

Halton to hire one welfare fraud investigator

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

In vain, Burlington regional councillor Doug Greenaway attempted Monday to have one more fraud investigator included on a roster of 11 employees who will be hired by Halton Region to cope with surging welfare claims.

It was probably the final setback in councillor Greenaway's long campaign to beef up security in the welfare system. Initially, he had wanted four of the 11 new social services department workers to be fraudulent claims investigators. But Monday the health and social services committee voted to have only one sleuth on the payroll, although that will be reviewed in a year to see if more fraud-busters are needed.

The other 10 new employees will be used as badly needed reinforcements in the fight to at least stay abreast of the workload in the regional welfare department. Current demands on staff make the situation "impossible", said regional social services director Bonnie Ewart.

There were 3,351 welfare cases in Halton in February. Regional social services workers were labouring under a caseload averaging 208 each. Provincial guidelines call for a case ratio of 90 claims per worker. Halton's acceptable standard is 115 to one, almost half the current volume.

The 10 employees don't represent a net gain of 10 people for the social services department, because five of the positions merely make permanent the temporary relief jobs that came into being as the numbers of people claiming welfare soared. For that reason, the caseload will only drop to about 150 per worker, even with the new staff.

Ms Ewart proposed the 10 claim staff additions as a compromise that would at least make the workload manageable — neighbouring Hamilton-Wentworth, for instance, runs at a

150 to one caseload ratio — during budget discussions early in the year.

But when the regional budget was approved in March, Mr. Greenaway successfully argued for holding off on three of the 10 jobs until a review was completed as to whether Halton would do better to hire three more investigators. He felt the money they saved Halton in exposing fraud had the potential to more than compensate for the overhead they generated. Monday Mr. Greenaway had softened

his position. Instead of three of the 10 being fraud investigators, he was prepared to settle for only one. But the committee dismissed that too. And fellow Burlington councillor Bob Wood said he was becoming impatient with what he saw as foot-dragging on the matter.

"I'm getting frustrated with the amount of time we're spending on this issue." The committee's job, he added, is "setting policy, not nit-picking." Further delays could hurt

staff morale as they struggle under the onerous workload, he warned. As well, there are people "waiting a month before they're getting processed" for welfare claims.

As far as the fraud question goes, "there are a relatively small number of abusers and hundreds who are victims of the economy," Mr. Wood added.

Mr. Greenaway said Hamilton-Wentworth saved \$209,551 thanks to its five investigators last year. Hal-

ton, could only boast a savings of \$47,380, he noted.

Burlington councillor Ralph Scholtens said Halton's welfare budget and caseload is only one-fifth that of Hamilton Wentworth, so the recoveries are in line with expectations. He added that given the five to one ratio in costs and caseloads, Halton should only have one-fifth the number of investigators — one. Anything else "puts it right out of whack."

—The Canadian Champion, Wednesday, April 8, 1992

SPRING INTO A DEAL...

• ON THE SPOT FINANCING AVAILABLE

• WE ACCEPT ALL TRADES

• ON THE SPOT APPRAISALS

FACTORY AUTHORIZED SALE PRICES

EXPERIENCE A JEEP!

BRAND NEW

1992 CHEROKEE SPORT 2 DOOR 4 X 4

4.0 L, 6 Cyl., A/C, 5 spd., reclining cloth seats, deluxe wipers, floor console, big mag wheel package & Much More!



From **17,770^{00*}**

"Consumer Guide Rated Best Buy" - 1992***

BRAND NEW

1992 JEEP YJ LAREDO SPECIAL

4.0 L., 180 HP, 6 cyl., 5 spd., hard top, conv. pkg., chrome pkg., interior carpet, body side steps, full size spare, aluminum wheels and more!



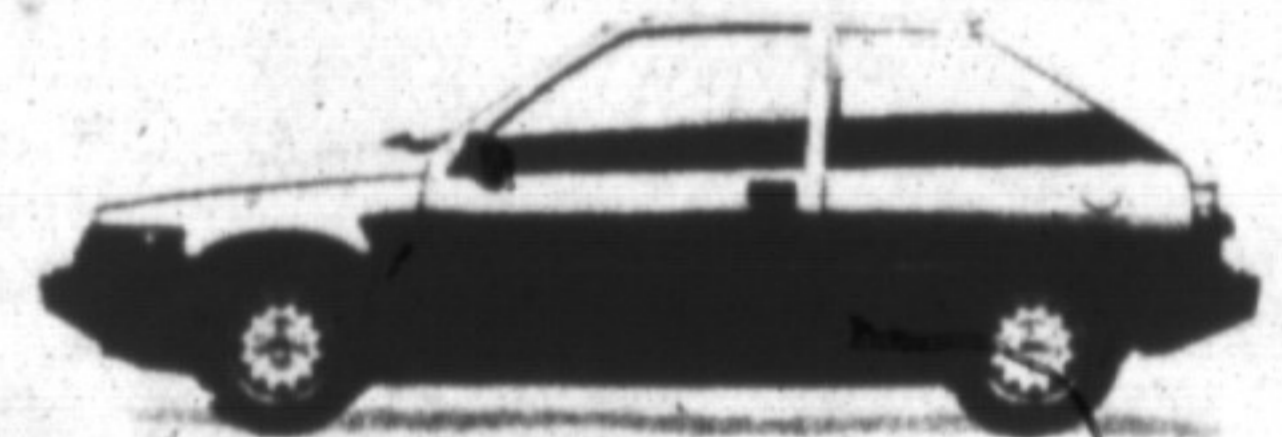
From **15,995^{00*}**

THE EAGLE'S IN FLIGHT

BRAND NEW

1992 EAGLE VISTA

5 speed, P/S, P/B, multivalve 1.5 L Engine and much more!

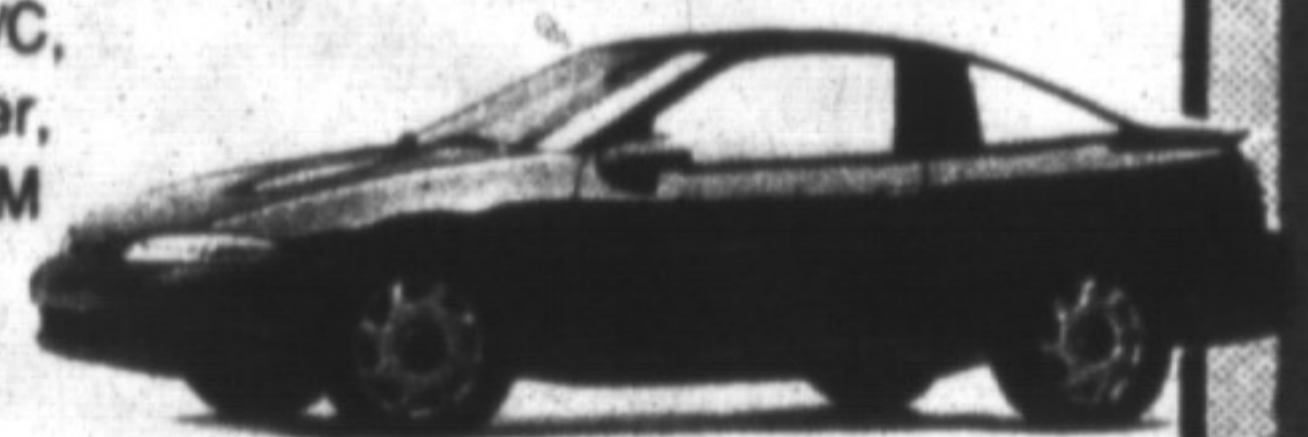


Only **7,263^{00*}**

BRAND NEW

1992 EAGLE TALON

2.0L, DOHC Engine, 5 spd., A/C, mag wheels, rear wiper washer, tilt wheel, speed control, AM/FM cassette, 4 wheel disc brakes, power mirrors and more!



From **16,995^{00*}**

*Consumer Guide Rated Best Buy - 1992***

**One of the world's 10 Best Car & Driver-

FINANCING AS LOW AS

3.9%**

UP TO 48 MONTHS ON SELECTED MODELS

UP TO

\$1500⁰⁰

CASH BACK ON SELECTED MODELS

* All Sale Prices include Factory Rebate, plus applicable freight charges, air tax & applicable taxes. **Special Low Financing Available in lieu of factory cash back rebate. ***1992 American Consumer Guide Rating. See Dealer for Details.

EVERY NEW AND USED VEHICLE IS ON SALE!

THANK YOU MILTON SALE CONTINUES AT...



MILTON



SALES
878-8877

CHRYSLER DODGE LTD.
Great Service • Great Value • Great Prices
"Serving Your Automotive Needs For Over 30 Years"
81 Ontario St. N. Milton

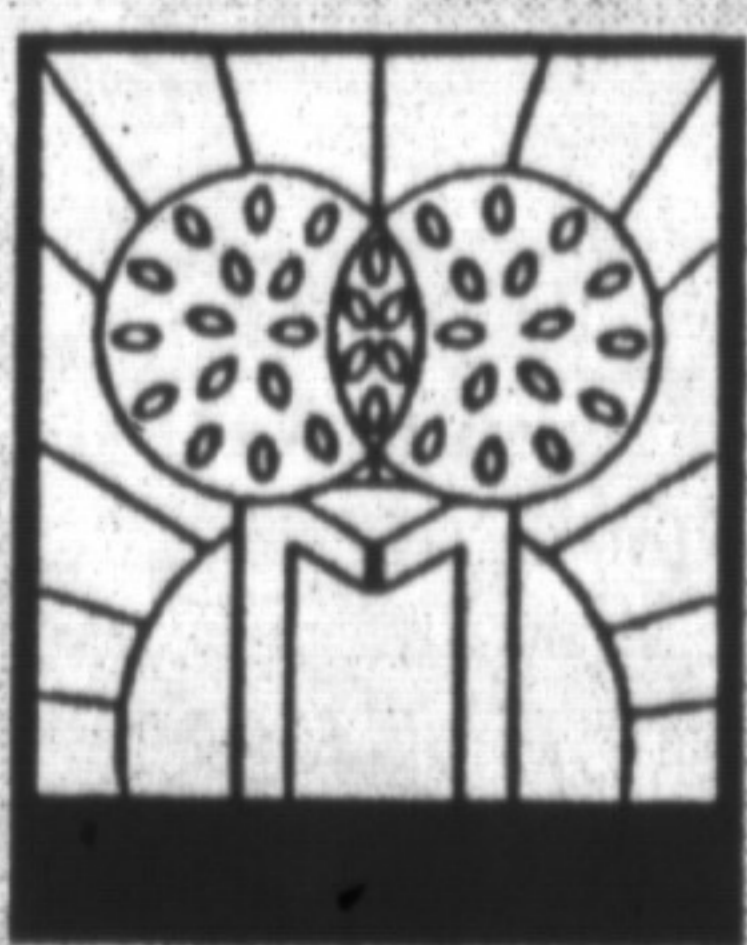
SERVICE
878-8808

Cancer can be beaten.

Please support our April campaign



Good Neighbours



GOOD NEIGHBOURS lend you tools