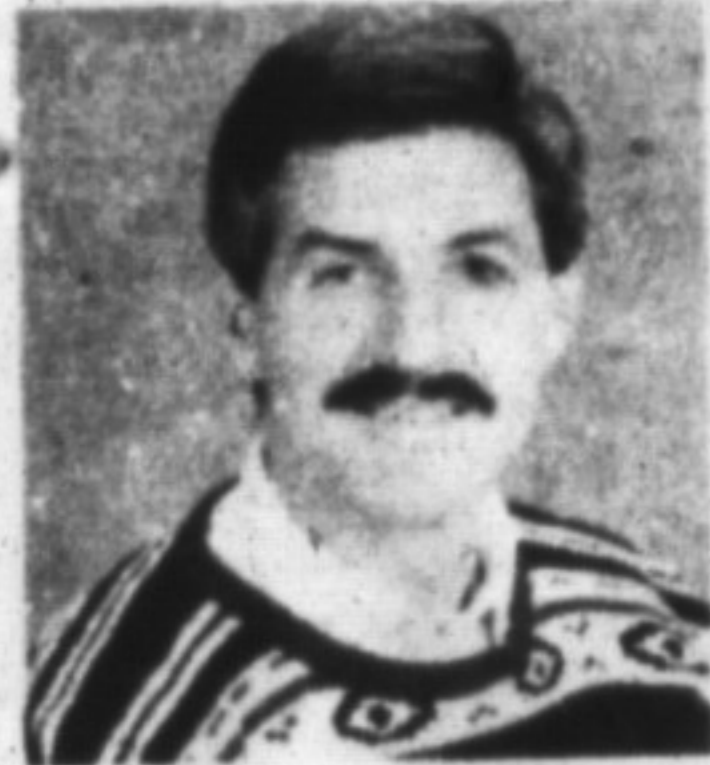


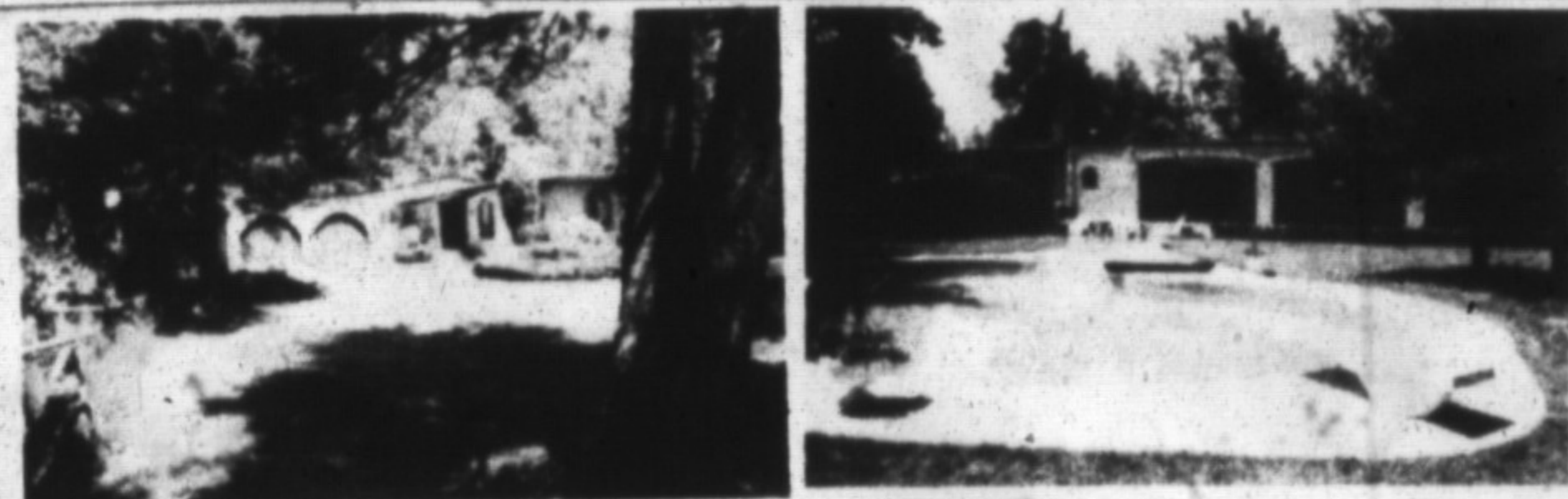


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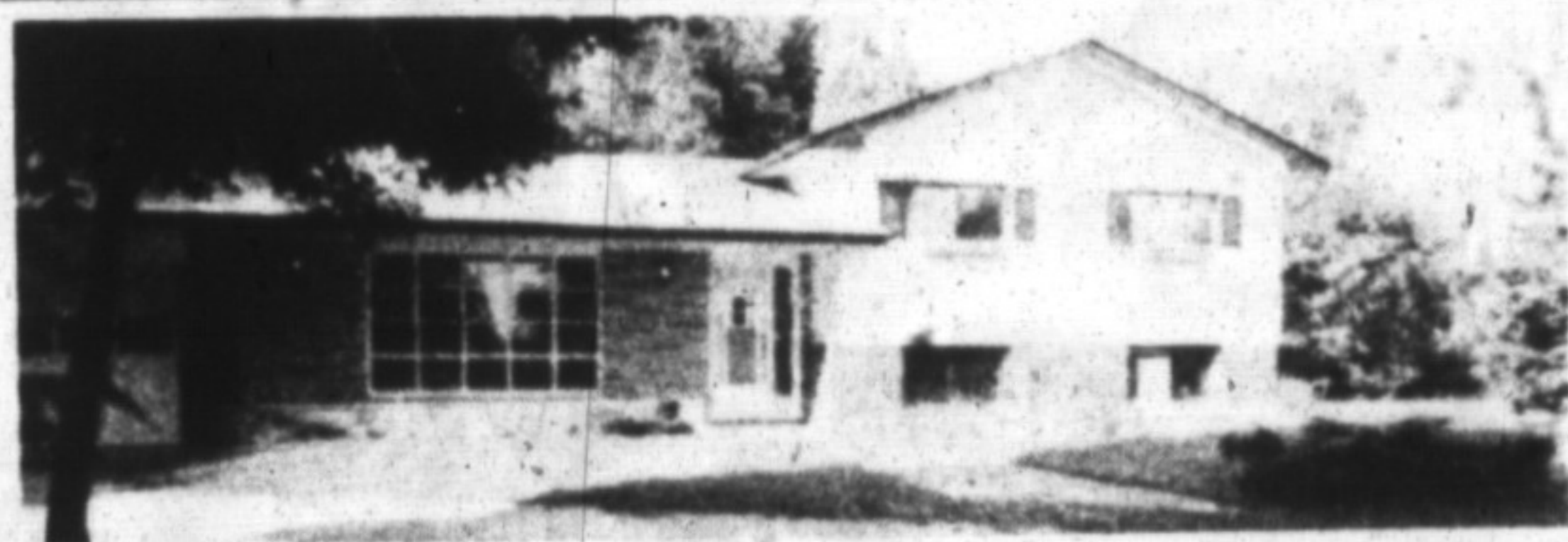
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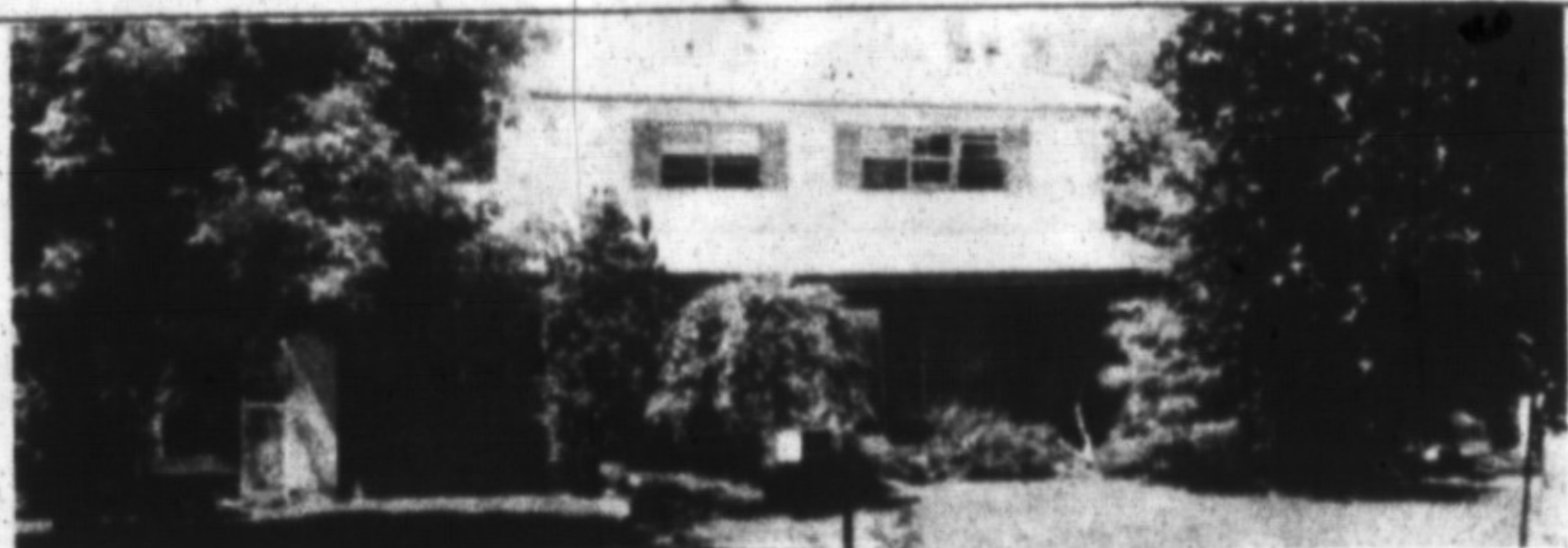
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**When the moan hits your eye,
like a big pizza pie, that's taxes**

That collective moan you hear rising from the ranks of the small business community these days is the sound of entrepreneurs being squeezed in the vice of ever-increasing levels of taxation.

So says a recent study of the current problems facing the small- and medium-sized business community by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Entitled "National Business Watch", CFIB's survey of the concerns of approximately 21,000 small business owners emphasizes the key role this sector plays in the Canadian economy.

In addition to accounting for three quarters of all job creation in the country, "small firms are responsible for 18 per cent of research and development spending in Canada — a much larger share compared with small businesses in the U.S., Japan, West Germany, France, or Britain."

Yet this vital sector is facing a tax burden which is getting worse instead of better. As the report points out, "taxation issues have leapt ahead as the most serious problems for small firms, as indicated by 69 per cent of members polled". No doubt the impending implementation date of the proposed Goods and Services Tax has been a major reason for the increase in concern about taxes.

But the GST is not the only fly in the tax ointment. Payroll taxes are definitely on the rise in most provinces, creating a heavy tax load, particularly for new and struggling business.

Small businesses report that: "The bottom line is that firms must pay the tax regardless of profitability."

Municipal taxes, and property taxes in particular, are also shown to be more and more of a problem.

The report clarifies: "Despite the fact that businesses pay substantially more property tax than homeowners on similarly valued premises, because of political expediency and without justification, local and provincial governments continue to look for ways to add more to the commercial and industrial tax load."

**Mainstream
Canada**

with TERRY O'SHAUGHNESSY

Government red tape and paperwork form the second most frequently identified problem, with 52 per cent of CFIB members polled citing major problems with the paperwork complexities, time requirements and regulatory delays of governments at all levels.

Again, the proposed GST will only make the situation worse as the study points out: "If implemented, the GST would be the most significant introduction of regulation in years. Provincial sales taxes already place a significant compliance burden on small firms — and the load will be crushing if the proposed GST is introduced on Jan. 1, 1991."

As in the past, the shortage of qualified labour remains a very serious problem for small business owners.

However, although 45 per cent of surveyed firms found this issue to be a major problem, it is clear that "concerns about taxation, regulation and business finance have preoccupied the minds of business owners" this time round.

As the leading job creator, small businesses have demonstrated their vital contribution to the Canadian economy. More effective than large firms in industrial innovation, small businesses are also clearly more successful at injecting life into economically depressed regions.

But heavy taxation makes it difficult for independent firms to continue to operate and grow.

Governments at all three levels would do well to act more sensitively to the concerns of the small business sector. The future health of the economy depends on it.

— CFIB Feature

Freeman

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