

# Education ---- back to the basics in cost and instruction --- parent

Dear Editor:  
There's a serious need for restatement of public policy for elementary and secondary schools in York Region.

Present policy, that seems to favor quantity over quality, is driving elementary and secondary education towards mediocrity.

There are good arguments to be made that this policy, although more affordable in the 1960's and early 1970's, did not serve us well then, either. A new balance must be sought between the QUALITY of what we do in our schools and the equitability of what we pay the people to operate them.

It would be unfair for me to criticize what the Board has done without being able to offer viable alternatives. Deep planning and structural changes will be needed if we are to achieve a quality "product" within reasonable levels of public expenditure.

In the most recent issue of "On Board", under the Director's Message, Robert Cressman asks this question: "How Much Can We Afford To Spend On Education?", only to answer the same with: "How Much Can We Afford Not To Spend On Education?" Cute eh? Let's not talk about the arithmetic (\$131 million), it's better to opt for safety in question-begging "ideology".

In an era of "soup-kitchens", the verbal flinchings used by the Director in between the forementioned question and answer-question, is "a little terrifying". Just a little. These comments need to be challenged.

No one can disagree with the Director when he writes: "Education is expensive and (that) ignorance costs our society even more dearly". But wise people, rethinking the same, could add that "ignorance in education costs even more".

Think for a moment about the "open" education schools built in the '60's and '70's---in many cases, built whether the communities wanted them or not. To oppose such schools was to invite ridicule and jeers from the education establishment.

Money wasted! Solid research now shows students in "open" classrooms

have made less intellectual progress on the average than their formally instructed peers in "traditional" schools.

The following statement is almost laughable---almost: "Ponder for a moment Canada's productivity record, realizing we have one of the highest strike rates in the world, and ask yourself whether or not attitudinal development has an impact on such decisions by Canadians". Nonsense and without foundation in fact. Only about one in five workers in Canada belongs to a labor union and what labor unions favor, may not be at all what "labor" favors; and there is ample evidence that many, sometimes even most, members of unions, do not agree with the pronouncements of their leaders (very similar to education).

I find this kind of statement particularly disturbing because it gives the impression that poor productivity is tied to Canadian unions and strikes. Nothing could be further from the truth. Poor productivity in Canada is related to many different factors. Most important of these are: (1). Foreign owned and controlled industry where cheap (yes cheap) labor and "free" natural resources are valued more highly than advanced technology. It is the lack of Canadian initiative, poor governmental policies and branch-plant Americanism that has given us these inefficient Neanderthal industries. (2). Approximately two-thirds of our workers lack knowledge and proper training for the job they are doing---including teachers! Which, of course, brings the problem back to the school doorstep. Just as our governments have done a poor job with industrial policies, schools have done a poor job in educating and training workers. Examples of poor productivity abound in the educational system---programs introduced without proper courses of study; industrial art courses that industries don't recognize and special education courses based on shaky scientific evidence.

In the past fifteen years, there has been a marked decline in cognitive achievement in elementary schools, that may rival our

high schools. And how could it be anything else? French instruction has been enlarged to 40 minutes a day; family life and sex education courses introduced and enrichment programs (some of dubious value) added without lengthening the school day or the school year (these, in fact, have been shortened). Something has to suffer and most enlightened people know what it is---THE BASICS.

What the public wants AND DESERVES is more

emphasis on basic skills and the discipline necessary to attain them---QUALITY EDUCATION---within an affordable budget. A system where students are constructively engaged in lessons about 85 percent of the time (compared to the present 25 percent)---a system that rewards hard work. I cannot imagine any society in its proper senses, passing anything along to an education system that fails to meet quality and quantity of instruction.

The truth is, many

of these "societal problems" have been usurped by the school system, whether there were parental objections or not. It is to be hoped those who know all do better with sex education than they did with reading, otherwise homosapiens may become extinct in one generation.

The facts reviewed above, strongly suggest it's time to put aside attempted externalizations of blame for increased spending in education and face up to the arithmetic and realities

of the situation. Simple arithmetic (our economy was down five percent in 1982), not ideology must prevail in education spending. The buck stops here. Our society should only spend on education WHAT IT CAN AFFORD TO SPEND! Can York Region afford to spend \$131 million in view of the current depression? The answer is a resounding "NO". There is a serious need for a restatement of public policy relating to spending by the Board if it is truly concerned about the

long-term vitality of our community and its education system.

It would appear present policy and

"director messages" are geared for the era of massive expansion in the 1960's and 70's. But things have

changed since then. If they haven't, noticed then some one should tell them.

Sincerely  
Sylvette Brown,  
Keswick.

## Dead end---almost

# Crash barrier

LINCOLNVILLE --- A 27-year-old Pickering motorist, unfamiliar with the area, turned west on the old Bloomington Road at Lincolnville, Saturday night, not knowing the

pavement was to come to an abrupt end a thousand feet ahead.

Dennis and Rebecca Mundy of Rosebank Road, crashed their 1977 Chrysler New York

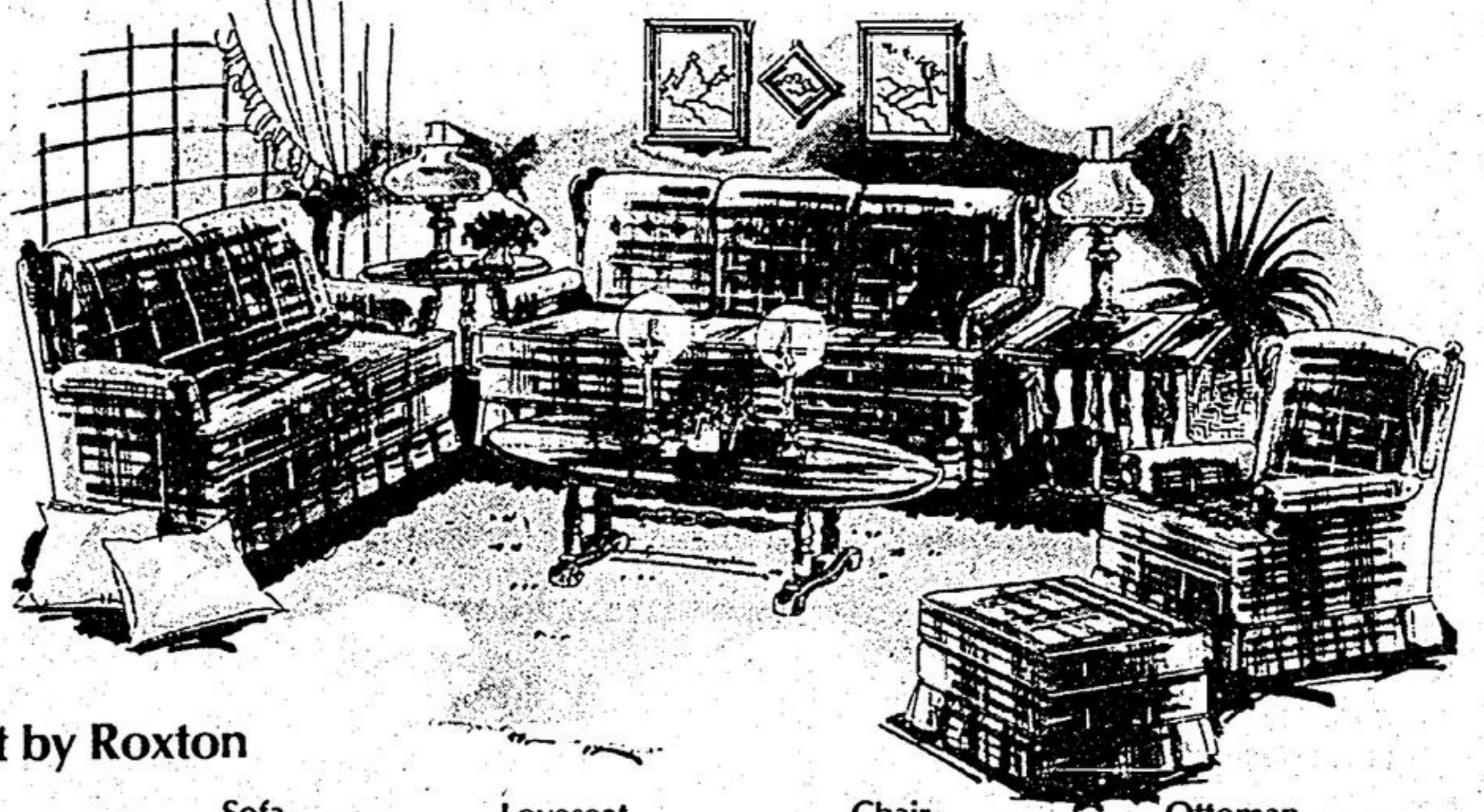
ker through two wooden barriers, struck a culvert and came to a sudden stop in a deep ditch. They were temporarily trapped in the wreckage and had to be released by

firemen from Stouffville. The couple was taken by ambulance to Scarborough Centenary Hospital, treated for minor injuries and later released.



### Colonial Living Room Set by Roxton

Here's colonial styled pieces our forefathers would have enjoyed. The finest in old fashioned warmth and comfort so appealing in a less formal decor. Nothing could be cozier or reflect that warm, yet rustic, style better! Roxton colonial upholstery is manufactured to the same high standard of design and hand craftsmanship which has become traditional, with its solid rock maple furniture. The exposed wood trim is protected by the tough, durable Rox-tide finish.



Sofa **649<sup>88</sup>**    Loveseat **519<sup>88</sup>**    Chair **349<sup>88</sup>**    Ottoman **129<sup>88</sup>**

Oval Cocktail Table **239<sup>88</sup>**    Oval End Table **139<sup>88</sup>**    Nesting Tables **239<sup>88</sup>**

### Contemporary Dining Room Suite by Universal

Limited space? Here's a beautiful answer. There's no dining room, L-shaped area or alcove that can't accommodate this attractively designed, lightly scaled grouping. The Parsons table 40" x 40" with a high pressure mar-resistant laminate top, extends to 58" when more seating is needed. Contoured slat back chairs are styled with comfortable fabric seats. The functional mobile server takes up little space, yet provides spacious buffet surface as well as generous storage.

Table ..... **229<sup>88</sup>**  
Chair ..... **69<sup>88</sup> ea.**  
Mobile Server ..... **229<sup>88</sup>**



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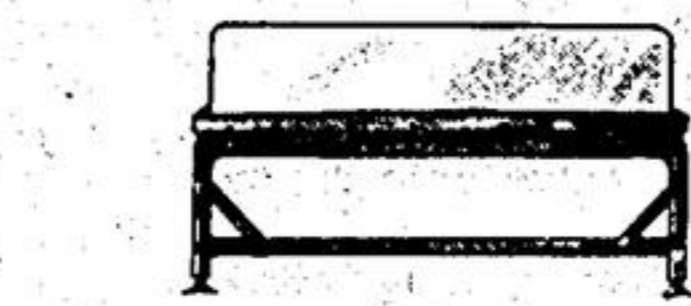


### Library Wall Units by Craftline

Can't afford Craftline luxury? Look again! These campaign style library units provide beauty and functionality. Each piece is meticulously crafted and finished in a medium ebony tone to provide a lifetime of enjoyment with minimal care. Each unit stands at 30 x 12 x 84 H and features fixed shelves and brass strip accents (2 units shown)

**339<sup>88</sup> ea.**

### Hi Riser Sleeper by Sealy



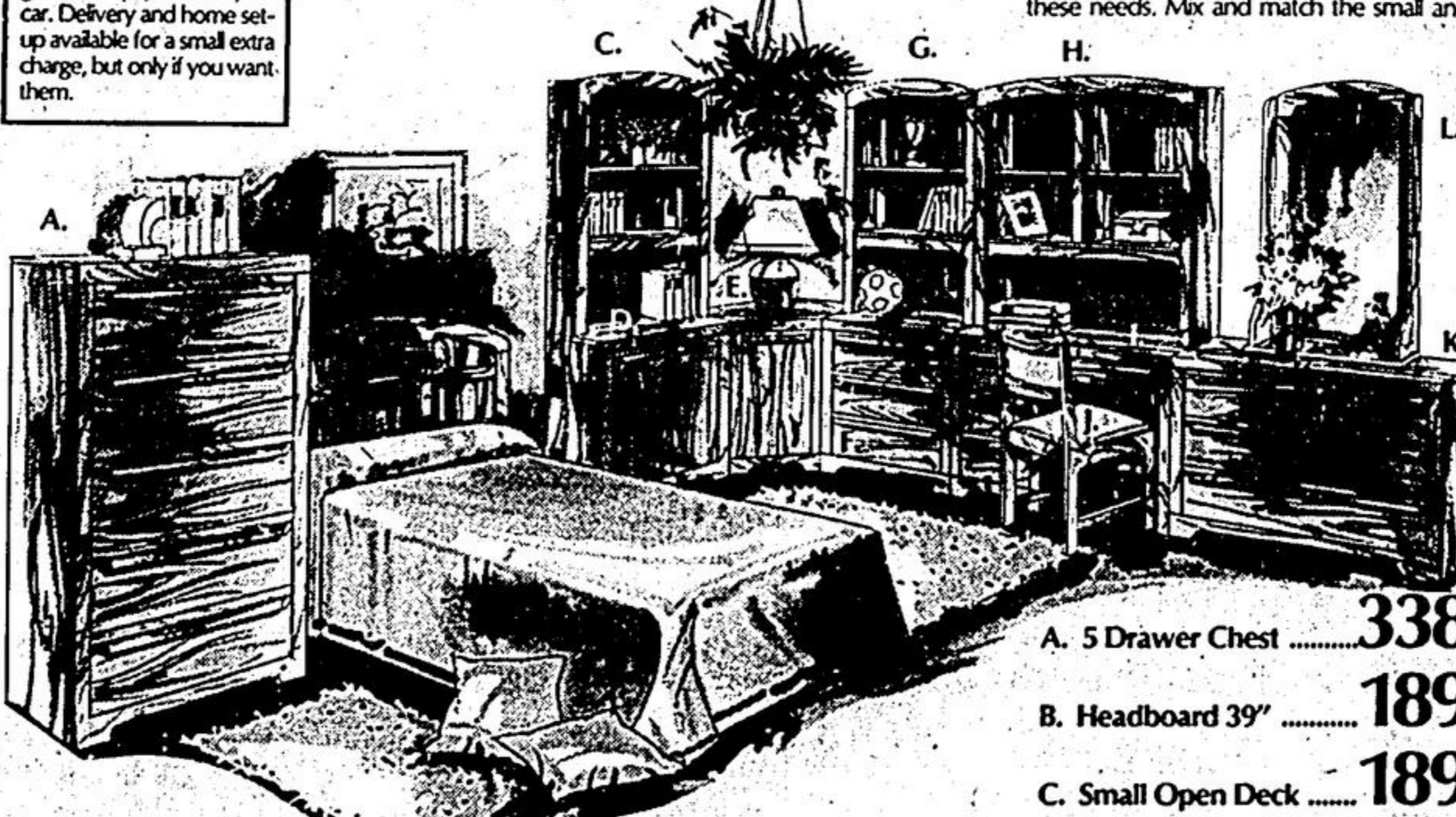
Shrinking bedroom? You can expand your sleeping potential with Sealy's Hi Riser sleeper. The quality and price make it a perfect idea. Units measure 39" x 74". Include two super firm Sealy mattresses. Welded all steel frame with ultra-firm springs.

It's A Sturdy, Convenience, And It's Only:

**369<sup>88</sup>**

### Bedroom Grouping by Lea Industries

These inflationary days it makes good sense to invest in quality. Something that will stand up to every day living. Lea Industries presents this flexible juvenile bedroom grouping, the answer to these needs. Mix and match the small and large units to achieve the look that's right for you. Crafted of oak hardwood solids and veneers.



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F. Bachelor Chest ..... **189<sup>88</sup>**  
G. Small Open Deck ..... **189<sup>88</sup>**  
H. Large Open Deck ..... **279<sup>88</sup>**  
I. Student Desk ..... **279<sup>88</sup>**  
J. Desk Chair ..... **179<sup>88</sup>**  
K. Single Dresser ..... **279<sup>88</sup>**  
L. Vertical Mirror ..... **119<sup>88</sup>**  
A. 5 Drawer Chest ..... **338<sup>88</sup>**  
B. Headboard 39" ..... **189<sup>88</sup>**  
C. Small Open Deck ..... **189<sup>88</sup>**

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