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Criticism surrounding the 'list' unwarranted: MMP advocate

• from REFERENDUM on page A5

member' portion of MMP, suggesting it could open the door to backroom alliances, thus hindering democracy.

"I have a hard enough time getting to know the candidates in my riding without having to worry about those who are on a party's list," noted McAuley. "It (MMP) worries me because you don't know just how far down the list these people are who may get in."

Anderson stressed the negative stigma attached to the 'list' simply isn't warranted, that every party has agreed to provide names of potential 'list members' up front and that they would be decided upon in a democratic fashion.

He added, "There's no mystery to this. I don't think it's confusing to people."

Speaking to the issue of governmental diversity, Anderson said under the current system Ontario's legislature is primarily comprised of middle-aged white men — with women holding only about 15 per cent of the seats — which doesn't represent either the province's gender balance or ethnic make-up.

However, McAuley didn't buy the notion that this would change drastically with MMP.

"You're implying that ridings won't opt for

diversity," he said, pointing to areas of the GTA where MPPs have been largely of south-east Asian descent.

Addressing some MMP opponents' aversion to having more legislative representatives, Anderson questioned how Ontarians could be against adding just 26 MPPs to Queen's Park when there are more than 1,000 municipal councillors across the province.

More MPPs, he suggested, equals more representation.

Echoing that claim was one audience member who said that in New Zealand — which has a similar form of MMP — if a constituent can't get 'face time' with his or her area's representative, there's usually another politician relatively close by who'll listen.

McAuley said it gets back to individual ridings voting for the candidate whom it feels will best represent its constituents rather than leaving that up to the parties.

Sponsored by Halton Fair Vote, Tuesday's meeting was moderated by former Burlington Mayor Walter Mulkewich and included an opening explanation of both electoral systems by Elections Ontario representative Iris McGee of Oakville.

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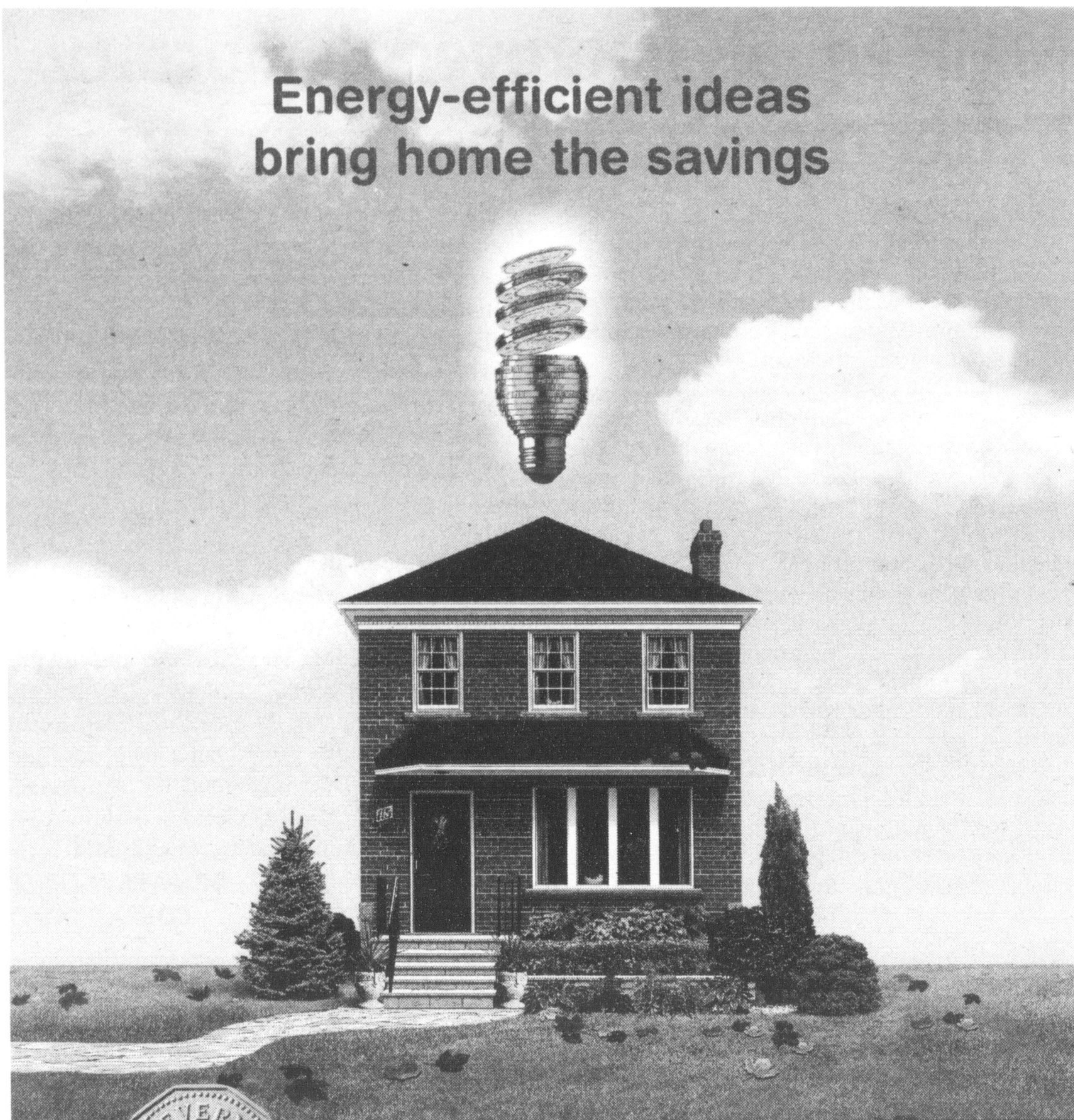
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