people feel more involved, he said.
 "I feel even as an MP, it's difficult for me to make as much of a contribution as I want," he said. "Political parties are a bit suffocating at times. There needs to be more room, more breathing space."

When it comes time to vote, MPs too often put up their hands in agreement with party policies rather than thinking independently, he said.
 At the same time, Mr. Turner isn't about to resign as a member of the Conservative party to become an independent. Without access to those who wield power, like Finance Minister Michael Wilson, he wouldn't be able to accomplish anything, he said.
 Mr. Turner has taken on the task of working for change from within the

party he represents, he said.
 "There's nothing wrong with lobbying for change from within." As a journalist (he was the business editor of a Toronto daily newspaper), he lobbied for change from outside the corridors of power. He says his former role as a media critic was easier than attempting to orchestrate change from inside the government.
 In his brochure, Mr. Turner advocates the following changes:
 • Guaranteeing a balanced budget

by law;
 • Creating a national waste management strategy;
 • Using Registered Retirement Savings Plans for downpayments on first homes;
 • Establishing elderly care tax credits;
 • Making the political process more accountable;
 • Encouraging volunteers by allowing them to deduct their expenses from taxable income.

Cynicism about politicians is not only affecting the majority of Canadians, it's also rubbing off on Mr. Turner.
 At a recent press conference he unveiled a brochure he is sending to each household in the riding, which includes Campbellville and other portions of rural Milton.
 The brochure outlines numerous changes he would like to see in Canadian government policy, some of which his Conservative government might have a hard time swallowing; a new approach to taxation, having more referendums so Canadians feel more involved in the political process and requiring governments to maintain balanced budgets.
 "I think that part of the cynicism that people have today about politics

NDP gov't withholds payments to municipalities

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 Savoline. "This is a shock to the system that is already inadequate."
 If the Province can't make its decisions by early in the new year, budgets at both local government levels will be delayed, Mr. Rinaldo said. "It's important we get some sort of announcement by January."
 In fact, Milton Mayor Gord Krantz pointed out, municipal governments may be forced to dip into their reserve funds to carry on with major projects if the situation isn't quickly resolved. Although the municipal government is essentially borrowing money from itself, legislation dictates

that municipalities pay "going rate" interest on such in-house debts, the Mayor said.
 Therefore, he added, municipal governments could be put in the position of having to finance in the short term various public works, at or close to market interest rates, while the Province in turn holds on to transfer payments and reaps the interest from those funds. "It's an old money game."
 Mr. Krantz suggested that the

provincial government should reimburse the municipalities for any interest paid out on short-term loans if there is a substantial delay in forwarding the transfer payments.
 The Province announced the delays Tuesday as treasurer Floyd Laughren unveiled the government's plan to combat Ontario's economic tailspin. The NDP government outlined a \$700 million capital works program aimed at battling rising unemployment through the creation of

20,000 temporary jobs. Mr. Laughren also plans on holding the provincial deficit at its current level, approximately \$2.5 billion.
 While the Province undoubtedly struggles through a difficult financial balancing act as the economy contracts, regional politicians can do little but wait, guess, and hope for the best. But at least one councillor, it appeared, had already abandoned such a hope. "We're going to get less," Savoline said. "Probably a lot less."

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