

Turner says group wants GST cut

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by an equal drop in expenditures. The GST credit cut-back would mean \$2.3 billion less in payouts, Mr. Turner reasons, while freezing social service funding would trim another \$2.1 billion.

The last \$1 billion would be pared out of federal bureaucracy budgets.

Mr. Turner contends the GST rate cut to 5 per cent would offset much of the loss to low income earners who receive the \$2.3 billion credit.

And in terms of freezing federal social service payments, such as old age pensions and a share of welfare, Mr. Turner feels the time is right since inflation is so low it isn't eating away at the value of the money very much anyway.

Mr. Turner also proposes elimination of the tax on new home purchases, a general downsizing of government, and making it impossible for MPs to collect government pensions until they reach age 55.

Although conservatives tend to shy away from government intervention in the economy on the same scale as their political rivals, Mr. Turner advocates pressuring banks to establish quotas for loans to small and medium-sized businesses.

He'd also like to see legislation that would cap credit card interest rates.

The federal government is currently in the throes of creating new financial policies, with announcements expected from Finance Minister Don Mazankowski in early December.

Asked about the government response to his report, Mr. Turner said, "I've talked with Mazankowski about it. He said thanks for the input, the ideas."

Mr. Turner has penned similar briefs before, but as a backbencher is not in a position to steer the federal agenda in the same manner as a Cabinet minister like Mr. Mazankowski.

He admitted that at times it's "frustrating, but I don't think that should prevent me from doing it. I'm funnelling along the views of my constituents."

The Halton-Peel MP acknowledged that any moves made by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives will be seen as electioneering, with a trip to the polls guaranteed sometime in 1993.

"No matter what the government does in the next year the cynics will say that. We have to live with that. What I'm trying to do is reflect what the people are saying. Here are some of the things we can do now."

In the big ticket reductions he outlined for government Mr. Turner suggested a 5 per cent cut in budgeting for general operations, as well as a 50 per cent reduction in the VIA Rail subsidy (\$206 million), the elimination of the federal forestry department (\$147 million) and a 1 per cent drop in federal transfer payments to provinces (\$83 million).

VIA Rail must find private sector money, the forestry department's work is largely duplicated by the provinces and provincial governments should accept their share of budgeting cutbacks by working with less federal funding, Mr. Turner said.

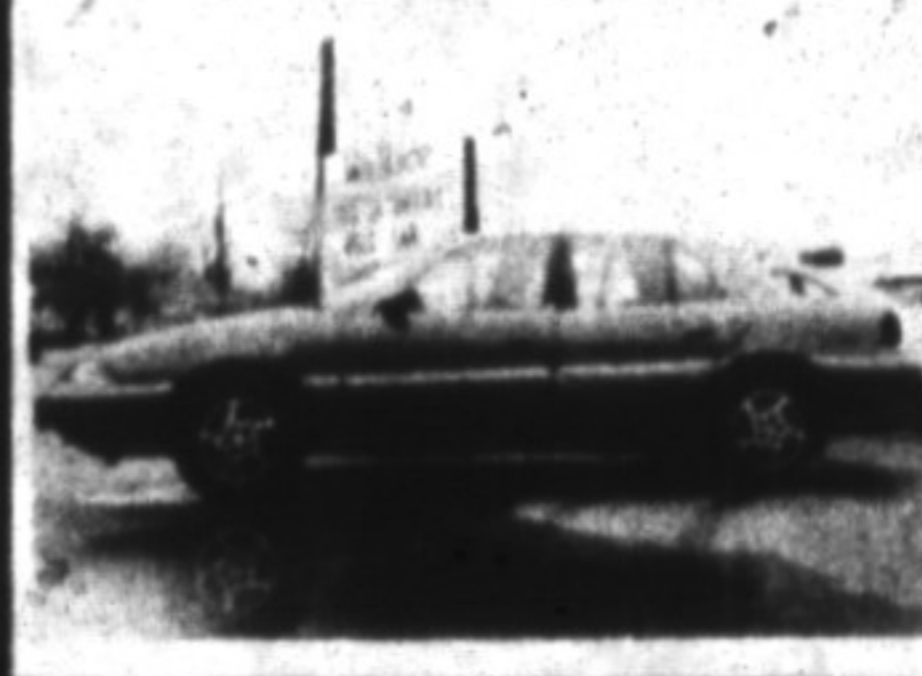
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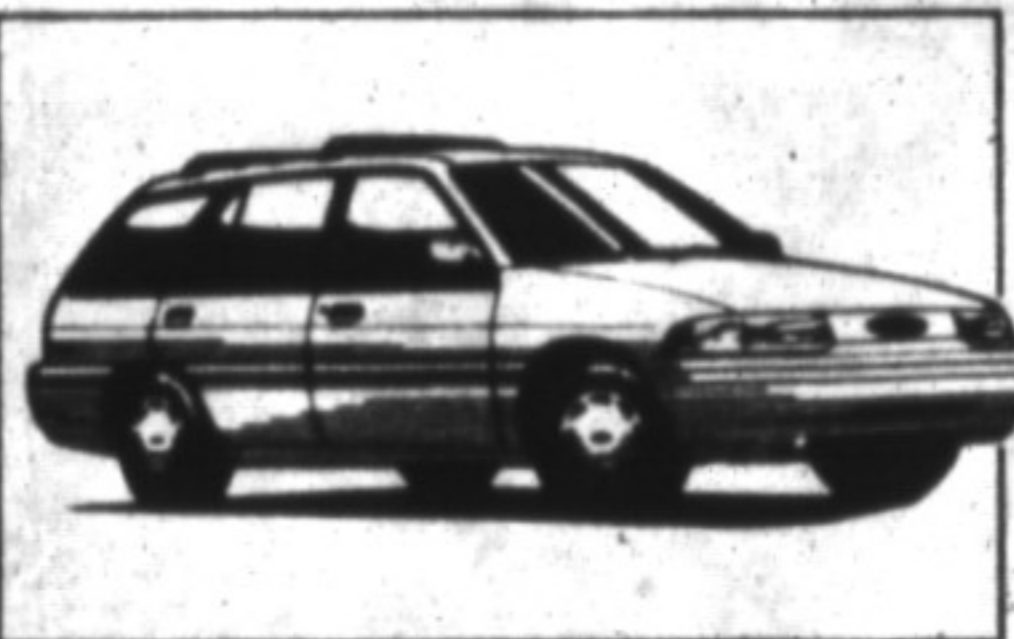
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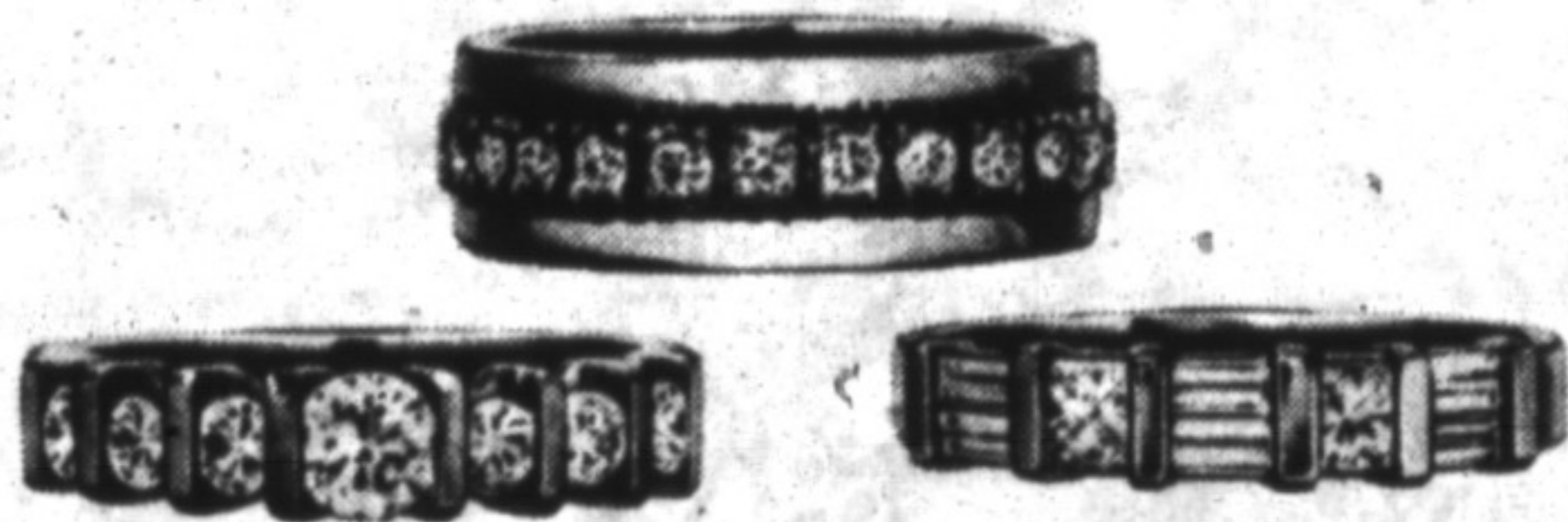
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