

Throne speech is just the beginning

The Throne Speech should be seen as the culmination of a three-step process that began when the election campaign was called.

First was the election itself, when we tried to be as clear and straight as we could about the differences between us and the other two parties. We represent, to a significant extent, a different Ontario from that of the Liberals and Conservatives, and we campaigned on some of the important issues that distinguished us.

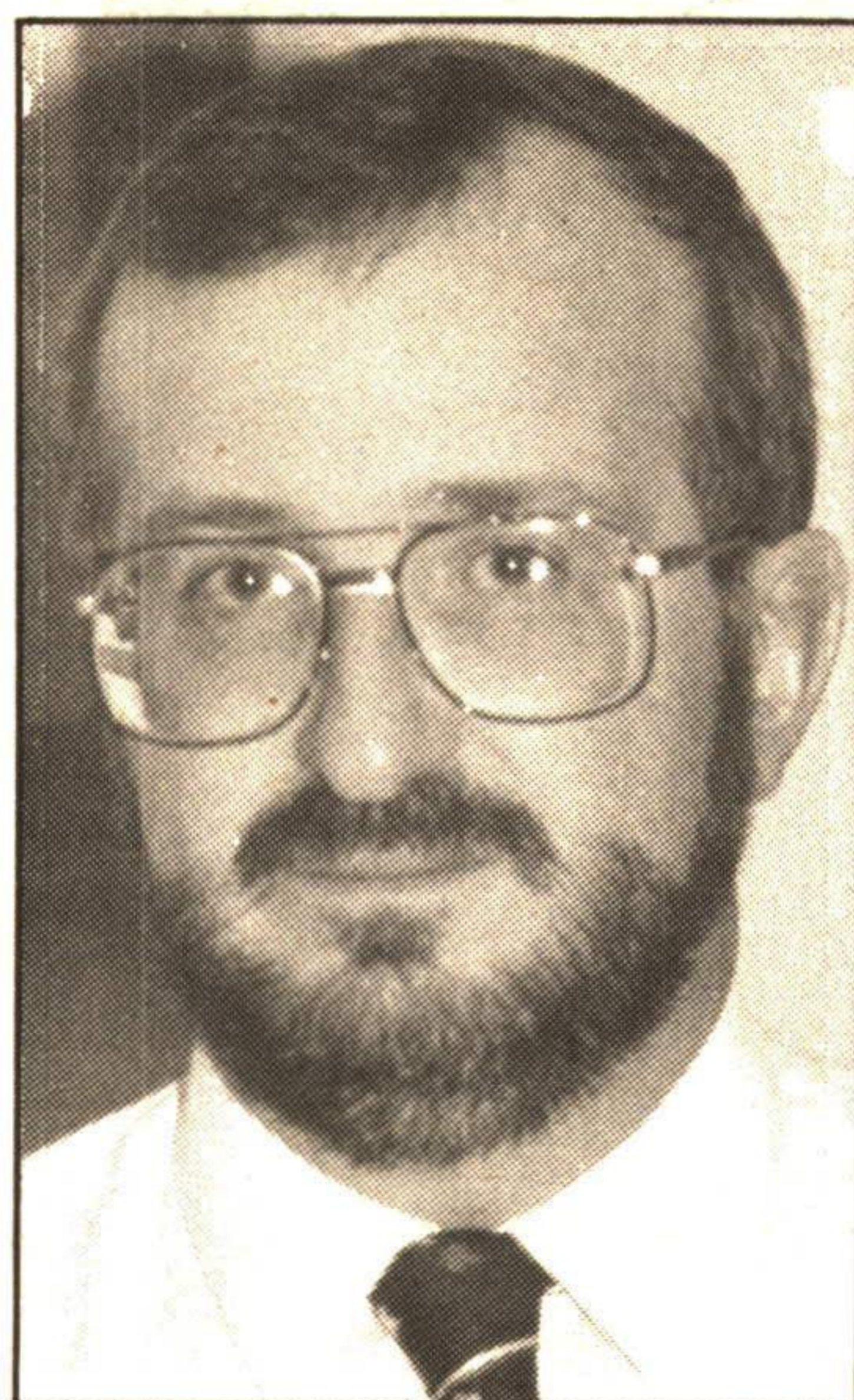
In particular we campaigned on the general proposition that the government was governing too much in the interests of the rich, the privileged, the large corporations, and those who routinely had easy access to the traditional parties at Queen's Park. We said we would govern in the interests of working people, ordinary folks, those who were the most vulnerable, those whose voice rarely was heard within the world of government.

Once elected, and throughout the past two months leading up to the Throne Speech, we've repeated these major campaign themes, but in the somewhat different context of being the government. We've repeatedly made it clear that our government's main agenda is to help forge for ordinary Ontario citizens a more decent and more just society. We've also said that we want to open the doors of government to those who have been kept out until now.

At the same time, recognizing the economic realities of Ontario especially in a time of recession, we've acknowledged that it's not possible to deliver on all our commitments as quickly as we'd like, and we've

Queen's Park Report

By NOEL DUIGNAN
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been straight about admitting this. We've also made clear our understanding that the private sector must remain the main engine of the Ontario economy, and have invited the business community to work in partnership with our government on any number of initiatives from mitigating the effects of the recession to meeting the environmental crisis.

We've repeatedly said that we will show that we know how to run the store efficiently, but we'll run it in the interests of all our citizens, not our most privileged ones. Politics, after all, is about far more than what each of us can get from the state and each other; it's about what we owe each other as well.

Our Throne Speech embodies these and other main themes. Although the realities of government mean we can't go as far or as fast as we'd like on some important reforms, and though some of our friends will be disappointed, I think this is a pretty good start.

I've outlined some of the key agenda items of the Throne Speech as follows:

- We intend to fulfill our promises, but we are highly dependent on the economy;
- We are creating a \$700 million package to fight the recession and to create jobs;
- We will introduce a Safe Drinking Water Act to set standards for water treatment;
- We are placing a freeze on

new nuclear power development;

- We will introduce an Environmental Bill of Rights in this session to give individuals more control over their environment;

- We will launch a "Fair Tax Commission" to recommend long term reform of the tax system;

- We will introduce, in the spring, a Bill to reorganize the delivery of car insurance to the driving public;

- We will implement social welfare reforms to "address the shame of child poverty in the midst of affluence";

- We will set clear standards of behavior for Ministers, MPPs, and senior government officials, and we will introduce new conflict of interest legislation at both provincial and municipal levels;

- We will establish measures to ensure more fairness in appointments to government agencies, boards, and commissions.

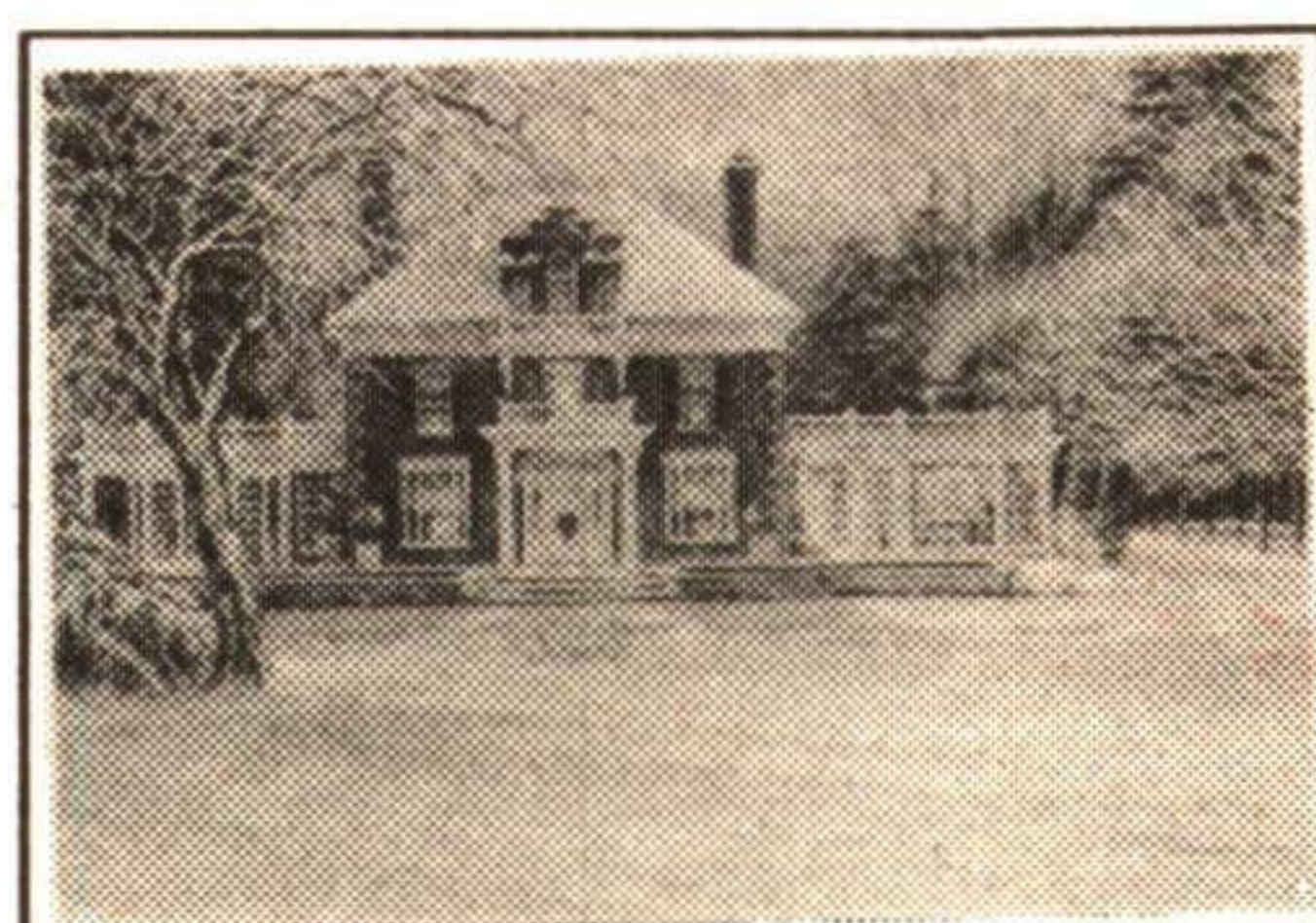
A Teddy convention



Gale Shields of Halton Hills was one of several vendors on hand at the Annual Huttonville Lions Club Craft Sale at Huttonville Public School. Gale's selection of handmade Teddy Bears was a hit at the sale.

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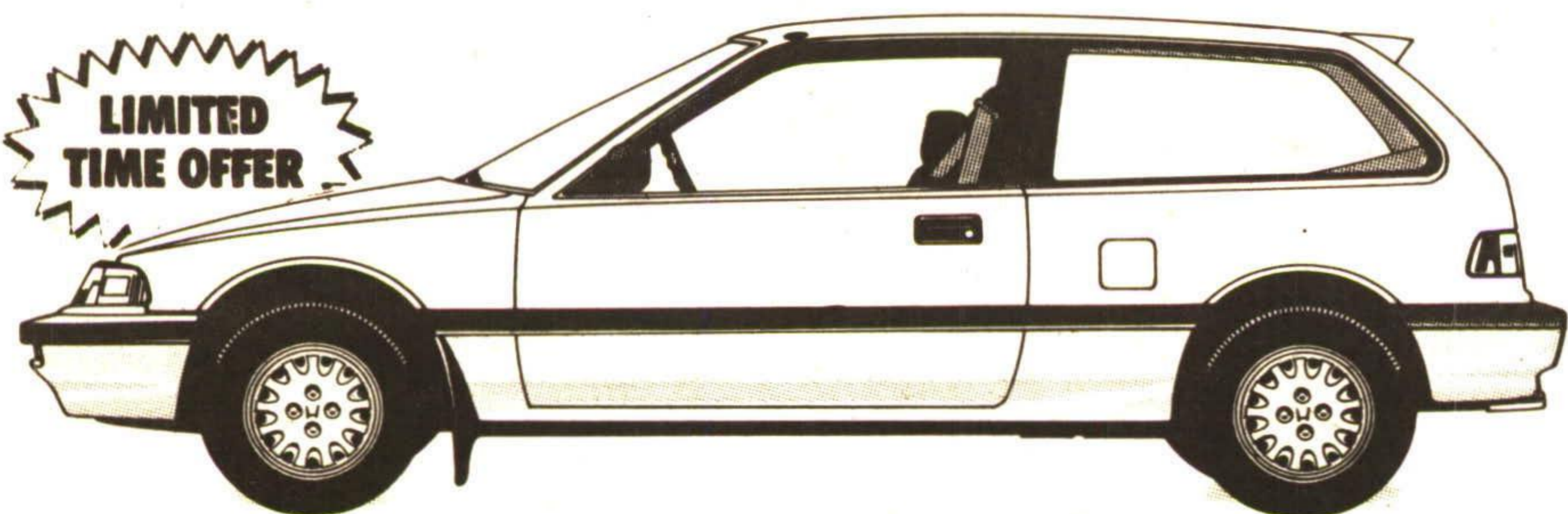
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