

Numbers count, Halton told health care commission

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Halton's four municipalities all told the Health Services Restructuring Commission that growth counts for something. Milton, Halton Hills, Burlington and Oakville all relied on a population growth argument for maintaining the region's four hospitals. The commission has the power to force hospitals to restructure

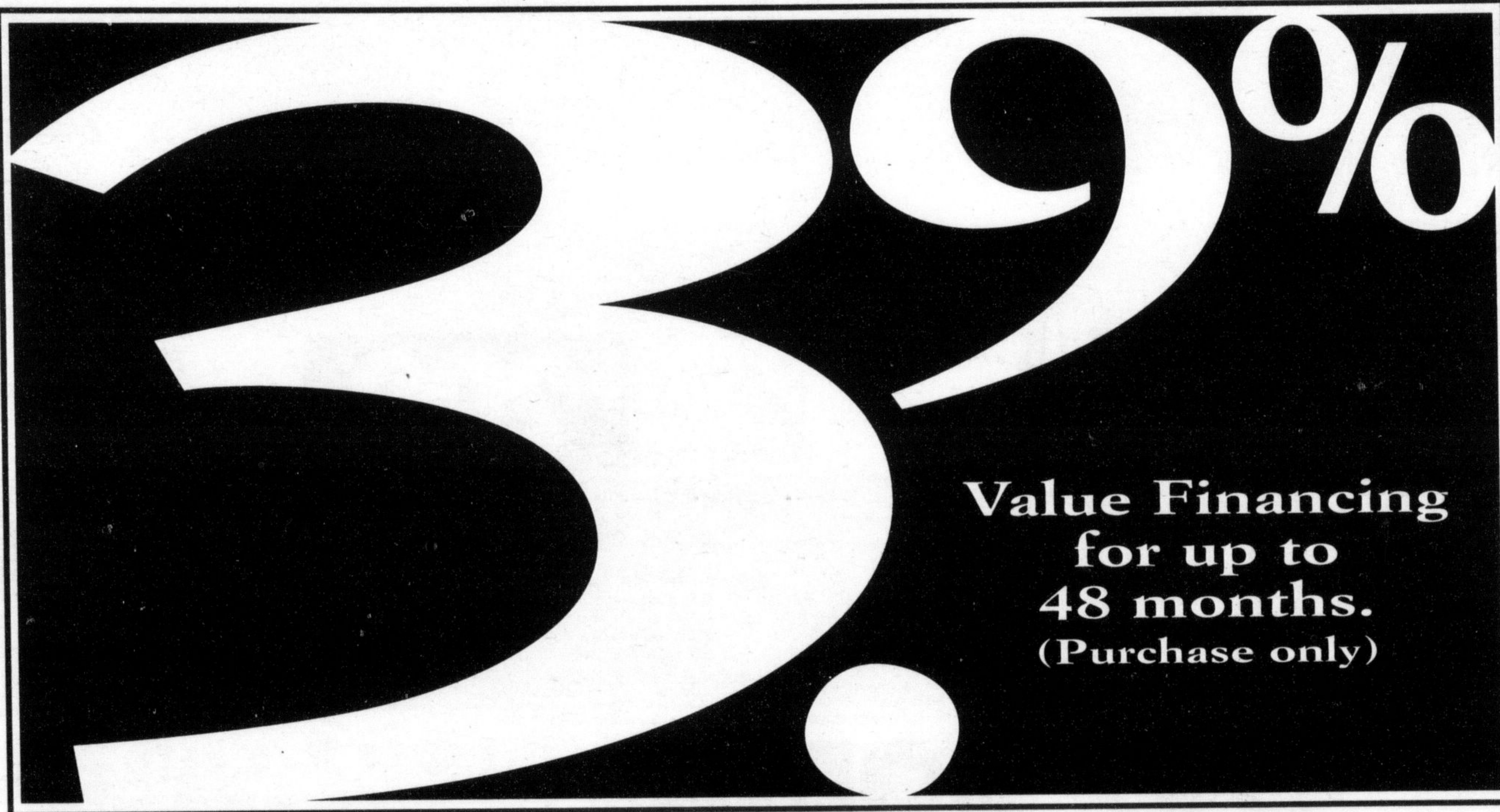
or close altogether. It will also make recommendations to the provincial government on other elements of health care. "Halton intrigued the commission with its coordinated approach," said Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale recently. "We asked for a 10-month study to provide our own recommendations on changes. We will wait until September to find out how effective we were." Halton officials plugged away at the lack of long term care beds in the region, growth projections for Halton and the aging popula-

tion of the area, according to Halton's medical officer of health Dr. Bob Nosal. Municipal representatives compared notes after their individual meetings with the restructuring commission. Ms Savoline said questions were the same and each municipality gave consistent answers. "I think we will get a positive response in September," she said. Ms Mulvale pointed out that in 15 years Halton will have about the same population as Hamilton-Wentworth has now.

Fee no longer charged for fish stocking

Minister Chris Hodgson recently announced that the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) will no longer charge a licence fee to stock fish in Ontario waters. "We have eliminated the fee as a way of encouraging people to go into their local MNR office to discuss their stocking plans and to apply for a licence," Mr. Hodgson said. "Issuing a free three-year licence removes a potential financial barrier to those who wish to stock fish." MNR required people who wanted to stock fish in Ontario waters to obtain a licence so that the ministry had the opportunity to review applications and prevent potential ecological impacts. Until the elimination of the fee a licence to stock fish in Ontario waters cost \$50 and was valid for three years from the date of purchase. The licensing system helps MNR ensure stocking will not be detrimental to existing fish stocks in Ontario waters. MNR reviews applications on a case-by-case basis. A licence will specify the water bodies and species that can be stocked. The requirement for a stocking licence also applies to some ponds on private property.

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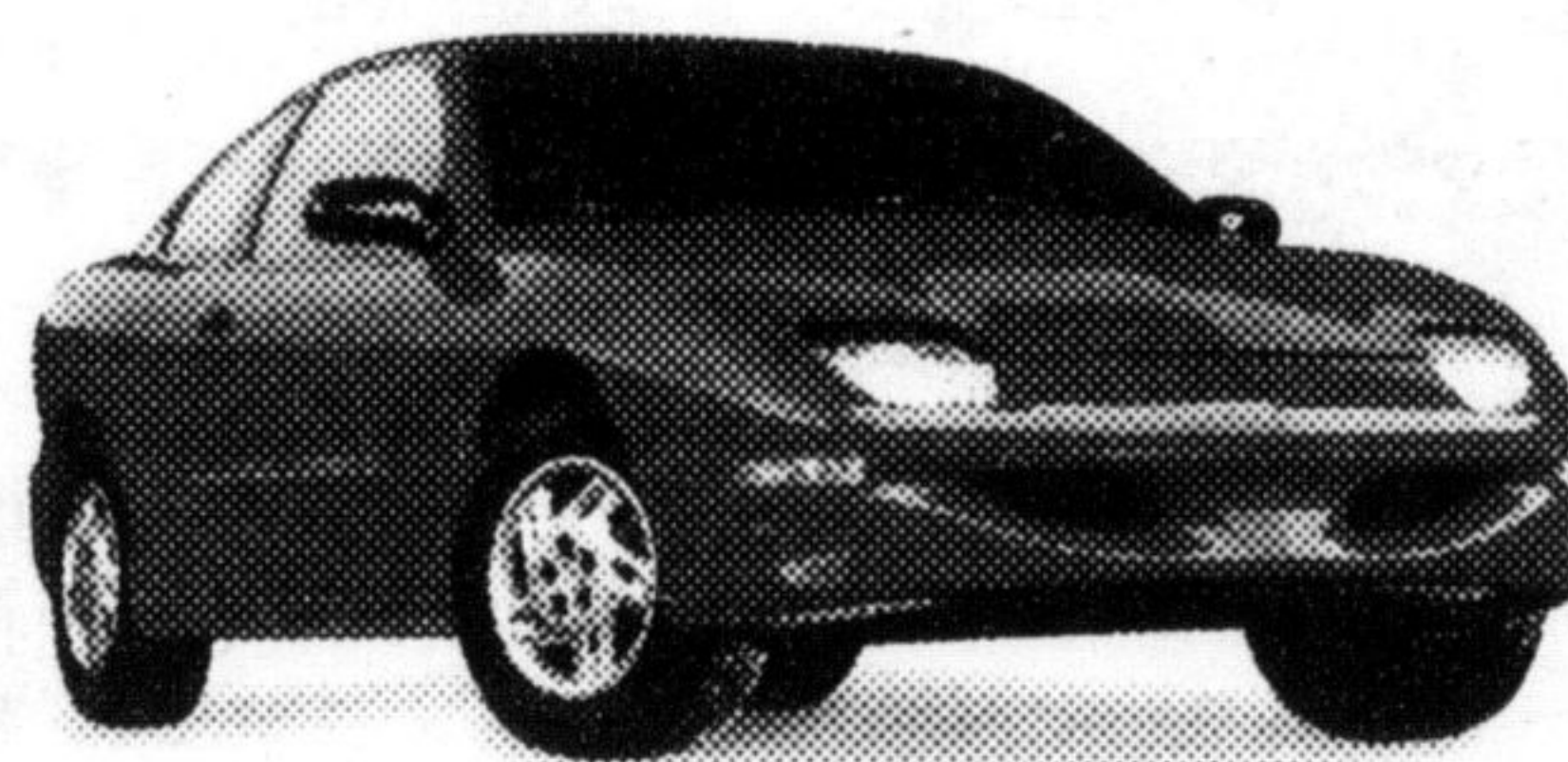
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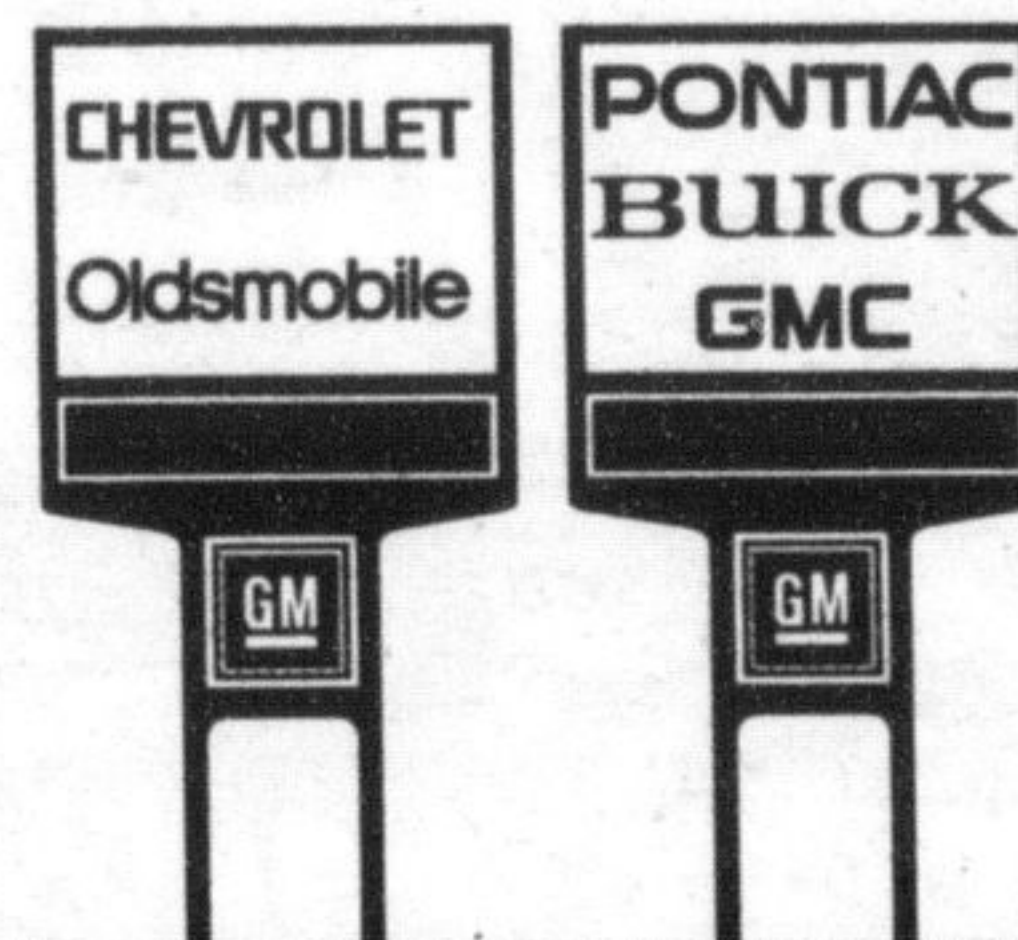
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