

# FWIO rural survey

## Rural Child Care Survey

Who looks after the children while the parents work is a problem faced by many families. However, when you live in rural Canada the problem is far greater. If by a miracle there is public child care available it is often many miles away, or the family needs it for unconventional hours e.g. during milking or just while the crop is being harvested.

In 1990 Federated Women's Institutes of Canada undertook to do a survey of the care of rural children using a grant from Child Care Initiatives Fund of Health and Welfare Canada. The results of this long awaited survey are now out. This is the only survey that has looked at all the rural areas in all the provinces at one time. The Ontario part of the survey was conducted by Federated Women's Institutes of Canada who have always been very concerned about rural child care.

In 1984 FWIO undertook the first pilot project on rural child care. FWIC undertook the survey with the hope it would assist all levels of government to draft policy and legislation while keeping the rural family in mind.

The survey revealed that respondents who use child care services are generally satisfied with the quality of care their children receive but it became evident that far more spaces for rural children are needed.

The survey reinforced the point that the need for rural child care fluctuates with the seasons with peak demand in the four summer months.

The report states that rural people are accustomed to solving their own problems and developing low cost, workable solutions. However often government restrictions get in the way. An example was given of a local community hall which passed all regulations for community use for groups such as Cubs, Scouts and 4-H and Sunday School but was not suitable for Child Care.

Among the recommendations of the survey are:

- That Municipal, Provincial and Federal agencies must develop separate policies designed to fit the special needs of rural families.

- That Short-term care costs incurred when a stay-at-home parent assists in operating a family farm be recognized as employment expenses by Revenue Canada.

- That Provincial governments examine the feasibility of using Farm Labour Pool offices as central registration for child care givers, especially during peak periods.

- That consideration be given to portable child care facilities that could be temporarily moved to areas of high need during peak periods.

- Universities and Colleges with ECE programs consider establishing co-operative education work terms to coincide with the peak demands for child care in rural regions.

- Incentives be given to rural service groups and volunteer organizations to encourage them to set up and operate before and after school drop-in programs for school children under the age of 12.

- As there is a shortage of child care spaces in rural areas, spaces must not be lost because of rigid adherence to overly strict regulations.

- Rural workplace care spaces be encouraged in such rural facilities as hospitals, schools, and light industries.

FWIC is the only rural women's group with branches in all the provinces of Canada and the results of this survey can really be said to represent the feelings of rural Canada. Only 20% of those filling in the survey were WI members, the rest were a cross section of the rural public.



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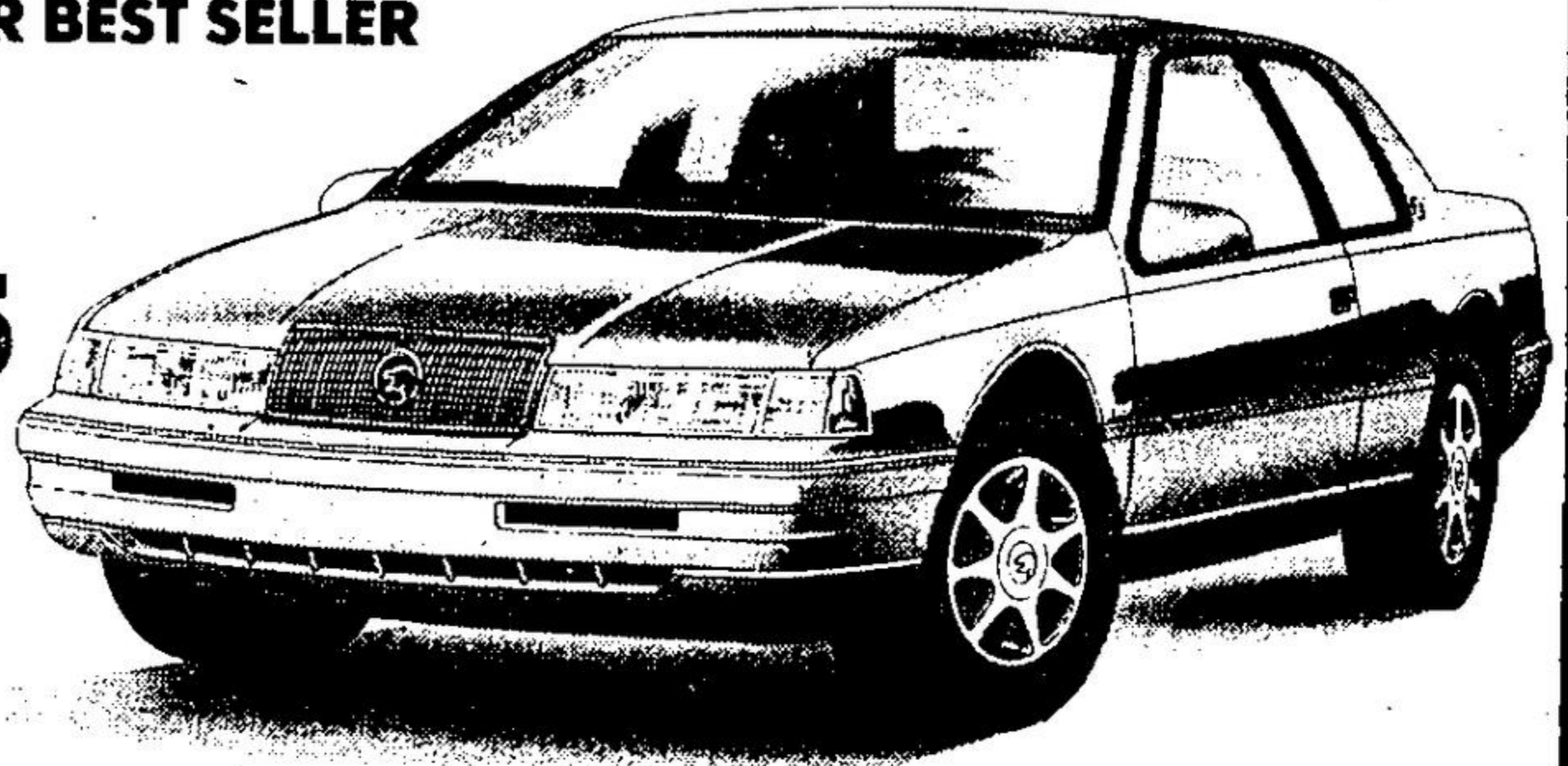
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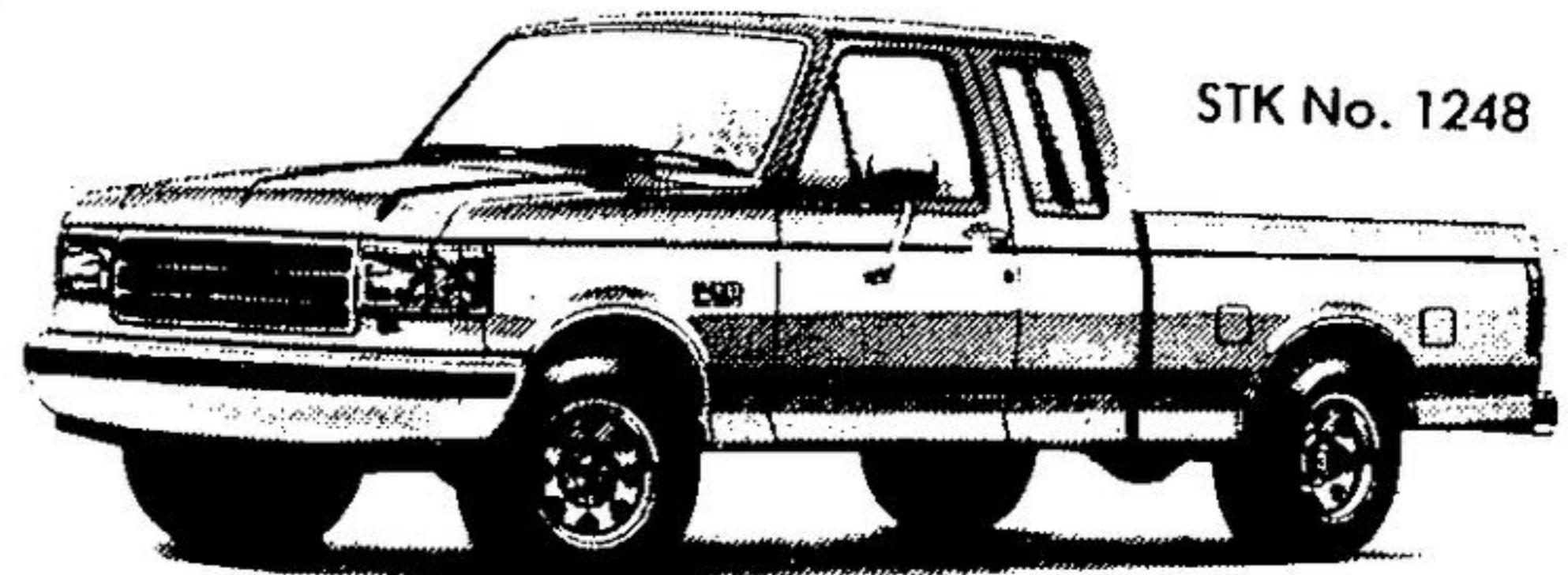
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