

# the HERALD

Home Newspaper of Halton Hills - Established 1866

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## Car owners beware

The latest provincial budget seems to be taking a stab at those who are reliant upon their cars.

Residents in what is termed the Greater Toronto Area, of Durham, Peel, York and Halton Regions, as well as Metro Toronto, are being slammed with an incapacitating \$90 fee to renew their licence plate stickers.

And fuel will take its second major hike in less than a month as the second governmental budget takes aim at Ontario taxpayers.

But the personal attack on car owners who rely heavily on their vehicles for transportation hurts. The provincial government is assuming that anyone living in the GTA has access to reasonable transportation.

The new taxes, they say, would reduce the number of cars burning fuel and wearing out tires (which pile up in landfill sites.)

Here in Halton Region, especially in North Halton, there are a great number of people relying on their cars for transportation into larger urban areas.

We pay taxes to maintain our roads to make them driveable, we pay subsidies to GO transit and VIA rail to facilitate train travel, and now we are forced to carry a debt load for not living in an urban area.

Making the assumption that the Greater Toronto Area residents don't need private transportation is erroneous as almost anyone living in almost all of Mississauga, Brampton, much of Durham, and all areas of Halton can tell you.

Ontarians will pay a \$5 tax per tire. They will face increased gas hikes and they will pay through a manufacturer's tax for having a car that burns an "unreasonable" amount of fuel.

But there is no concession for those who live in rural areas. They have no choice but to pay the price or exercise the option of living in an urban centre where they could rely on large and frequent transit systems.

But that's not why people came to Halton Hills. Those who weren't born here came to escape crowded urban centres and to bring up children in a better environment.

And now the very people who made Metropolitan Toronto a less-crowded place are paying for it on the drive to work.

## Bang-O-Rama is a bang!

### Staff Comment

Paul Svoboda  
Herald Sports Editor

You've heard it said before: "Who doesn't like a fair?"

While the annual Optimist Bang-O-Rama may not be, in fact, a full-fledged fair, it is the closest thing we've got until fall. And isn't it great to enjoy all the best attributes of a fall fair in balmy spring weather?

Walking around the Fairgrounds on Monday, taking in my second Bang-O-Rama, I couldn't help but harken back to my own adolescent days.

Heading straight for the food stand to buy my hot dog - with tons of fried onions - I breathed in deeply of the fun-filled atmosphere.

The midway rides, games of chance and skill, the good old tug-

o-war, curios and art shows.

They're all there. Add modern additions like truck-pulls and radio-operated model car races and you've just about covered everyone's tastes.

Then, of course, the smell of barbecued chicken in the air and to top it all off in proper Victoria Day fashion - fireworks.

It all spells fun and it surely must provide a thrilling benchmark for local kids who realize with the coming of Bang-O-Rama there's only one month left of school!

But perhaps most importantly, while we're busy eating hot dogs and having loads of fun, the Optimists are raising much-needed cash to fund their many worthwhile community projects - such as the anti-drug C.H.I.C.K.E.N. Club.

As one of the Optimist faithful manning the gate told me Monday, "We can always use more money, there's so much to do."

Here's to Bang-O-Rama.

## Member is "howled down" after hitting raw nerve



### Queen's Park

Derek Nelson  
Thomson News Service

TORONTO-You know when a member here has hit a nerve with his question. The place erupts.

Progressive Conservative Don Cousens, who hails from the northeastern border of Toronto, did that this week with a very pertinent question about the use of French in the legislature.

In the best Liberal and New Democratic Party traditions of free speech, he was howled down.

The effect was rather devastating on Cousens personally, as he floundered around trying to defend himself from accusations of being a bigot, prejudiced, and so on.

But then, when people don't want to debate an issue on its merits, they invariably resort to personal abuse.

Much of the media played along, naturally, in that their reports suggested Cousens was objecting to the use of French in the

legislature.

He was not. As a courtesy, questions and speeches have been recognized here in all languages. That's fine with Cousens.

Instead, he was asking about bilingualism, which is the official substitution of French for English on an equal - and interchangeable - footing in any and all activities of government.

In a departure from tradition, Deputy Speaker Jean Poirier has been using French rather than English to conduct routine business from the chair.

"What is the precedent for (this) on an on-going basis?" Cousens asked on a point of order, noting that Ontario remains "primarily an English-speaking province."

Cousens had his own suspicions.

"I have a sense that there is a movement towards making (Ontario) an officially bilingual province... and that is the basis upon which my concern was expressed," he said.

Liberal House Leader Sean Conway really confirmed Cousens' fears when he responded:

"This legislature quite properly recognizes two official languages.

"I have been particularly pleased by the way in which you (Poirier) have been conducting yourself over the past few days by

introducing French as the first language on a number of occasions.

"Speaking from the government's point of view, we are absolutely in support of that, because it recognizes a central reality of this country."

What that central reality is he didn't say, but presumably he meant the equal constitutional status of the French and English languages in Canada.

Yet, Queen's Park is not Ottawa. Toronto is not the seat of the federal government. This is a legislature for a province where barely 282,000 out of 9.1-million people speak only French at home - and most of them also know English.

Ironicly, Conway's "central reality" doesn't apply in Quebec, where English is never heard in the legislature. No Speaker in Quebec would dare give English precedence such as Poirier gave French here.

It is true that the Ontario legislature made English and French equal languages by statute in 1986 (what Conway means by calling both of them "official languages"), although many people at the time thought the action mainly symbolic.

HOW YOUR BUDGET DOLLAR IS SPENT....

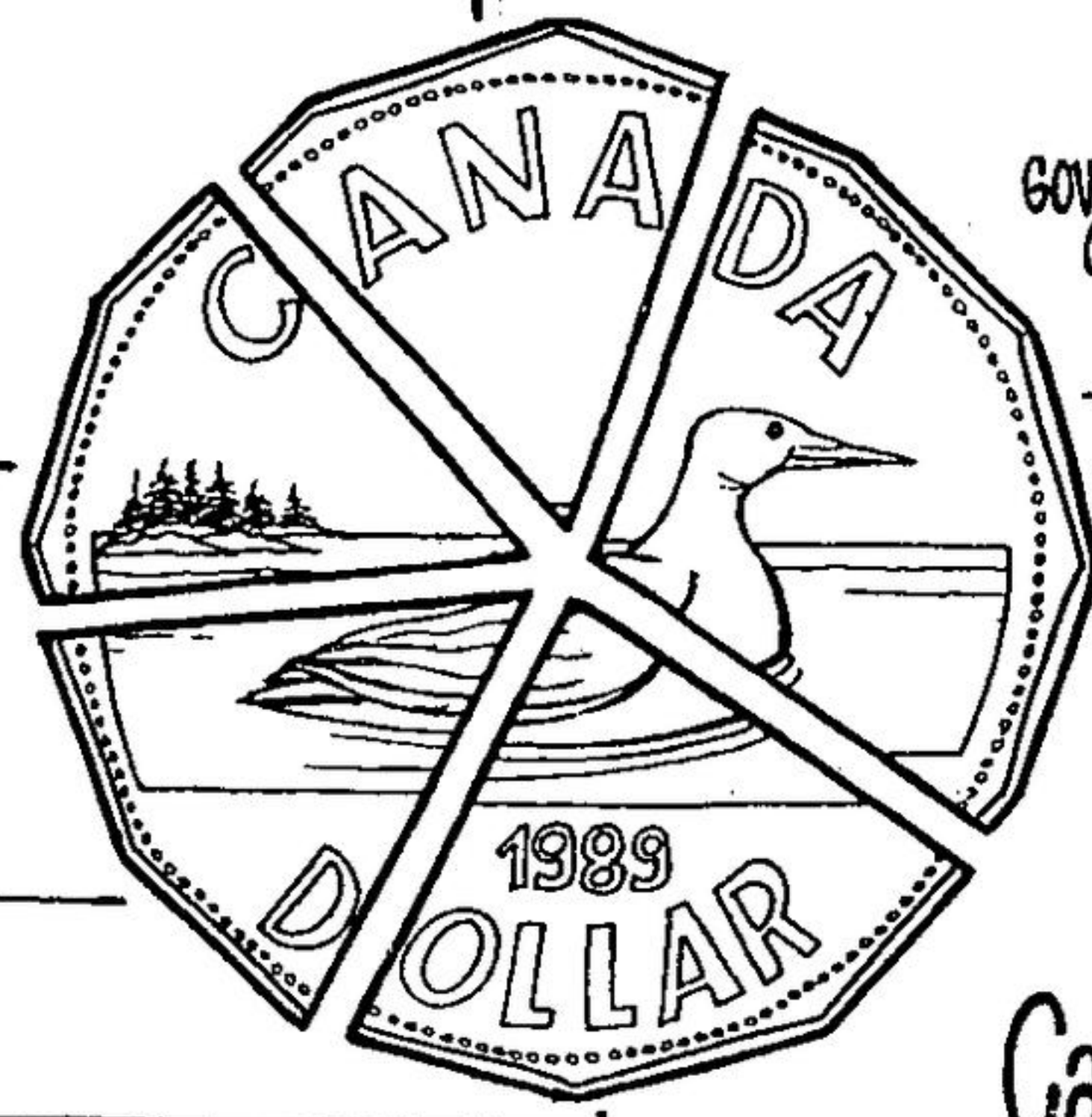
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Canada

## Collapsing real estate market hits



### Your Business

Diane Maley  
Thomson News Service

A collapsing real estate market claims its victims in waves.

First it drowns the speculators, people who snap up half a dozen houses hoping to flip them over at a profit.

Then there are the people who get caught trading up - buying bigger, better houses, confident they can sell their existing ones with no trouble. Having thrown caution to the wind, they suffer when the market turns. Often, they end up with two heavily mortgaged houses.

The third wave hits the builders of new homes. It is this group that is floundering now. New home sales tumbled by 50 per cent in the Toronto area last month, hard on the heels of a similar drop for resale homes.

Nation-wide, housing starts slipped 10.6 per cent in April, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. numbers show.

Builders are putting on a brave

face. The drop in sales was expected, says Frank Giannone, president of the Toronto Home Builders Association. Unlike the resale market, new house prices will not drop, Mr. Giannone says. "The average price for new homes has never dropped, year-over-year, even during periods of recession."

What do you expect the leading builder spokesman to say? "Actually, this is an ideal time to buy a new house," Giannone adds optimistically. Maybe.

### PRICES MISLEADING

When it comes to prices, it is difficult to get a handle on what is really happening. In the Toronto area, the average house price edged lower in April, but that's a meaningless number.

Sellers have had to slash up to 25 per cent off their asking prices, but the cut is more apparent than real. They may still be selling their houses for more money than they would have last month or last year.

The weakness is spreading. Recent reports show house sales tumbled in the overheated West Coast market last month. Even so, one housing analyst believes the British Columbia market will fare better than most of the country because people are still flocking to the province.

Newfoundland, too, could prove resilient, helped by the anticipated

development of the Hibernia oil field.

### DEFAULTS SEEN

Meanwhile, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. is fattening its mortgage insurance fund in preparation for a wave of defaults that could come when the economy finally slows in 1991 or 1992.

A recent CMHC study shows the average new house is sitting empty for 6.7 months, which is a long time. The nation-wide average is the highest since the 1982 recession. Most of the empty homes are in Quebec; as well, the numbers may be distorted by the fact that most southern Ontario homes are sold before construction begins.

The only good news seems to be on the lending front, where mortgage rates are easing after a frightening run-up early in the year. At Canada Trust, for example, four- and five-year mortgage loans cost 12 per cent. That compares with 13.5 per cent for the banks' prime business lending rate, a bellwether short-term rate.

For now, short-term rates are being helped by the strength of the North-American dollars, which have been soaring against their European counterparts and the yen. Whether they are about to begin a long, steady descent remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, the next move in interest rates will be down.