

# Auto theft jump plagues whole province, say cops

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

Assaults are down dramatically, overall theft is down a little but auto theft is way up, according to crime statistics presented to municipal councillors at Town Hall last week.

"Increased auto theft is a provincial problem and is not just happening in Halton," said Inspector Keith Gregory of the Halton Regional Police Service. "They target high value vehicles and they are often shipped overseas."

In addition, Inspector Gregory said break and enters have risen in Milton. The town, he said, is

being plagued by thieves from outside the area who are hard to trace and difficult to get information on from police informants. He added the break and enters are done by groups, so one arrest often leads to many cases being solved.

"Sex assaults and other assaults are down but we don't know what to attribute it to," said the inspector. "Thefts are down a small amount, which we think is the work of various community groups."

Police say there were 34 sexual assaults in Milton in 1995 but only 17 have been reported so far this year. Common assaults numbered 234 last year but through the end of September this

year only 156 have been committed. Property theft offences will likely top last year's numbers with 356 reported so far in 1996 and 370 reported during 1995. So far in 1996 there have been 94 reported auto thefts in Milton, while there were 74 during all of last year.

Break and enters are up this year in all categories. In total 128 break and enters have been reported this year versus 113 during 1995.

Inspector Gregory confirmed to councillors the Satan's Choice chapter which was in Milton has moved out, leaving only "a few insignificant items behind" in their former clubhouse.

The inspector also said that construction of the

new 12 Division building on Childs Drive near Milton Mall is ahead of schedule. He said the building should be ready in December and will likely be occupied during the first week of January. The new building has a meeting room available to the public.

In addition, he said there is a proposal which would allow the police to keep the station open until midnight five days a week. The police service's management board will consider the proposal in the near future. Hiring more staff, which would allow the building to remain open, is unlikely to occur given tight restraints on Halton's police budget, he said.

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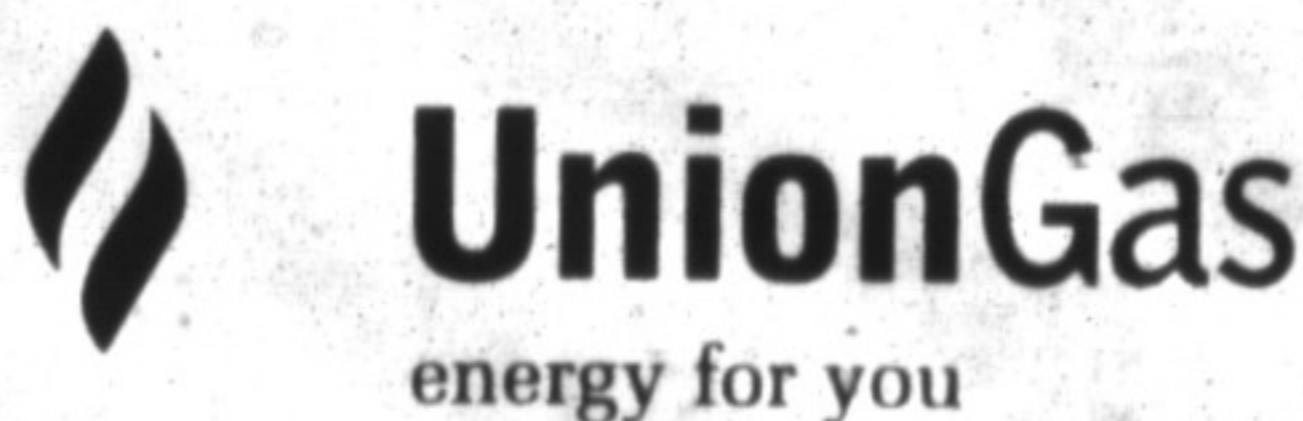
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## Survey says:

### Dole on the decline

People leaving the welfare system did so because they landed jobs, a survey says.

The survey, released by Minister of Community and Social Services Janet Ecker, said the majority of respondents left the welfare system to join the workforce.

"This survey is the first effort by an Ontario government to research why people are leaving the welfare system," said Ms Ecker. "The survey expands on the ministry's existing information in this area."

More than 180,000 people have stopped relying on Ontario's welfare system since the end of June, 1995. The survey was conducted in August, 1996, with more than 2,100 former welfare recipients agreeing to participate. The sample consisted of people who left the system in May, 1996.

Almost 62 per cent of respondents gave employment-related reasons for leaving social assistance. More than 46 per cent found a fulltime job, 9.6 per cent found a part-time job, 2.6 per cent had a partner of spouse who found a job and 3.6 per cent either received an increase in pay or found a better job.

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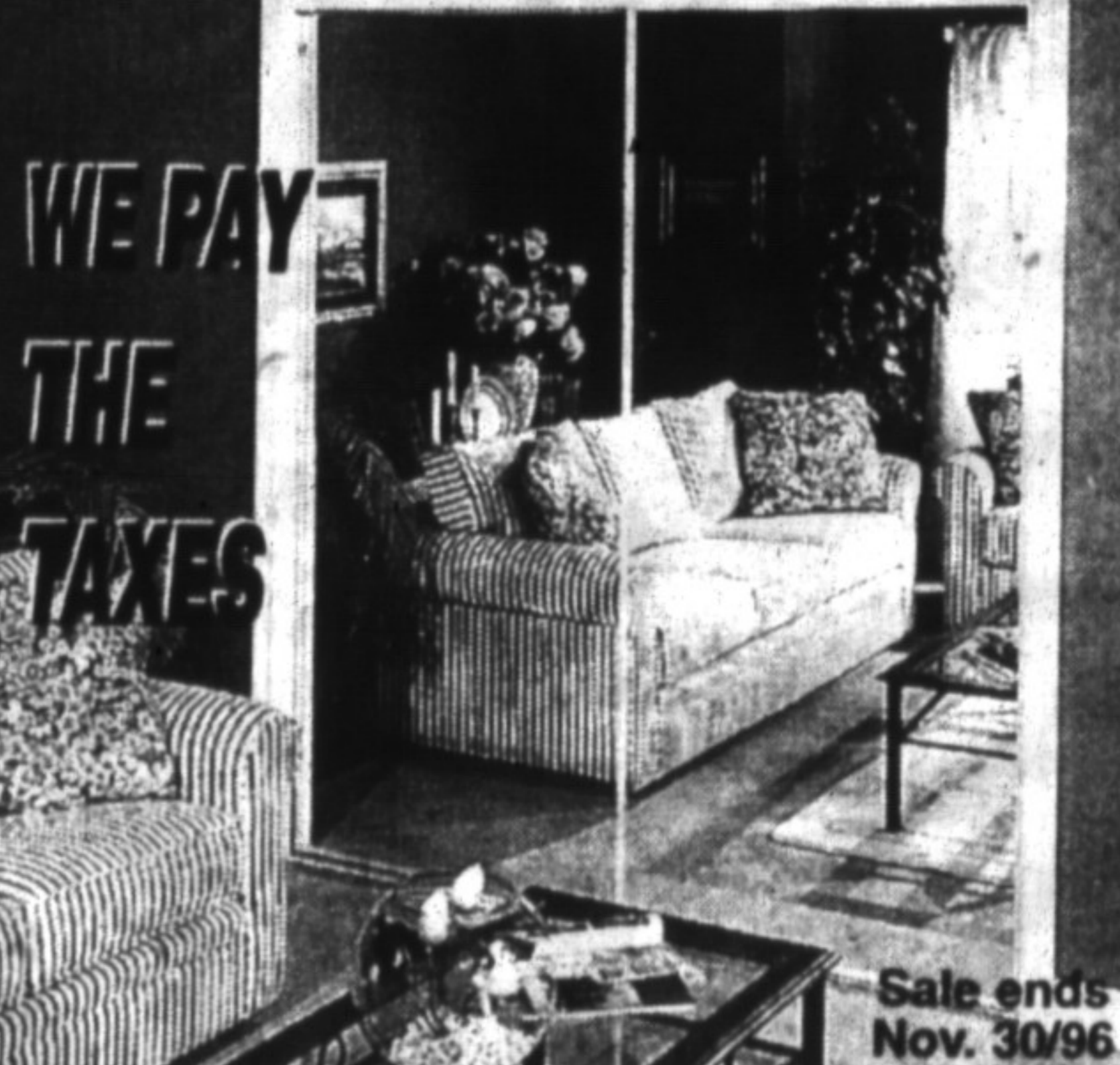
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