

# Apprenticeship program great training, say students

• from OYAP on page 5

Eighteen-year-old Mike Pickett was pulling his gear out of a van, getting ready to tackle the first floor. He's pumped.

"I'll get a better understanding to see what goes into building a house," the Acton High School student said. "It'll give me some nice experience."

Robert Andrew, 17, also from Acton High School, said trying out various trades is great.

"I'll get to learn more about everything."

He's steering toward the electrical trade right now.

"Somebody told me I was good at electrical," Andrew said, smiling.

David Graves, technological education co-ordinator for the public board, said he wishes he had this kind of program when he was a student.

"In my estimation, this is the best course ever to be offered in an education system," he said. "We can't afford to give (students) \$300,000 worth of materials to build projects in shop."

Mr. Graves said competition is stiff for a spot in OYAP, with 75 to 80 people applying each year. They'll undergo interviews and have to meet other standards, with the program being filled up by the end of January. The work days run 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and it's crucial the students adhere to the schedule, Mr. Graves said. A teacher, who's always on site, has a cell phone and the teens have been given the number to call if they're going to be sick and can't show up for work. There will be no free ride, Mr. Graves said.

"We're trying to instill a work ethic in them, that it's their responsibility to be on the job site on time, and be there every day."

Robert DeRubeis, curriculum consultant, technological studies for the Catholic board, said, "I think we've

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**MIKE PICKETT**

put together a really, really unique program."

Students get to dabble in different trades to see what they like, he said.

At any given time, 40 trades, like aluminum siding, trim carpentry or roofing, are being applied to build a house and each is important.

Because there are so many trades involved, students learn problem-solving and time-management skills to ensure those workers coming to the site for one job aren't waiting for another job to be completed.

"They've got to be good problem solvers," Mr. Rubeis emphasized.

The fact the Province is experiencing a shortage of skilled labour — with as many as 40 per cent of the total of those workers retiring over the next decade — this kind of apprenticeship program will go a long way in helping bridge that gap.

"We want to introduce them to the trades sooner as opposed to later because the supply is becoming so acute as a result, costs of labour are skyrocketing," Mr. Rubeis said.

Those costs are being passed on to the homebuyer.

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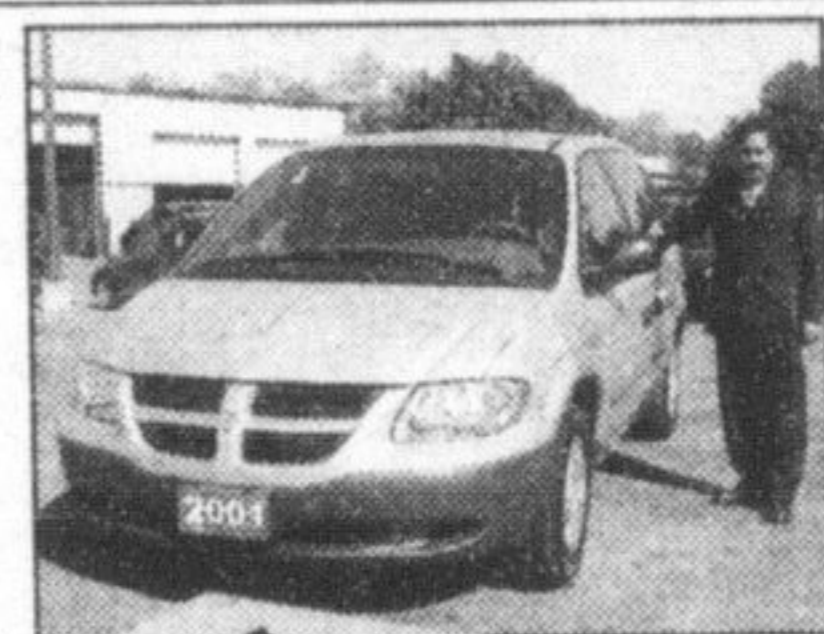
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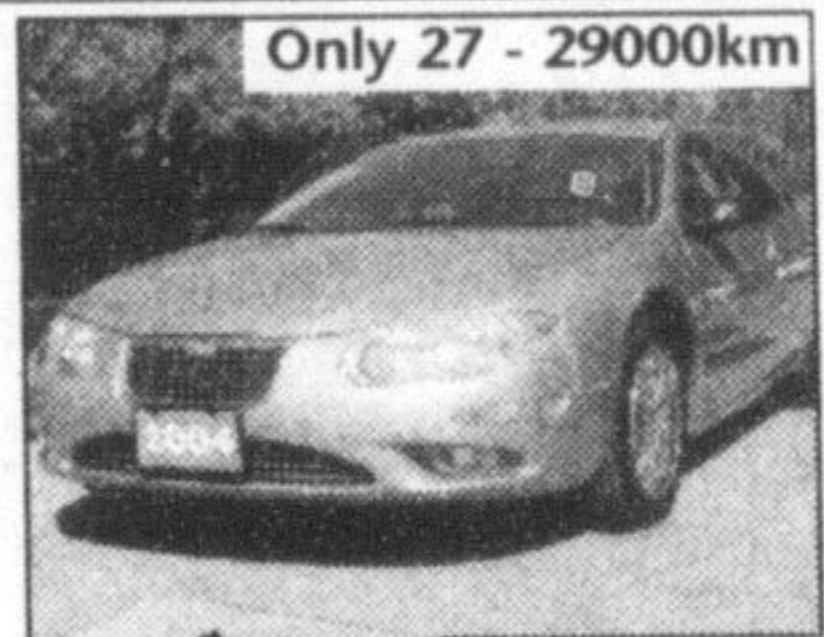
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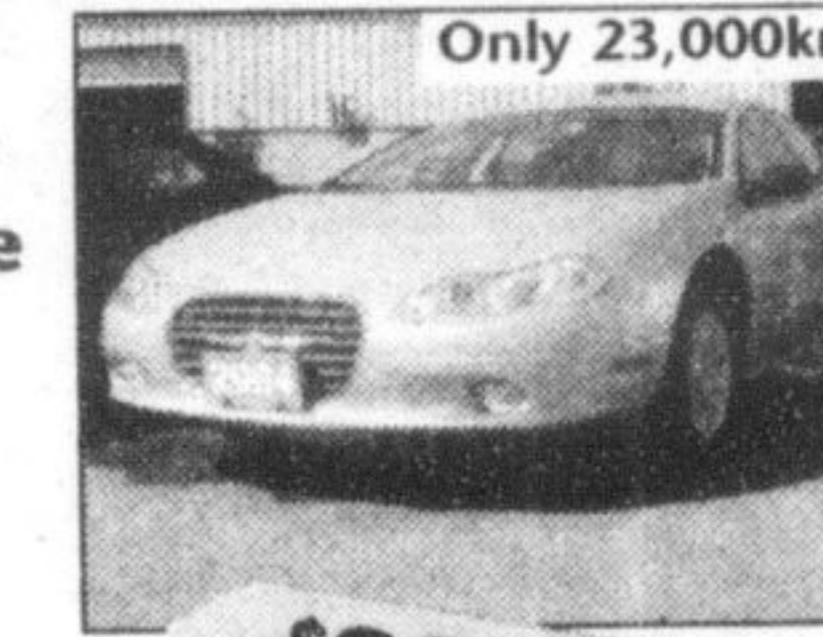
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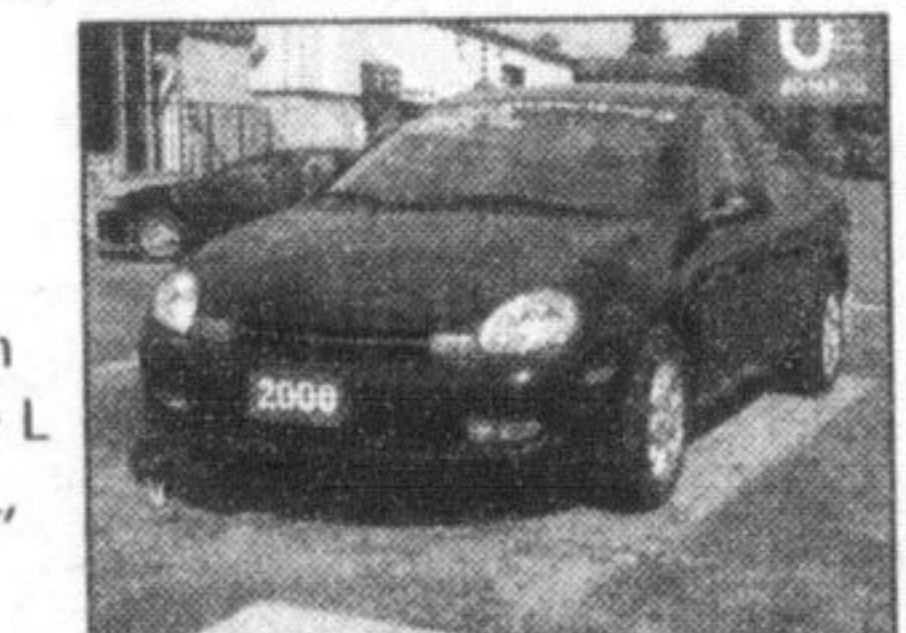
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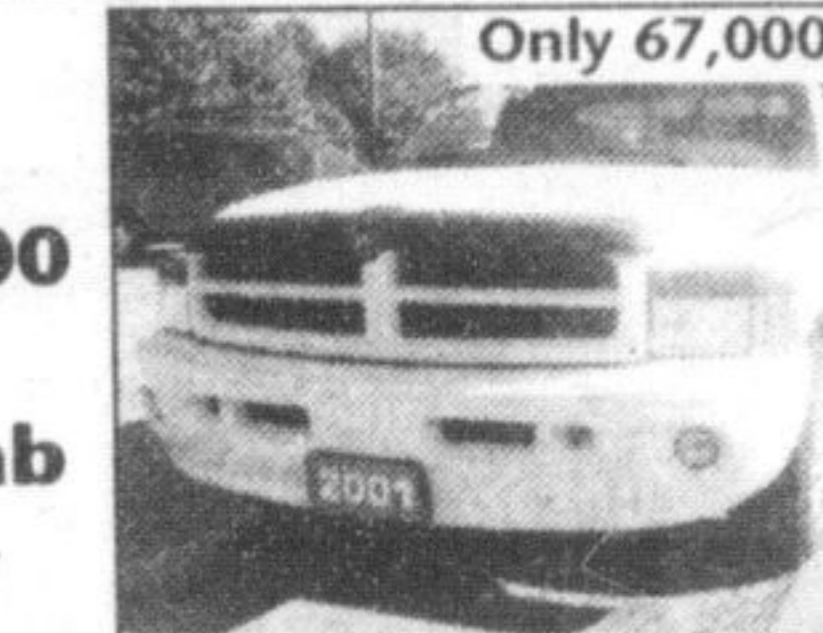
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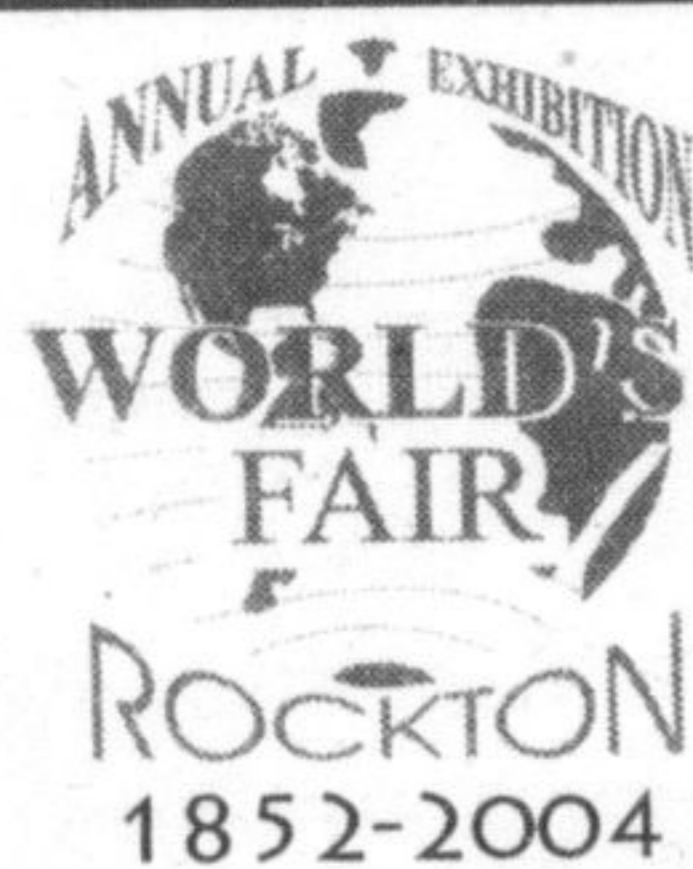
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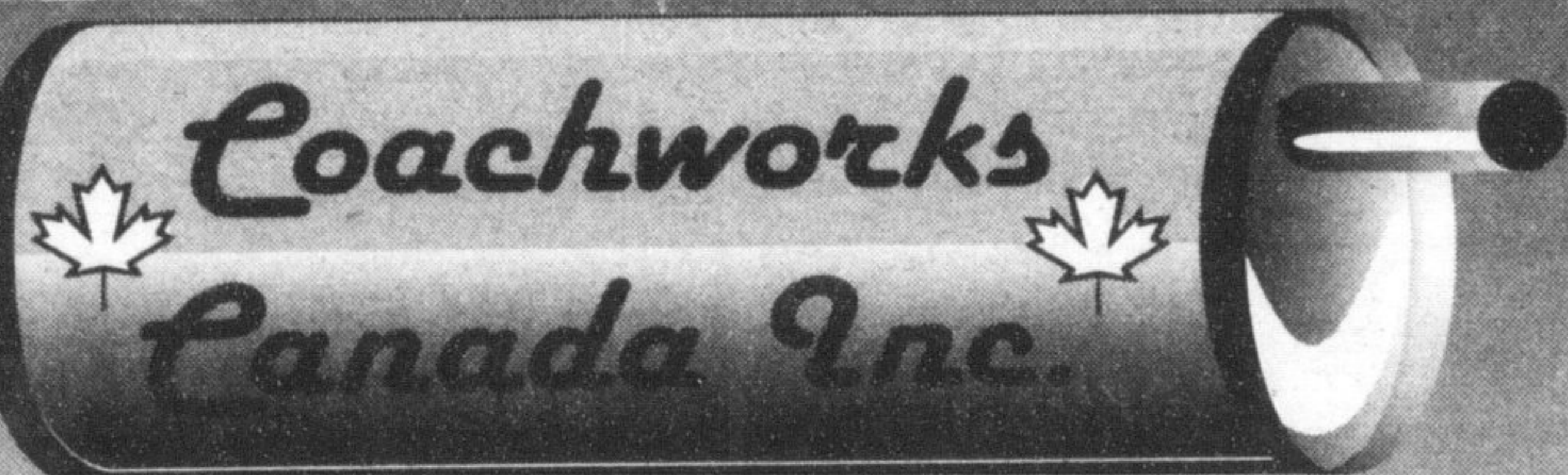
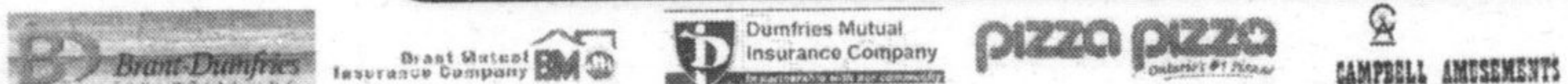
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