

# Consider Union With YMCA

## YWCA Meeting View Amalgamation

By MARGARET LADE

Is Richmond Hill and District YWCA giving adequate service to the community? Does Richmond Hill need a YWCA? Does it need a YMCA, or should it have a YM-YWCA?

These questions posed at the annual meeting of the Y at Bond Lake Arena community hall February 28 are being asked at meetings of YMCA's and YWCA's all across Canada and were the topic of intensive discussion at the National YWCA Convention in Banff in June according to the local "Y" President Claudine Wallace.

December 1, 1972, witnessed a significant development in the history of co-operative effort between the two national movements, said Mrs. Wallace. A commission on co-operation jointly sponsored and funded by the National YWCA and YMCA of Canada under leadership of Dr. Frederick Elkin of York University had its first meeting.

**FOUR MODELS**

The commission had come into being because of a growing feeling that the subject should be studied, and four members of the Richmond Hill Y's Board of Directors undertook to enlighten the meeting of about 60 people on the various alternatives to amalgamation of two bodies, reasons for continuing as separate entities and reasons for separate but co-operative efforts in service to the community.

Mrs. Wallace provided an introduction to the presentations that followed:

Both the YMCA and the YWCA were started in Canada in the last half of the 19th Century. The formation of local associations in a few cities was soon followed by the formation of two national bodies to which the local associations were affiliated.

By 1973 there were 105 Y's in Canada, located in every province and in the territories. "As we look at the historical background, we note that co-operation between the national YMCA and the National YWCA has existed for almost 50 years," said Mrs. Wallace.

**SEVEN TASK FORCES**

Under leadership of Dr. Elkin, the commission appointed seven task force chairmen who were responsible for gathering information on different aspects of the relationship between the two national organizations. After nearly a year of study and discussion the commission arrived at a number of conclusions about similarities and differences between the two organizations and the degree of importance of these characteristics when viewed from the standpoint of future co-operation.

Both organizations have rather diffuse objectives and carry on many activities directed to a wide range of people — men and women, children, middle aged, elderly, privileged and underprivileged, Christians and non-Christians.

Volunteer boards and volunteer workers come from all walks of life and as such vary considerably, not only in their ideas about the associations but about social issues as well.

Both, like many voluntary associations, are facing two major practical problems — the growing presence of government in services traditionally provided by the associations and the increasing costs with relatively decreasing revenues.

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

In addition to the obvious difference between the two organizations — that the YMCA is essentially a men's and the YWCA a women's organization led by women, it also is very much concerned with the place of women in Canadian society and the role that the YWCA can play in improving the status of women.

There are significant differences in the staff-volunteer partnership in the two organizations. The volunteers of the YWCA, many of them housewives, play major roles in the day-to-day planning and decisionmaking of the organization.

In contrast the YMCA volunteers, especially on the national level, are businessmen who follow a more management-oriented style, leaving much more of the planning to the staff.

Four "Models" proposed by the commission were outlined in a brief by 1st Vice-President Margaret Collett, 2nd Vice-President Lee Rimmon, Recording Secretary Edith Burnfield and Treasurer Gayle Brillinger. The Y's Executive Director Doeren Wright then invited questions from the audience.

**DISENGAGEMENT**

Mrs. Rimmon led off with the first model, termed "Disengagement" which suggests that the relationship between the national YWCA and YMCA should be nothing more than the relationship each already maintains with other social agencies that there should be some co-operation in areas identified as common concerns, but not otherwise.

This model, said Mrs. Rimmon, would involve "unwinding" because there are already 28 YM-YWCAs in Canada. This could mean that the national YWCA would disassociate itself from the YM-YWCAs, or the

national YMCA could become a National YM-YWCA movement and local YM-YWCAs would have to decide whether they wished to join such a body. This, the report indicated, is not a particularly popular model according to surveys.

Some groups, said Mrs. Rimmon, regard closer co-operation with the YMCA a backward step in this day of "women's liberation". Others feel it is not good enough for women's groups alone to attack the present status of women in our society, that there are already groups established expressly for this purpose.

**TIGHT MONEY**

Many, said Mrs. Rimmon, would like to see an organization where men and women together should work toward achieving equal opportunities for all people and fight social injustices on behalf of any group.

Another serious drawback to "disengagement", Mrs. Rimmon said, is in the financial area. Already agencies are being harshly examined with respect to duplication of services, and monies being so tight, it is unlikely that local communities would tolerate the re-introduction of rivalries and competition for dollars and other resources.

Finally it has been shown through surveys that the public does not make a clear distinction between the YM and YWCA anyway. If disengagement took place it would be difficult to interpret the differences and the massive public relations campaign necessary to interpret it to the public would be a serious financial drain.

Generally, Mrs. Rimmon concluded, this model might serve the aims of some women on a short term basis, but the majority of the commission felt that in the long run it would seriously weaken the organization.

**"WHERE WE'RE AT"**

Mrs. Burnfield described the status quo, model two — "Where We're At". Both organizations are federally incorporated and have their own constitutions. Each has a statement of purpose revised in 1970, similar in content although the YMCA purpose no longer includes the word "Christian".

Individual memberships in both cases is in the local association, not the national body.

The YMCA had admitted women as members for several decades, but although the YWCA has programs for men and boys, it still denies them the right to vote.

In some cases, said Mrs. Burnfield, particularly in large urban areas, the two organizations work together effectively in the community, one complementing the program or service of the other, but there are relationships which involve competition for membership and dollars which border on open hostility.

According to the report of the commission, both national YMCA and YWCA are experiencing budget difficulties. Each had a deficit in 1972 and each anticipated reduced revenue in 1973. Major budget items for both is salaries, and although salaries are higher in the YMCA generally increases and benefits between 1970 and '72 were greater by seven percent in the YWCA.

**PUBLIC FUNDING**

A major source of revenue in larger communities is from United Appeal, with the majority of local associations being covered to a certain percentage of their budget by some public funding.

Programs mainly follow the needs of the community to be served, but the YWCA has always stressed the housing aspect with only six YWCA's not providing residence accommodation, while the YMCA leans heavily toward physical fitness. Both organizations give heavy priority to training and development.

The YMCA has a long tradition of debating issues of social concern at all government levels reported Mrs. Burnfield, while the YMCA is more likely to try to influence social change through informal approach, through information sharing and discussion.

Co-operation between the two national bodies at present is on an informal basis with ad hoc committees, such as the present "Joint Co-operation Group" formed to serve a pre-need need.

**OPPOSE STATUS QUO**

Some see continuation of the present model as the safest option of the four suggested, said Mrs. Burnfield, but there must be considerable dissatisfaction with the status quo to justify establishing the commission, and out of 658 individual leaders, only 72 voted to continue

under this plan.

The third model was presented by Mrs. Collett and was entitled "Closer Formal Co-operation" and supported the plan for separate identities which seemed most popular of all, although many felt it would be a step toward total amalgamation.

The YWCA has essential commitments that cannot be ignored, said Mrs. Collett, including its work on the status of women and its unique volunteer movement.

On the other hand there was much to be said for sharing headquarters (both national bodies have their headquarters buildings in Toronto), facilities, liaison in approach to government. This model represents the greatest degree of consensus among those consulted by the commission, said Mrs. Collett. It also requires a great degree of commitment on the part of both bodies.

In the fourth presentation, Mrs. Brillinger outlined the case for amalgamation, for a new national movement that would combine both YMCA and YWCA.

**LESS SCOPE FOR WOMEN?**

This is a more futuristic concept and would give scope to people who do not want to be committed to an organizational structure committed to the interests of closed organization.

On the other hand there was the argument that large organizations become unwieldy, and that total amalgamation would give less scope for girls and women in executive and leadership areas. Yet this model is strongly supported by those at top levels in both organizations, said Mrs. Brillinger.

Model three would be relatively easy to introduce, but difficult to maintain. Model four would be relatively difficult to introduce but easier to maintain, she concluded. It is a model that would be turbulent and challenging to implement, fraught with difficulty, but tremendously rewarding and stimulating.

Mrs. Wright told the meeting that there will be more meetings to discuss the various models presented and that comments from all members will be welcome.

**NEED YMCA IN HILL**

"We are part of the YWCA of Canada, and we do need your points of view. If it is the consensus of YWCA membership that we can pursue our goals best on our own, we will continue to do so, but the majority (of those surveyed) seem to feel joint effort would present to both organizations more scope, more challenge."

A member pointed out that there is no YMCA in the area and asked how it would affect the Richmond Hill Y.

Mrs. Wright agreed, adding there is no YMCA from Metro to Barrie, so closer cooperation or amalgamation would presumably lead to greater contact and co-operation with Metro.

Another member from Richvale said a YMCA is badly needed in the area, that apart from organized sports, such as hockey, there is nothing for men and boys in the way of recreational pursuits. She said that there was talk of including a YMCA in the recreational complex in the civic centre planned for the new BAIF development south of Vaughan Road.

**AVOID CONFLICT**

One member added that the YMCA had been approached and asked to come into Richmond Hill, stating, "The YMCA has activities for women and girls. We would be in direct rivalry. It seems the time has come for co-operation. It would be a great waste of energy otherwise, and we have had a lot of support from the men of the community. Now we should consider their needs."

Rae Abernathy, former executive director of Richmond Hill Y, reminded the meeting that the YMCA has taken the "Christian" out of its purpose. "Now with this (amalgamation) that would make us different from a public recreation facility? What are we setting ourselves up for? What about our commitment to people?"

Mrs. Wright replied that the



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Y has worked with the recreation committee in the area on some of its programs and that there is room in the community for both.

**WELFARE OF WOMEN**

Mrs. Grace Jackson, recently retired from the national executive of the YWCA, pointed out that people have the idea that it is always cheaper to amalgamate, but this is not a valid concept. There would be additional costs in equipment and personnel for a wider program to include boys and men.

"Equal opportunity is important, but we have to look at our commitment to the interests and welfare of women," said Mrs. Jackson, adding that this did not mean the "far-out" attitudes of "Women's Lib".

Mrs. Wright added that Mrs. Jackson had been very much involved in establishing the Y in the community and at that time the needs of women in the area were very real.

The members present were asked to consider all aspects of the proposals put forward for further study and discussion. Copies of the voluminous report of the commission, which had been very briefly summarized, would be available for study at the Y office at 25 Yonge Street North in Richmond Hill.

Mrs. Wallace thanked the TAB (take-a-break) group of Oak Ridges-Lake Wilcox for its hospitality in arranging for the hall for the meeting and providing refreshments. The discussion continued in informal groups when the meeting adjourned.

# Physical Fitness, Crafts, Day Camps Highlight "Y" Year

The Oak Ridges-Lake Wilcox TAB (take-a-break) group were hostesses for the Richmond Hill YWCA annual meeting in the community hall at Bond Lake Arena on February 28.

The meeting was opened by Rev. Robert McElhinney of St. Paul's United Church, Lake Wilcox, opened the meeting which was conducted by Y President Claudine Wallace.

West President Daphne Straumann presented Mrs. Wallace with a gift of appreciation for her two years of service as president, and a slate of directors for 1974 was presented by Lois Miller, chairman of the nominating committee.

It was a busy year for the Y with 89 mothers from Richvale, Oak Ridges, Lake Wilcox and Aurora attending weekly TAB programs in their own communities with baby-sitting provided.

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS**

A total of 1,180 children seven to 13 took part in the fitness recreation program in the evenings in eight public schools and three high schools. The program administered by the YWCA is sponsored by the Town of Richmond Hill.

The Park Y Day Camp expanded to include campers five to 13 and 428 children enrolled in 1973.

There were 67 craft and leisure skill classes offered, and emphasis on physical fitness continued with skiing, pre-school swim, tennis, golf, yoga, kindergym, teen weight control, and women's slim and trim.

The Y entered into the spirit of the town's Centennial Year with a float made and operated by youth leaders, and its Second Century Ball was the highlight of its 1973 fund raising campaign.

A newly developed baby-sitter training course proved very successful, and unique recreation opportunities were offered for mothers on family benefits allowance.

**CONVENTION IN BANFF**

Staff and volunteers attended a day care seminar, volunteer workshop, Galt pre-convention workshop, staff development seminar, and the local Y was represented by four voting delegates at the national YWCA Convention in Banff.

Development and involvement of over 100 women was encouraged through volunteer tasks — clerical, sales, receptionist, building maintenance, window display, community projects, child care and group leadership.

The Lake Wilcox Day Camp for 90 children was operated by ten local young people under the Opportunities For Youth program sponsored and encouraged by the YWCA.

The women's handcraft courses were extremely popular — crochet, needlepoint, sewing, decoupage, rug hooking, and the babysitting program was used by 216 children, freeing the mothers to join in Y activities. Youth leaders, 75 in all, were trained.

Information and community referral service continued at the YWCA front desk and over the telephone at Y headquarters at 25 Yonge Street North, and a federal LIP grant allowed the YWCA resale shop to serve customers in a store front location.

**CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAMS**

There were winter break programs in March last year for elementary school children, and there were co-operative programs with York Central Hospital Mental Health Clinic, Richmond Hill

Library and the Richmond Hill Parks and Recreation Department.

In her presentation to the meeting, President Claudine Wallace spoke of two outstanding events that made 1973 a most eventful year in the life of the local Y.

"The Centennial activities (of the Town of Richmond Hill) brought to our attention the rich heritage of our community and reminded us that we inherit a proud tradition in which to build a strong and purposeful future."

"1973 also found us preparing for the first national quadrennial convention in our second century, following the celebration in 1970 of the 100th birthday of the YWCA in Canada," said Mrs. Wallace. "The convention, held in Banff, Alberta, in June was attended by four voting delegates from our local Y."

She continued, "Acknowledging the rapid social changes of our times, both world-wide and within our community, we must review our program priorities and expand programs already producing beneficial results."

**WORLD-WIDE PROGRAM**

On behalf of the board of directors and staff, Mrs. Wallace expressed sincere appreciation to the many persons and organizations that have facilitated the work of the association through their assistance and support.

Membership and world relations chairman Daphne Straumann reported that through the world YWCA, national associations are enabled to know their counterparts in other lands and to be aware of what women around the world are thinking and doing in the field of public affairs, in improving the lot of themselves and

their children and in instituting health and educational reforms.

"The YWCA in Canada, even in its earliest days, has been interested in promoting association work in other countries," reported Mrs. Straumann. "This sustained interest in and financial support of world service demonstrates responsibility as a part of a world-wide fellowship."

The allocation of \$400 for world service was met by holding a country tea, distribution of coin banks, sale of Centennial spoons, operation of an English tearoom during Centennial Week and sale of hot chocolate for skaters.

**SERVICE PROJECTS**

A map of the world at the Y office depicts world service projects, and these are interpreted to participants in membership classes. A membership tea aided in raising funds and there was a collection of winter clothing for sale by a Y-Teens group at Blind River Indian Reserve. The local Y was also represented at a seminar on world relationship at Guelph.

Treasurer Gayle Brillinger presented the 1974 budget anticipating income of \$5,500 from the YWCA's annual campaign, \$3,100 from special events, \$2,500 from parks and recreation, 800 from fitness recreation, and an administrative grant of \$8,000. Membership fees are expected to bring in \$440, program fees and child care \$15,000 rental of facilities \$300 and monies from other sources to a total of \$39,040, for the year.

In output the budget anticipates \$18,540 for salaries of professional staff, \$8,000 for salaries of child care supervisors and instructors, \$3,900 for rental of facilities,

\$1,400 for program rental (schools, pools, etc.), \$1,500 for advertising programs, other services, and numerous other expenditures that would bring total outlay to \$39,040.

**NEW DIRECTORS**

Present directors who were serving the second year of their two-year term are Mrs. Evelyn Boyd, Mrs. Gay Brillinger, Mrs. Edith Burnfield, Mrs. Peggy Critchley, Mrs. Eileen Judge, Mrs. Maureen McGraw, Mrs. Phyllis Miller and Mrs. Daphne Straumann.

Present directors who were appointed by the board in 1973 to fill a vacancy and now being installed for two-year term are Mrs. E. Allan, Mrs. June Burn, Mrs. Marjory McLellan and Mrs. Frances Wachna.

Present directors who have filled one or two full terms and have now been elected for an additional two-year term are Mrs. Margaret Collett, Mrs. Lee Rimmon, Mrs. Claudine Wallace.

Members-at-large who were elected for a two-year term are Mrs. May Ashkanas, Mrs. Lola Buckles, Mrs. Edith Clement, Mrs. Joe Flett, Mrs. Lulia Parke, Mrs. Helen Pipher, Mrs. Janet Whalen and Mrs. Jo Wood. Elected to the nominating committee for 1974 were Mrs. Anna Little, Mrs. Dorothy McElhinney, Mrs. Lois Miller, Mrs. Dorothy Price, Mrs. Eva Allan and Mrs. Evelyn Boyd.

A panel presented "The Distance Between Two Triangles", a feasibility study of possible amalgamation of YMCA and YWCA in Canada.

Refreshments were served by the host TAB group.

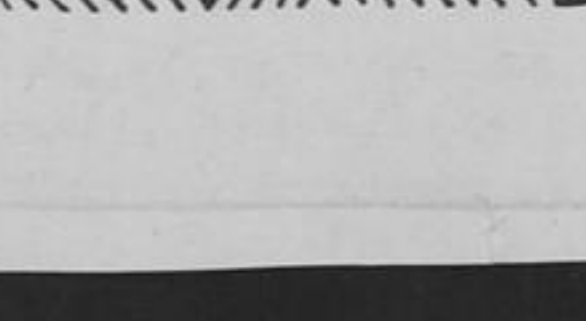
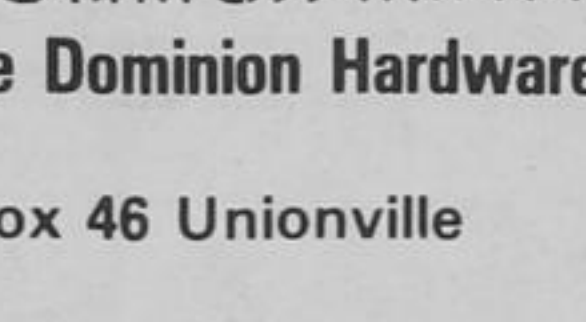
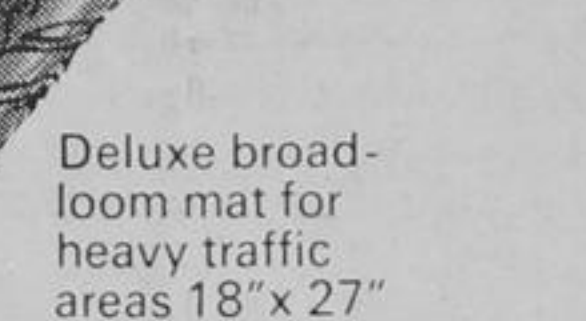
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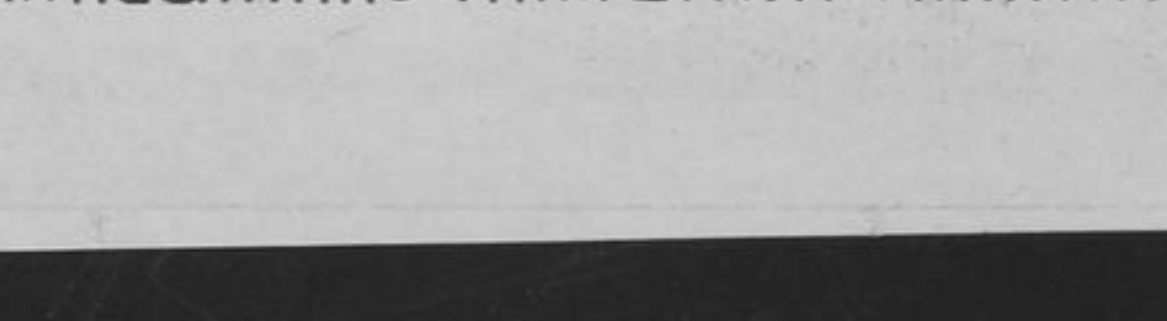
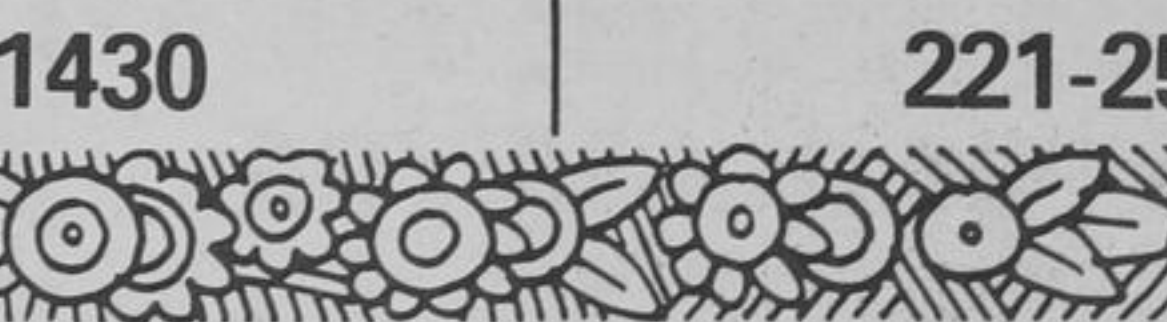
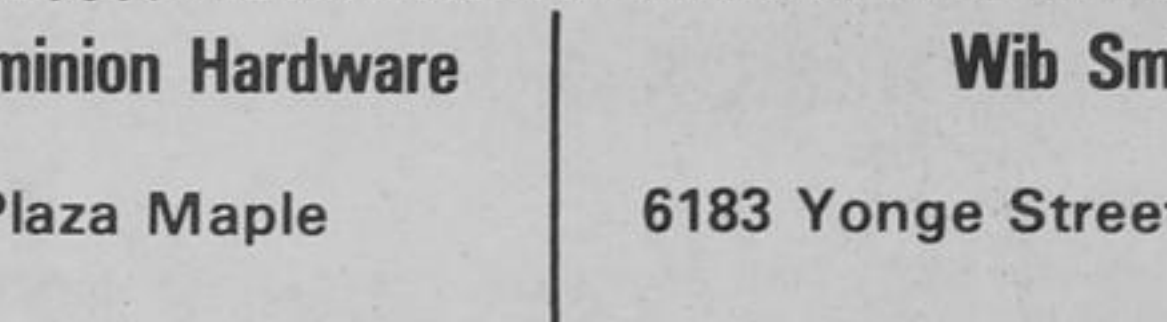
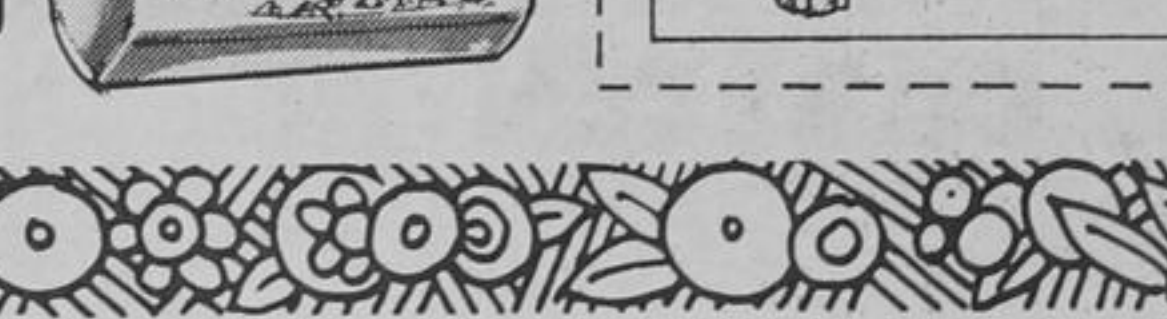
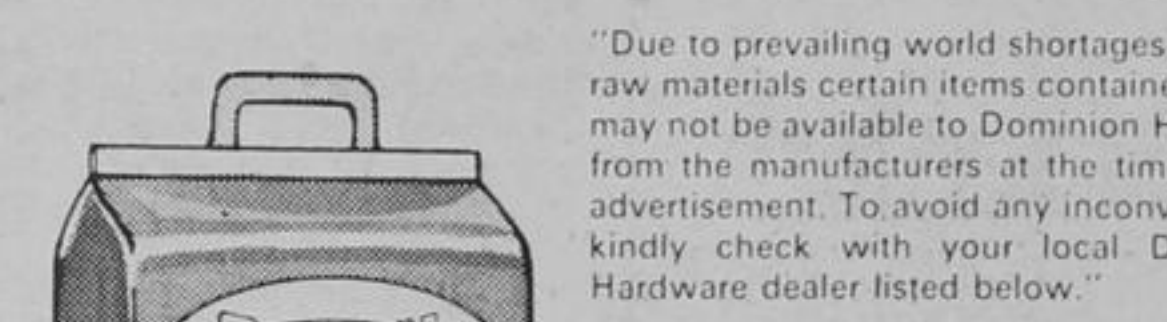
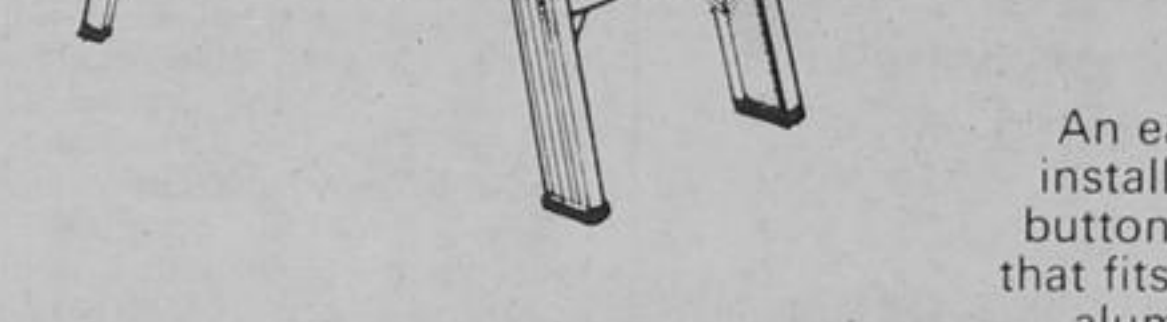
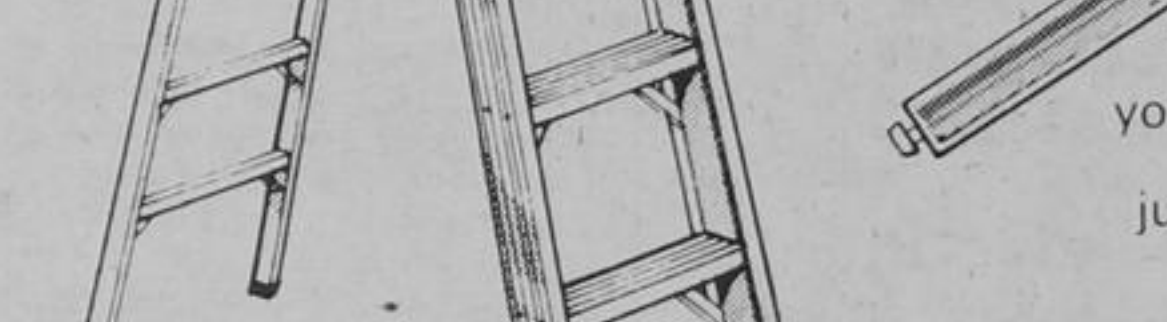
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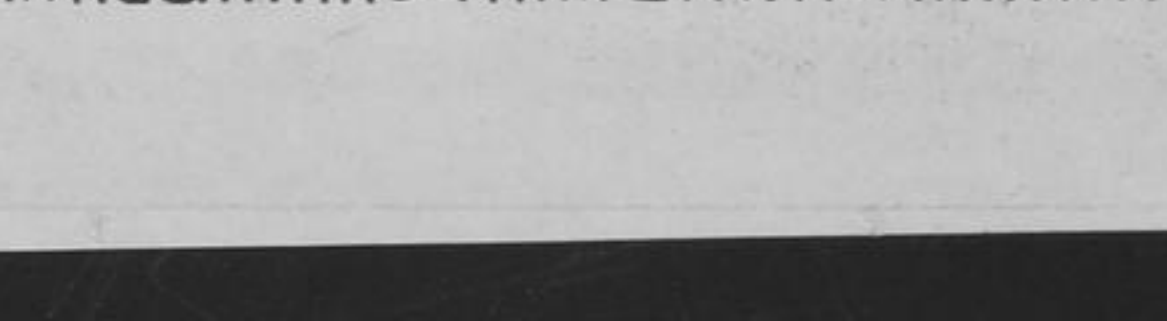
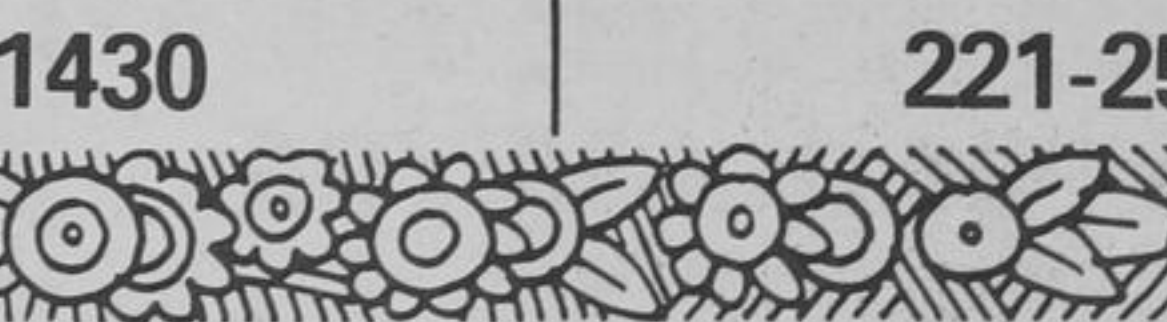
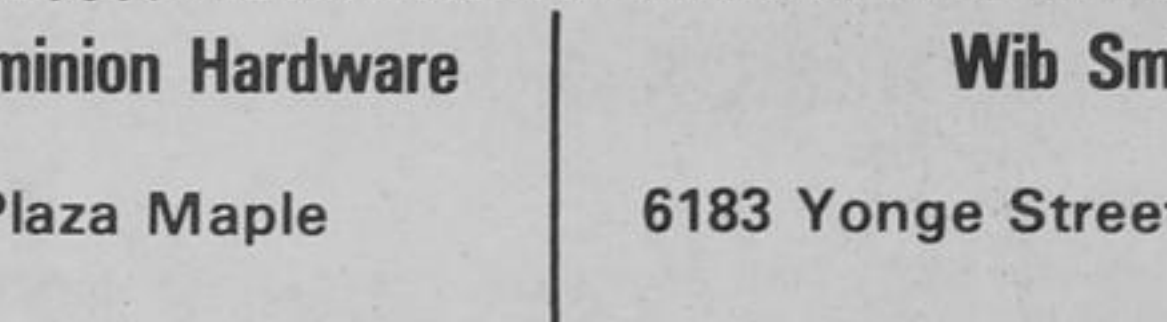
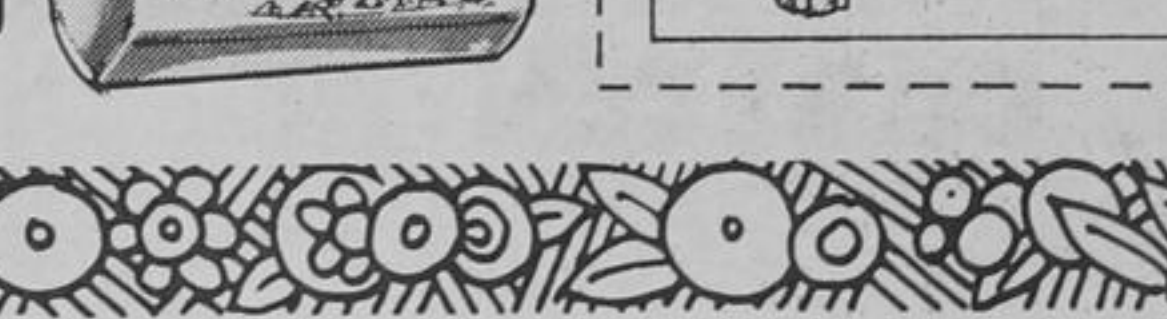
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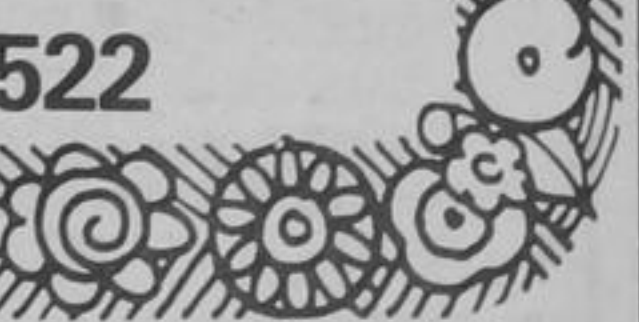
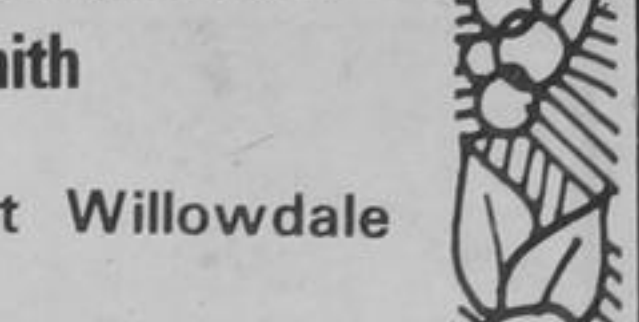
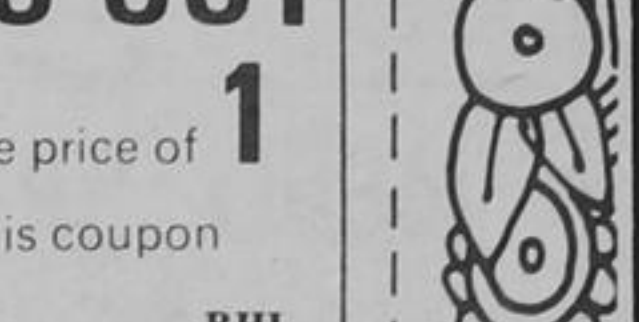


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