

Welfare caseload up over '92

Year-end figures show Halton Region dispensed more than \$28 million in welfare cheques in 1992, an increase of approximately 35 per cent over 1991.

While that's not good news, it, at least, is not as bad as regional welfare director Janet Menard had anticipated. The \$28,041,130 is "slightly less than we had budgeted. We had budgeted \$29.6 million," she

said Tuesday's region meeting.

Menard also noted that Halton dealt with 40,145 welfare claims in 1992. That too was "slightly under" the expected 42,000 cases. Each case may represent an entire family. The accepted average is that one case equals two people on welfare.

Welfare costs are shared among the regional, provincial and federal governments. Halton pays 20 per

cent of the bill in many instances, while the other two governments tiers split the remainder. Because there are various funding exceptions to the ratio, Halton in fact only paid \$4.3 million for welfare in 1992. But that was \$180,000 over the approximately \$4.1 million regional government had anticipated, Menard acknowledged.

From January of 1992 to year-end the number of monthly claims only climbed 9 per cent, from 3,337 cases to 3,611.

"That's not a bad increase in a year that was economically pretty poor," said Menard.

In terms of the unemployment that has led to massive increases in welfare claims, Menard was guardedly optimistic. "We're starting to see some movement in the labor market."

The 40,145 cases in 1992 represent an increase of approximately 34 per cent over the 29,983 in 1991. In 1990 Halton recorded 17,396 welfare claims.

Halton's caseload crept up slightly from 3,337 in January of 1992 to 3,452 in March, then began a slow decline from April to bottom out at 3,142 in September. Since then the numbers have been moving up again. The 3,611 cases in December represented a new high.

Business not closing

Park Thermal on Todd Road in Georgetown isn't going anywhere.

In a recent issue of the Independent/Free Press, a legal notice appeared announcing the dissolution of Park Thermal Ltd., leading to confusion by many that the company was closing down.

But Brian Reed, president of Park Thermal Canada Ltd. explains assets were bought from the previous management and a new name was incorporated. Park Thermal Canada Ltd, a manufacturer of industrial heat treating furnaces and ovens, is a separate entity from the previously named company, Park Thermal Ltd., which placed the notice of dissolution.

The 40,000 sq. ft company, bought by Reed on May 20, 1992, is doing quite well. "Things are quite hectic here," said Reed. "There's a lot of work on hand."

Reed, anxious to clarify any misconceptions, said he's received several calls from concerned buyers and also from residents of Georgetown who know of his business.

"People have phoned to ask me why we're closing," said Reed, "but we're not. In fact we're doing just the opposite."

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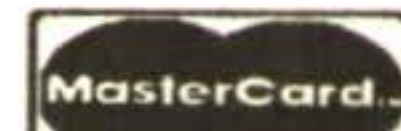
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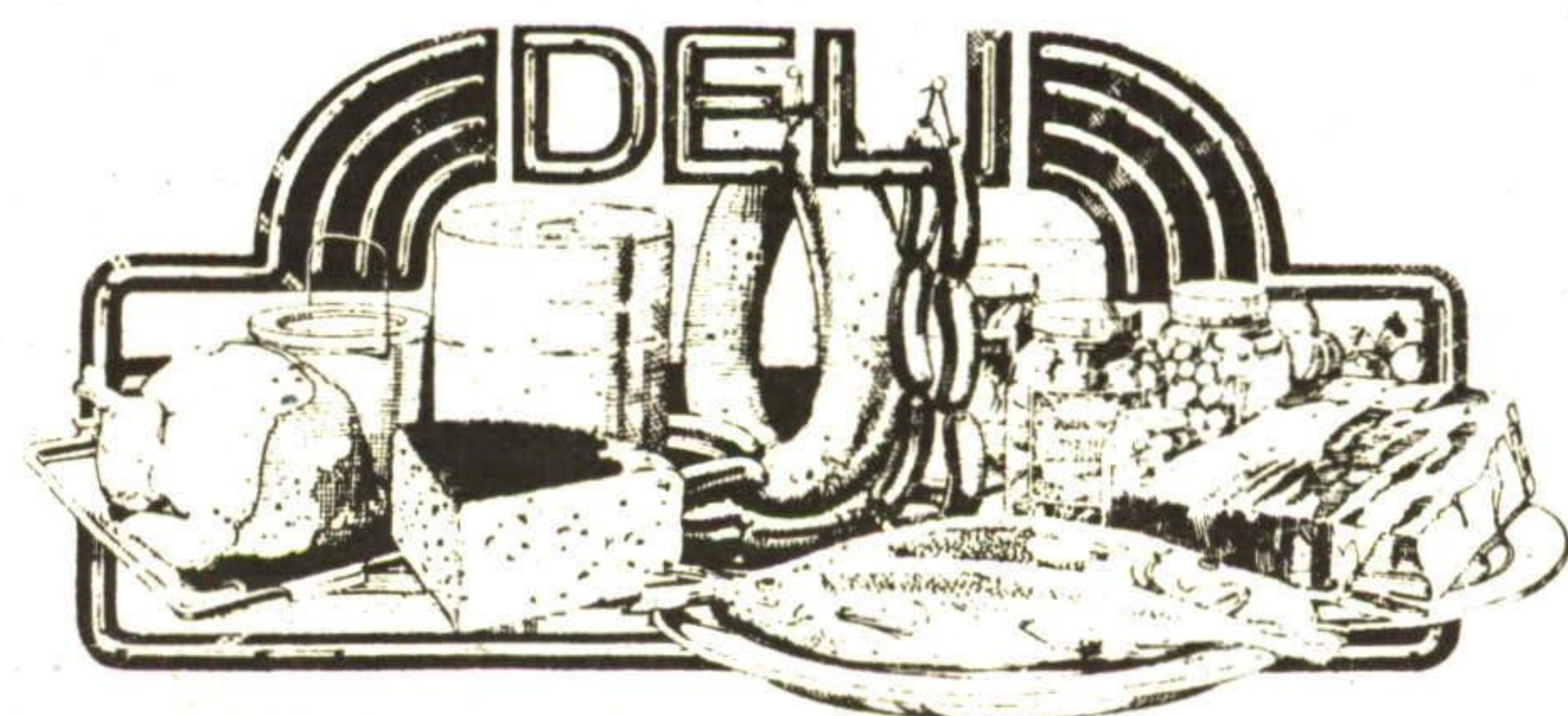
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