

Who wrote unsigned letter? ^{B-647}
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MP Blenkarn lashes back at phantom protest group

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By ED PICCININ
Staff Reporter

A Mississauga Progressive Conservative MP lashed back this week at an unsigned letter recently published in the press claiming a full withdrawal of local Tory support because of unfair tax reform proposals introduced by Finance Minister Michael Wilson in June.



MP DON
BLENKARN

The unsigned missive was published in a Toronto daily newspaper. It was part of the business editor's report attacking Wilson's white paper on behalf of some 4,000 respondents who have written to the paper criticizing the proposals.

The letter was said to have come from a group of "concerned Progressive Conservatives from Mississauga," who are "a group of middle class workers who are sick and tired of being screwed by our Progressive Conservative government."

Blenkarn said he, too, received the letter, but it was not signed. The chairman of the House of Commons finance committee also said he had spoken with the newspaper's business editor, "who knows who wrote it," but did not disclose the group to him.

"I read letters like this sometimes; sometimes I don't," Blenkarn said. "Then I file them — in a round green basket."

"Anyone who writes a letter and hasn't the (courage) to put their name on it is a person whose message I will not read or put much trust in," Blenkarn snapped Monday in a telephone interview from Ottawa.

The Tory MP said he felt the editor

was entitled to print the letter as long as he was satisfied that there was, in fact, a group behind it whom he had identified.

The group said it was "organizing to withdraw all services and assistance to all Progressive Conservative candidates, both federal and provincial, in all of Canada, effective immediately."

The letter criticized Wilson's proposed tightening of tax deductions on automobiles used for business purposes, as well as business lunches and changes to capital gains deductions.

Blenkarn says he won't be pressured by some phantom organization into pushing him one way or another on tax reform recommendations that his finance committee is putting together for the government.

But he said he's "not one to deny there is lobbying, or to disregard it."

Some 250 submissions have been made on Wilson's white paper to date, Blenkarn said, adding that he expects a deluge to arrive on the final date, August 18, from major tax research institutes and large business organizations.

He expects the finance committee's recommendations to the government will show some changes that reflect the business lobby.

"The automobile thing is patently unfair," Blenkarn said. "There's no question we may have to make changes."

He also admits that the letter may reflect "a certain amount of unrest over this government and tax reform, and there are obviously some who are disappointed in me and the government."

Taking it all in stride, the Tory MP said, "It's one of the unfortunate things that go along with being in government."