

# Manning predicts surge for Reform Party

By JANET BAINE  
Staff writer

It's not a question of whether Preston Manning and the Reform Party will become the Official Opposition in Ottawa, but when.

"We're headed towards becoming the Official Opposition. The question is just when, what point in time," Manning said after making a presentation to business people and Reformers at the Brampton Flying Club recently at lunch. The leader of the federal Reform Party said once a resignation has been handed in from Bloc Quebecois leader, Lucien Bouchard, (who is leaving for provincial politics), the Reform Party will take action. Manning believes the Liberals would prefer to have the Bloc Quebecois as Official Opposition, so he expects his move won't go unchallenged.



PRESTON MANNING

He expects at least one byelection in Quebec and one in Labrador and is hoping that the Labrador riding might switch to a Reform representative.

This was one of 100 meetings Manning has had since September, when he began traveling across the country. This week he was also in Hamilton and St. Catharines, but headed home to Calgary after his stop in Halton North.

About 90 people, including

members of the Halton-Peel Reform Party, some local business people and some high school students signed up for the luncheon, which cost \$15 per person, said Dick MacDuffee, the Reform candidate in the last federal election. It wasn't a fundraiser, but intended to appeal to a broader range of people.

MacDuffee said he was pleased with the turnout and hopes the Reform Party will be successful in becoming the Official Opposition.

Manning said he thinks that people who support the Conservative party provincially have thrown their support behind the Reform Party federally.

"We have a good base in Ontario. We have to break through in Ontario and in a big way," he said, adding he thinks this will happen in the next federal election. "In Ontario many people are saying let the Reform Party be the vehicle at the federal level, but the Conservatives at the provincial level."

Bob Malcolmson, a Georgetown resident who is a policy advisor for the Brampton board of trade, and longtime Tory supporter who attended the function, said he is doubtful this will happen.

"I don't know where he gets his facts. I don't see the support waning that way," he said.

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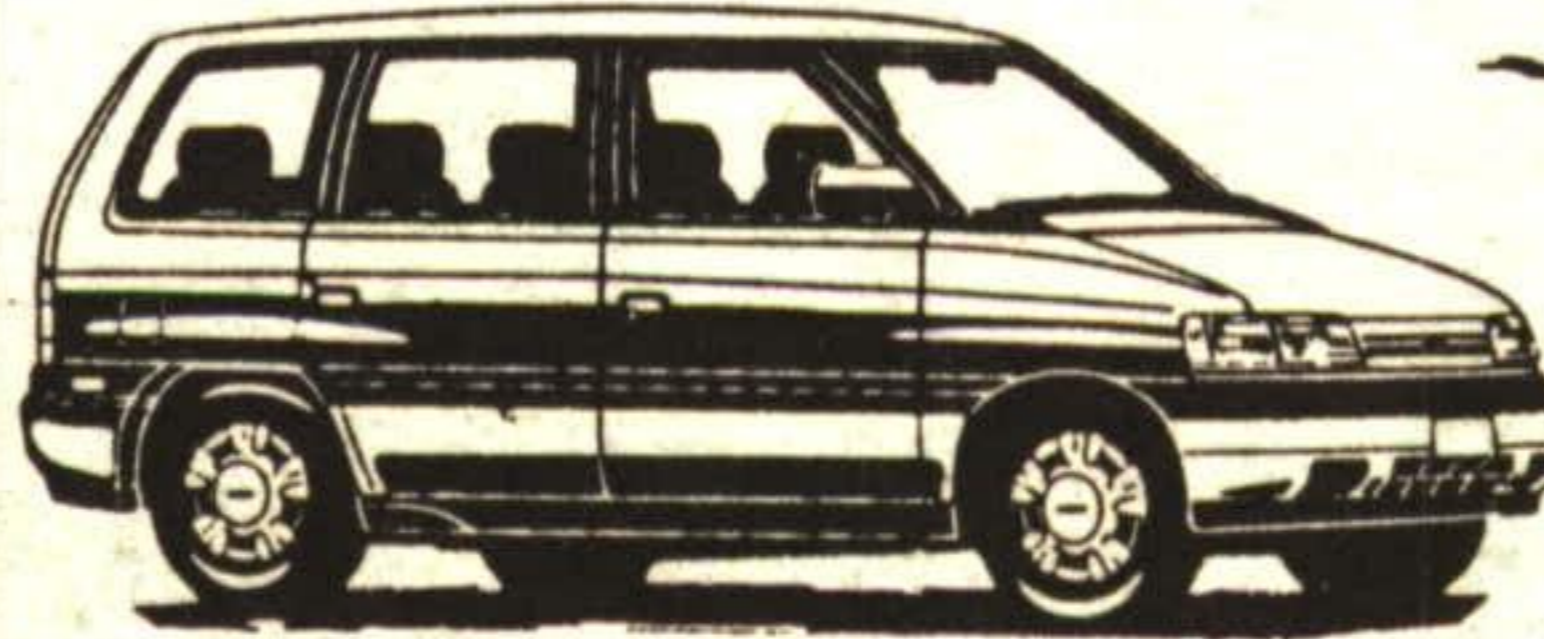
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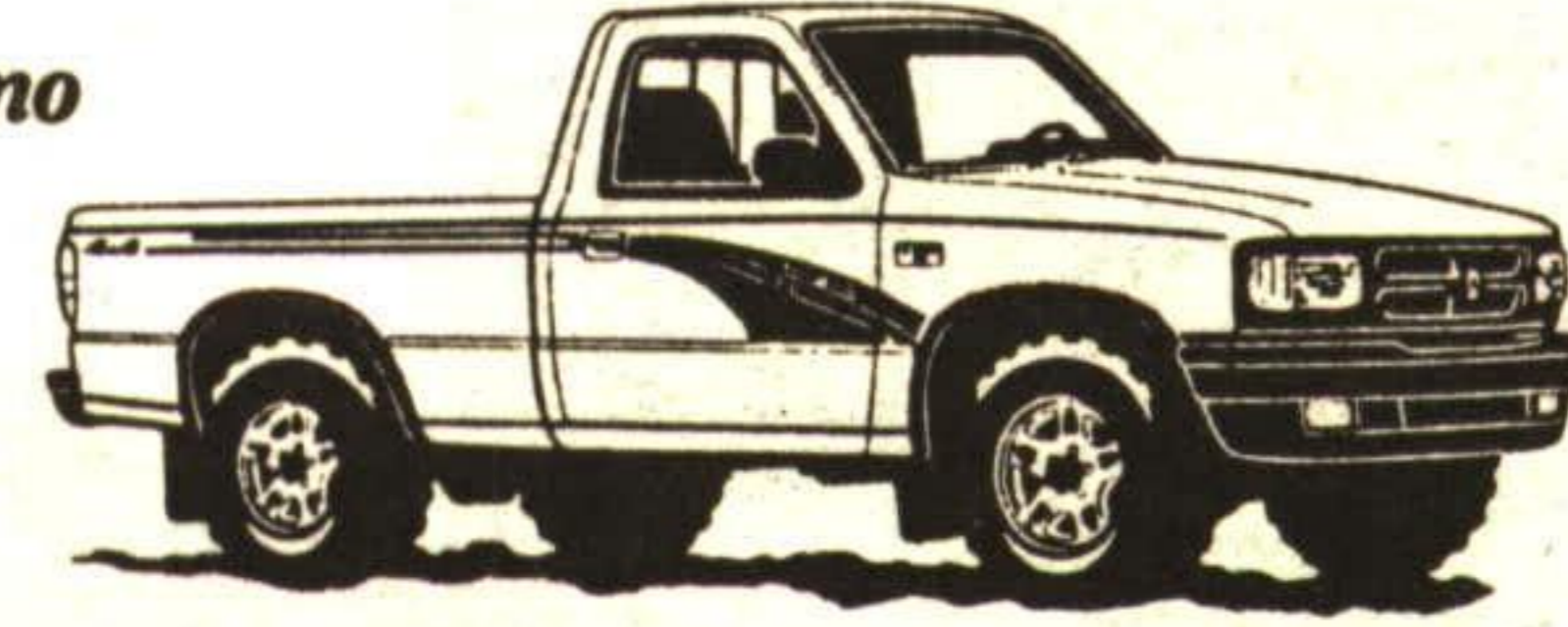


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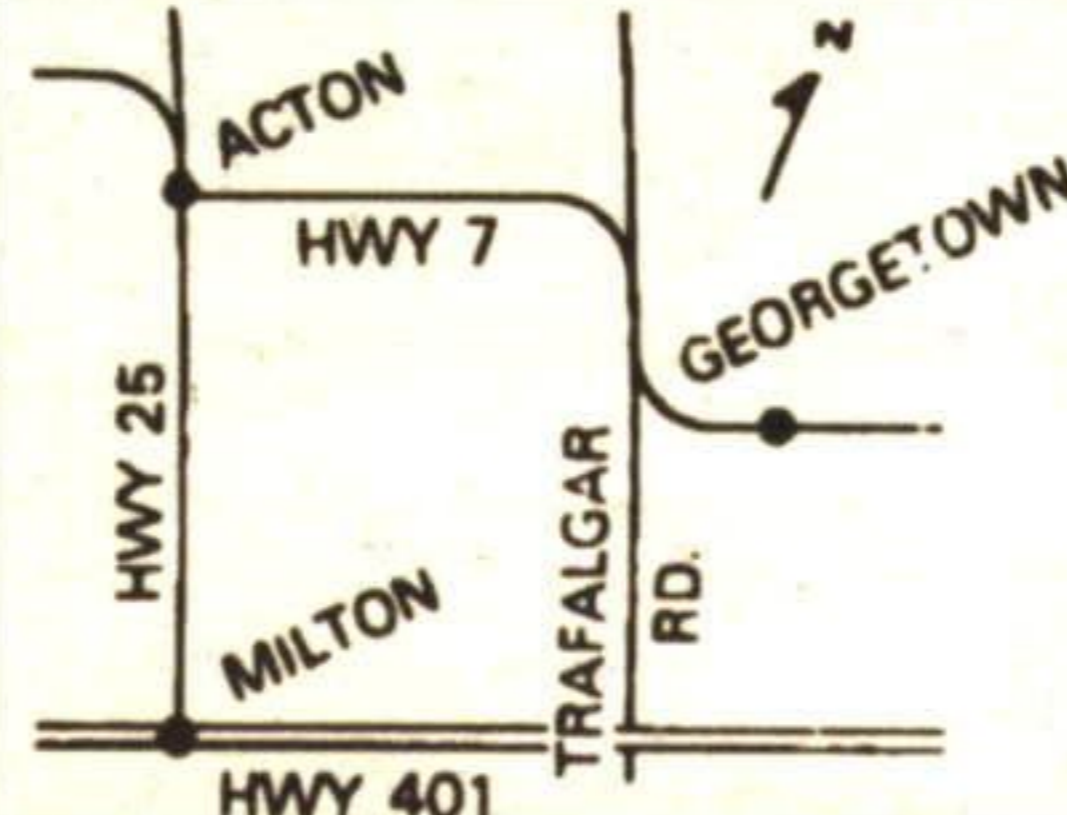
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