

Consumers warned of unscrupulous frozen food salesmen

People trying to put the freeze on grocery bills should be wary of unscrupulous frozen-food sellers, says Marilyn Gurevsky, of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Seniors, the consumers most inclined to prefer the convenience of at-home shopping, are considered at greater risk from dishonest door-to-door vendors.

High food prices have led many to seek ways to stretch the purchasing power of their dollars. One way of reducing costs is the frozen-food plan, which became popular in the early 1980s. Many consumers continue to participate in such plans, and are pleased with the results.

Unfortunately, unethical promoters are still in operation across the province.

In a recent case, says Gurevsky, two salesmen used high-pressure sales tactics to convince a Mississauga woman to buy \$240 worth of meat, despite the fact she told them she rarely ate it. They told

her they couldn't accept a cheque, then persuaded her to let them take her to the bank, where she made a cash withdrawal.

A few hours later they returned, and sold the same woman \$687 worth of meat and other frozen foods. A 17-year old freezer, complete with dents, dirt and rust, was included in the deal.

They were convicted of engaging in unfair business practices.

One of the offenders had been found guilty of similar charges just four months earlier.

When a frozen-food salesperson appears on the doorstep, consumers can best protect their interests by asking themselves the same questions they would in a store.

Ontario's Consumer Ministry encourages people to make sure they know all the facts before they sign on the dotted line. But if


you enter into an agreement and then decide it's not for you, all is not lost. It's possible you can benefit from a "cooling off" period, provided by the Consumer Protection Act.

This legislation applies to door-to-door sales contracts valued at \$50 or more, for which payments, performance of services, or delivery of goods will take place in the future. If the deal has effectively been completed -

full payment was made with cash, a cheque or a credit card and the product or service has been provided - the contract cannot be revoked.


Brochures on the Consumer Protection Act, Business Practices Act and many related issues are available free from the Consumer Information Centre at 555 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario M7A 2H6, Tel. (416) 326-8555 or (toll free) 1-800-268-1142.

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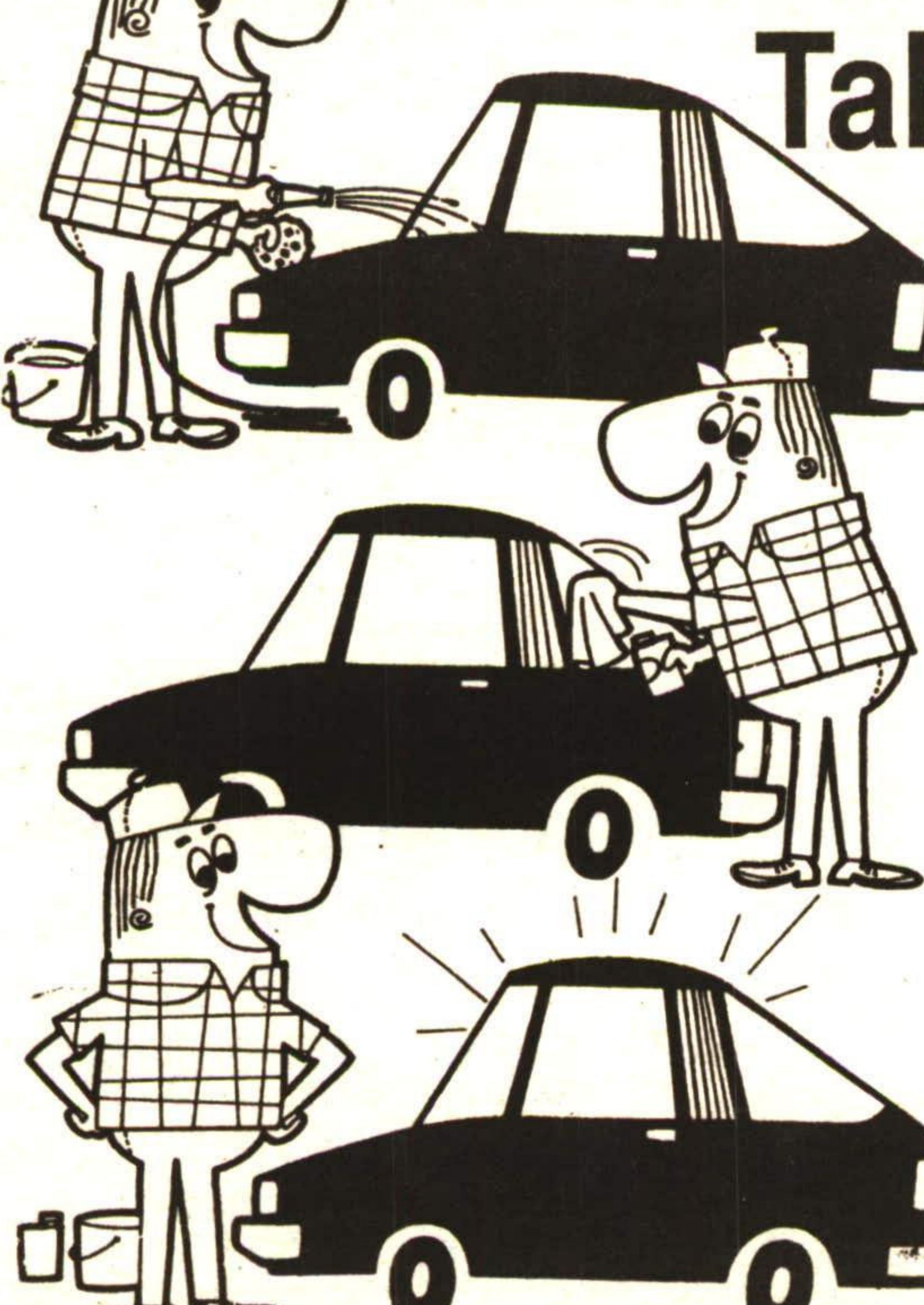
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