

Shoppers like low prices

No-name generic products are a hit

By Olga Darcovich
Like everywhere else, no-name generic products in Milton are selling like hot cakes.

"The movement has been phenomenal," reports Barry Parker, manager of Loblaw's mall store. "The first shipment cleared out in a week." So far, Ledwith's Super Save has not joined the no-name bandwagon. But National Grocers, the firm which has the Super Save franchise, is keeping a close eye on this latest development.

"We have a program we're looking at and if we decide to get into it, we can get into it in a very short time," says Dwayne Matthews, general sales manager for National Grocers.

Mr. Matthews said if the firm does opt for the program, it will be offered to its retailers as an in-store feature.

The source of the savings in no-name products lies in elimination of frills, reduction in advertising costs and opportunistic buying, says Mike Bregman, Loblaw's business studies manager.

Packages and containers are a standard rather than a custom design. Two-color (black and yellow) packages are used rather than the more costly packaging using multi-colors or graphics. Package finishes are flat rather than glossy. Using plastic bags instead of boxes saves money — 25 cents in the case of detergents.

Goods are packaged in large amounts. Juice, for example, is available only in the 48-ounce size, vinegar in 160-ounce size and bathroom tissue in 10-roll packs.

Although Loblaw's did invest in advertising to launch the project and "educate the consumer", the funds came out of their pre-allocated

advertising budget, Mr. Bregman says.

Thirdly, savings obtained through opportunistic buying and bulk buying are passed on to consumers, he said.

House brands differ from no-name products in that house brands are bought on contract from the same supplier to ensure consistency. The consumer gets the same product each purchase. However, in no-name goods, subsequent purchases of an item may or may not come from the same supplier.

Loblaw's guarantees its generic products, Mr. Parker said. "Customers can bring them back if they don't like them. No one has."

Shoppers buying no-name items at Loblaw's say they like the low prices. Several Saturday shoppers had sampled a few of the products, liked them and had come back for more. They were picking up other no-name goods to try as well.

Generic products are a definite saving, says Barbara Shand, president of the provincial division of the Consumers Association of Canada. "I would like to see consumers really give it a try," she says. "I hope they won't let snobbery discourage them from buying."

She pointed out, however, that she had found cheaper buys on specials of regular products. "It still means if consumers want to make the best buy in the marketplace, they should plan their shopping and look around."

In Ontario three grades of food products are available — fancy, choice and standard. Ledwith's stocks only fancy and choice.

At Loblaw's, the two no-name products bearing a grade label, tomato juice and apple juice, were marked fancy and choice respectively. Not all goods are comparable in quality. A Loblaw's

brochure states its no-name bleach contains 13 per cent less active ingredient than the nationally advertised brand, but claims the no-name product is of acceptable strength for most requirements.

According to Mr. Bregman, all products are laboratory and consumer tested, and must meet rigorous quality control standards. "If customers aren't pleased with the no-name items, they won't buy the others either."

Quality and availability are two factors National Grocers are studying closely before making a decision on no-

name brands, Mr. Matthews said.

He called the no-name development another type of promotion. Promotions already used by grocers are manufacturer's allowances, which are passed on as special buys to consumers, and loss leaders, which are low-priced items used to draw people to a store.

The best no-name sellers at Loblaw's have been tomato juice, apple juice and coffee, Mr. Bregman says. He added Loblaw's doesn't expect the buying to continue at the same fantastic pace as the first week, when 250,000 units

were sold in Ontario in four days.

Loblaw's advertises savings from 10 to 40 per cent with its generic products. At the Milton store last week no-name fancy tomato juice, 48 ounces, was selling at 59 cents; Heinz fancy tomato

juice, 48 ounces, at 83 cents. No-name apple juice from concentrate, 48 ounces, was priced at 55 cents; ValuPlus apple juice from concentrate at 69 cents for 48 ounces. Both no-name and ValuPlus were labelled "Prepared for Sunfresh Foods Limited".

No-name coffee was priced at \$2.99 for one pound, still cheaper than Loblaw's Pride of Arabia coffee selling at three pounds for \$10.99. No-name bleach sold for 69 cents for 128 ounces. The same amount of Clorox sold for \$1.19.

While National Grocers is deciding whether to go generic, Loblaw's plans to add 15 more items within three weeks. Sixteen are carried at present in the Milton store.

Generic labelling, although new to Canada, has been around awhile. The concept began in France and was picked up by supermarkets in the United States.



CHECKING OUT Loblaw's no-name generic products is Joy Cole, of Fifth Line, Milton. A mother of six, Mrs. Cole is interested in getting the best buys. Daughter Heather, 5, is more interested in teasing the photographer.

No French immersion for Milton schools

There will be no French immersion programs in Milton schools next fall.

Although 23 applications were received for a grade 1 immersion program, the number was insufficient to meet Halton Board of Education requirements. The Board had agreed to set up an immersion program provided a minimum of 35 grade 1 pupils was registered.

An immersion program for grade 7 also failed to attract enough applications. Only six pupils were registered.

"We're very disappointed it didn't go ahead in Milton," said Magda Benedek, one of a group of concerned parents promoting the grade 1 immersion program. She said the group will try again next year.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Benedek is considering sending her daughter to kindergarten in Burlington with the intent of enrolling her in the school's immersion program the following year. "But if I do that, I'm giving up on Milton," she worried. "I'd prefer to see it in Milton."

School trustee Bill Lawson said he was surprised at the amount of interest shown by Milton parents. Because the immersion programs aren't going ahead this year, doesn't mean the door is closed, he pointed out. If sufficient interest is shown in 1979, a program will be instituted.

Mr. Lawson said he supports an optional immersion program. "I believe there are advantages to learning French at an early age, as

long as parents make the decision and as long as we can sustain the program without additional costs," he commented.

The possibility remains a grade 1 French immersion program will be given in Georgetown, Mr. Lawson said. However, Mrs. Benedek said she doubts any Milton parents will enroll their grade 1 children in Georgetown because of the travelling distance.

The Oakville situation is uncertain at present as well. Although there were sufficient applications, there seems to be a disagreement concerning the location of the program. Burlington is definitely going ahead with a program.

The Board recently turned down a plan to expand daily French studies to 40 minutes and to extend the classes to grades 4 and 5 as well as 6, 7 and 8.

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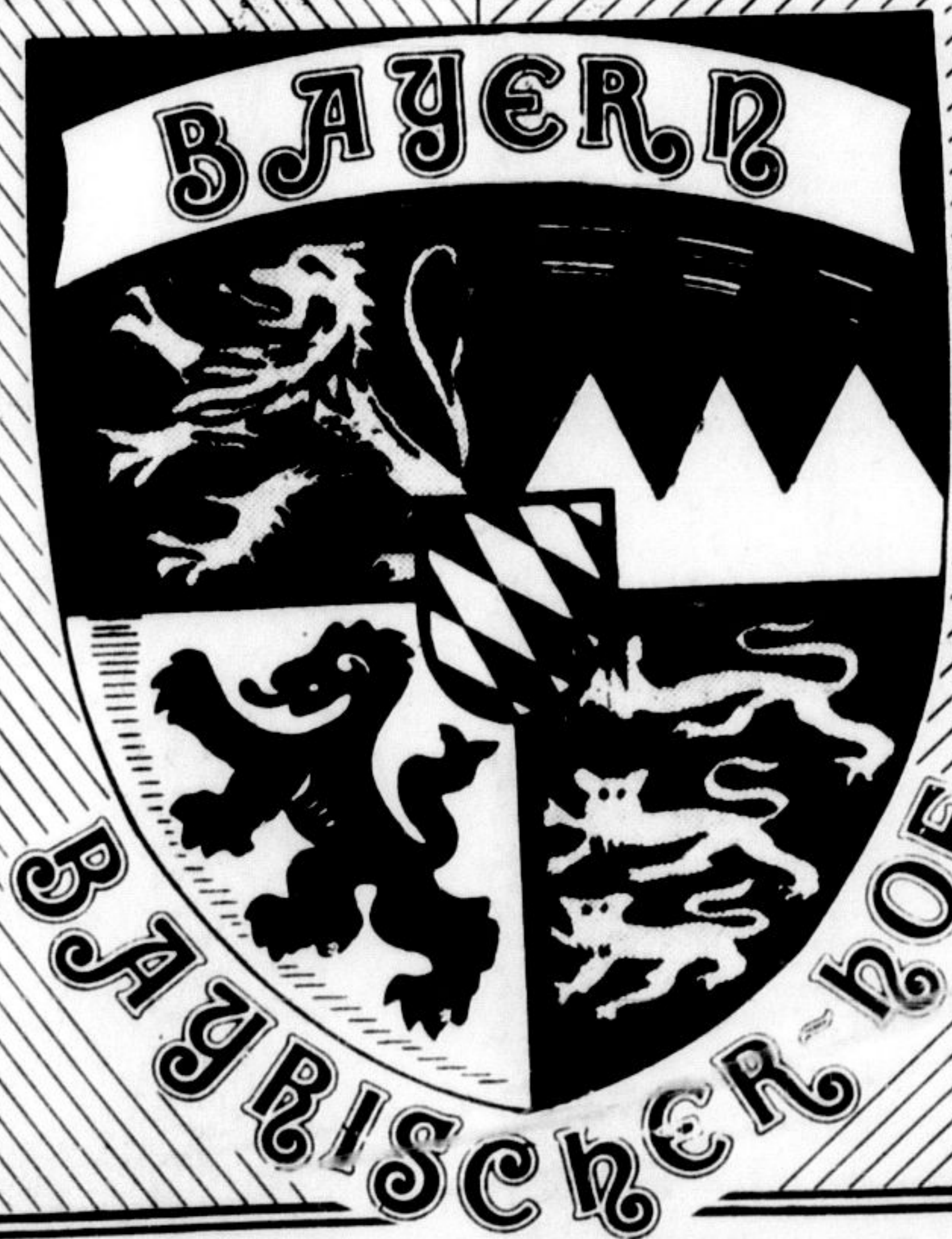
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Disputes claim of mill rats

There are no rats at the Supersweet feed mill on Martin St., plant manager Sergio Zoppas assured The Champion, following a story on local rat problems in last week's paper.

"We have had a professional pest control firm working here for the past five years, and there have been no rats around here since they started," the manager said.

In last week's story, Halton Health Unit's chief inspector Neil Pattulo had been quoted as saying that with two feed mills in town, the creek and plenty of open spaces, Milton is "a natural for rats". He did not actually say the mills had rats.

"We are in the downtown area, we can't have rats here," Mr. Zoppas added. "We are doing our best to keep the mill clean, if we don't we'll have a big problem."

Pest control is handled by the Abell Waco Company, which visits the feed mill once a month on a contract basis. Poison is laid out in safe areas, to keep the rats under control. It costs the company \$30 a month, Mr. Zoppas pointed out, but it is an effective program.

He said the mill used to have a lot of rats, and they ate a lot of feed. But since the pest control program started,

very few rats have been seen. When the town channelled the creek beside the mill, a few rats invaded the mill, he said, but the pest control firm soon wiped them out.

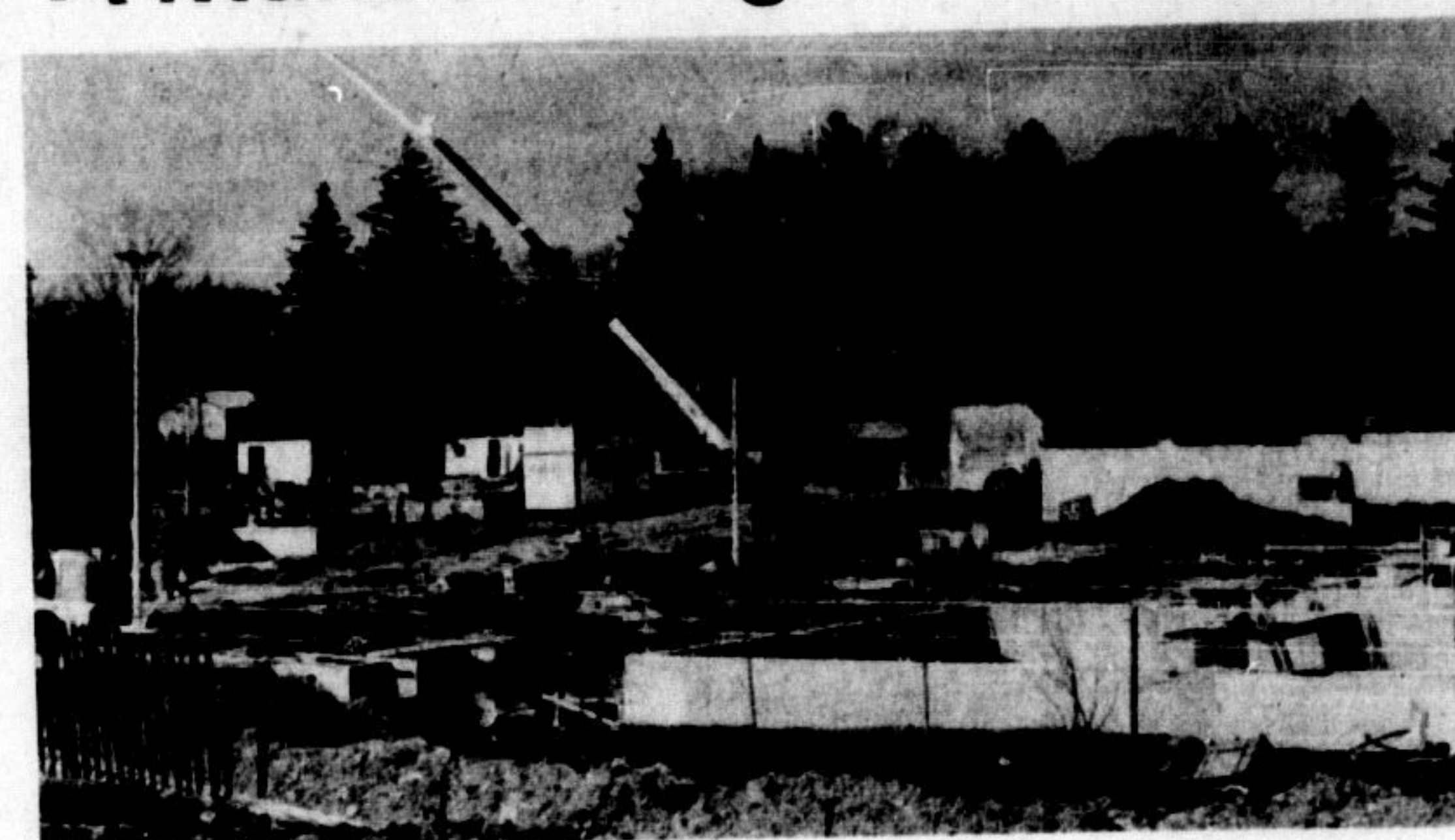
He stressed the mill has a continuing program of rodent control and he was upset when he read the health inspector's comments in The Champion.

—Skipping ropes and baseballs have replaced the hockey sticks and snow-mobles on Milton streets.

—Give generously to the Milton Rotary Club's Easter Seal campaign.

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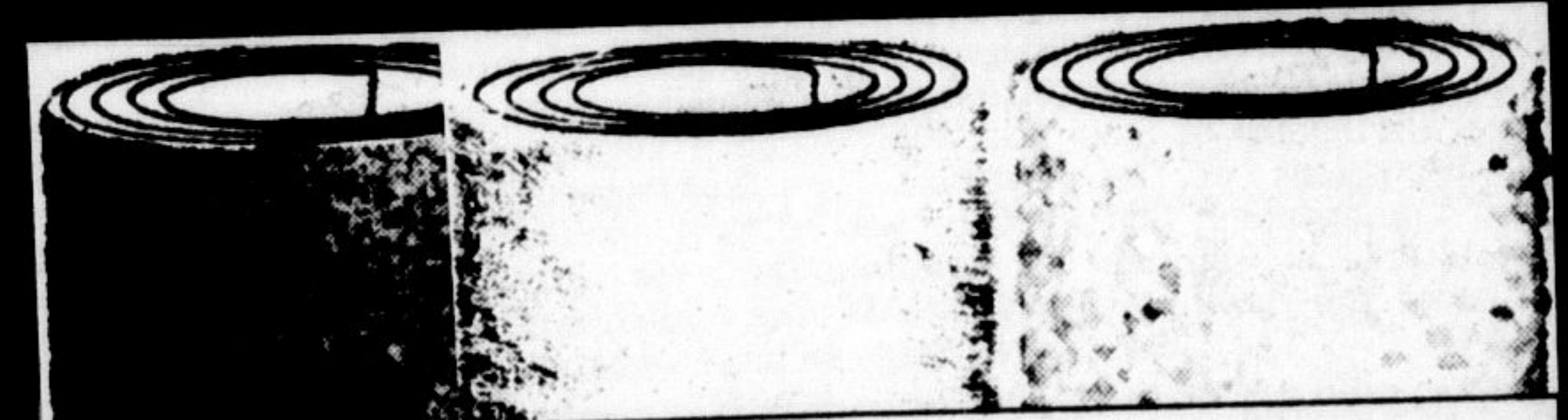
A Mark of Progress in Milton



Expansion of Milton's sewage treatment plant is still underway. The \$4,000,000 project will allow the town to serve a larger population and ensure continued quality of water in the 16 Mile Creek which flows past the Fulton St. plant.

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