

RC Board renews term of education director

JULIE CASPERSEN
Staff Reporter

A York Region education director has been retained for three years despite spurning his board's budget.

York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board trustees voted last Thursday to renew the contract of Director of Education



BOBESICH

Frank Bobesich for three years with an option for another three.

Initial contract talks started May 12, two weeks after the board of trustees approved a deficit budget that plunged the board deeper into debt to the tune of \$23 million.

Bobesich publicly berated the trustees for not levying a higher tax hike. Trustees passed a 6.6 per cent increase although a balanced budget called for a tax jump of more than 13 per cent.

He also refused to sign the budget before it was sent to the Ministry of Education.

A board source said trustees received a memo before the May 12 contract meeting from the director informing them he would not support the budget, and took it as a warning to

renew the contract or face a punitive lawsuit.

Negotiations were delayed until last Thursday when the director was signed on for another three years. In the meantime the board asked for legal opinion and were told they had the right to not renew Bobesich.

But Bobesich said he never intended to take legal action.

"I don't think it was in my mind to take them to court. I was told from the beginning it would be renewed."

Bobesich said he did not want to lend his name as director and secretary-treasurer to an illegal document. "Look at the position I'm put in. I'm not supposed to sign a deficit budget. I have to respect the Education Act," he said in an interview.

"I protected my own integrity by not signing the budget."

Bobesich wanted trustees to approve a tax increase on par with, if not higher than, the York Region Board of Education which passed a 6.9 per cent tax increase.

Markham (Thornhill) trustee Nora Sullivan said public scolding from Bobesich isn't common.

"I don't condone a director that tears a strip off trustees. Frank's not like that. It's not his style," she said.

But Sullivan said the renewal of the director's contract should not hinge on a single issue.

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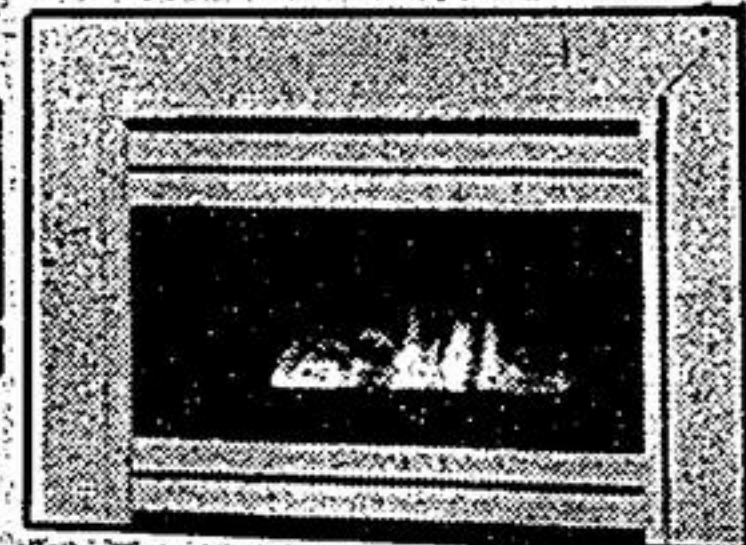
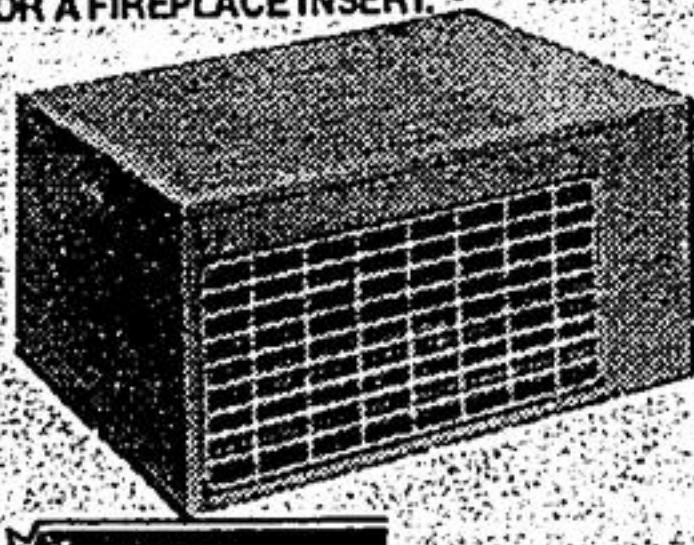
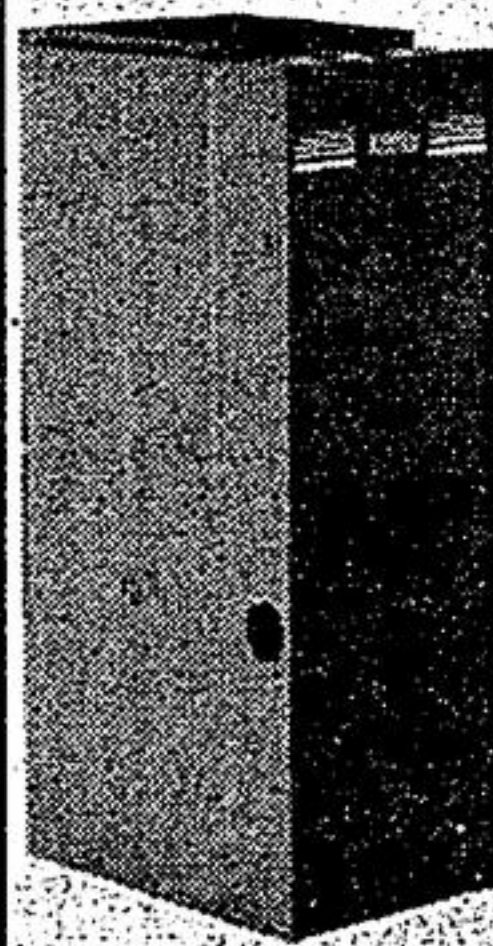
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