

School board snubs provincial group

York Region's public school board is breaking away from a provincial group it feels has been too "negative" on Progressive Conservative plans for education.

Budget committee trustees have decided the board should no longer belong to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, which represents almost all public boards in Ontario and has been highly critical of Tory education reforms.

OPSBA has threatened a court challenge against a new provincial law which will merge many school boards and cap trustee salaries

at \$5,000.

"Our board has some concerns about the extreme negativism" the association has shown on the reforms, board chair Bill Crothers said.

"The board doesn't want any part of that court action," he added.

Trustees could decide the matter tonight if, as expected, the board's budget passes.

OPSBA officials were told the group must supply "a vision statement and action plan" on its role "within a restructured educational community," and that the board won't renew

its membership until it is satisfied with the plan.

The association's president said she told the board OPSBA is doing what it needs to do to protect public education. "We take our directions from the majority (of boards)," Lynn Peterson said in an interview this month.

Since the annual \$97,000 membership fee won't be in the budget, it will be almost impossible for the board to renew later this year, Crothers said.

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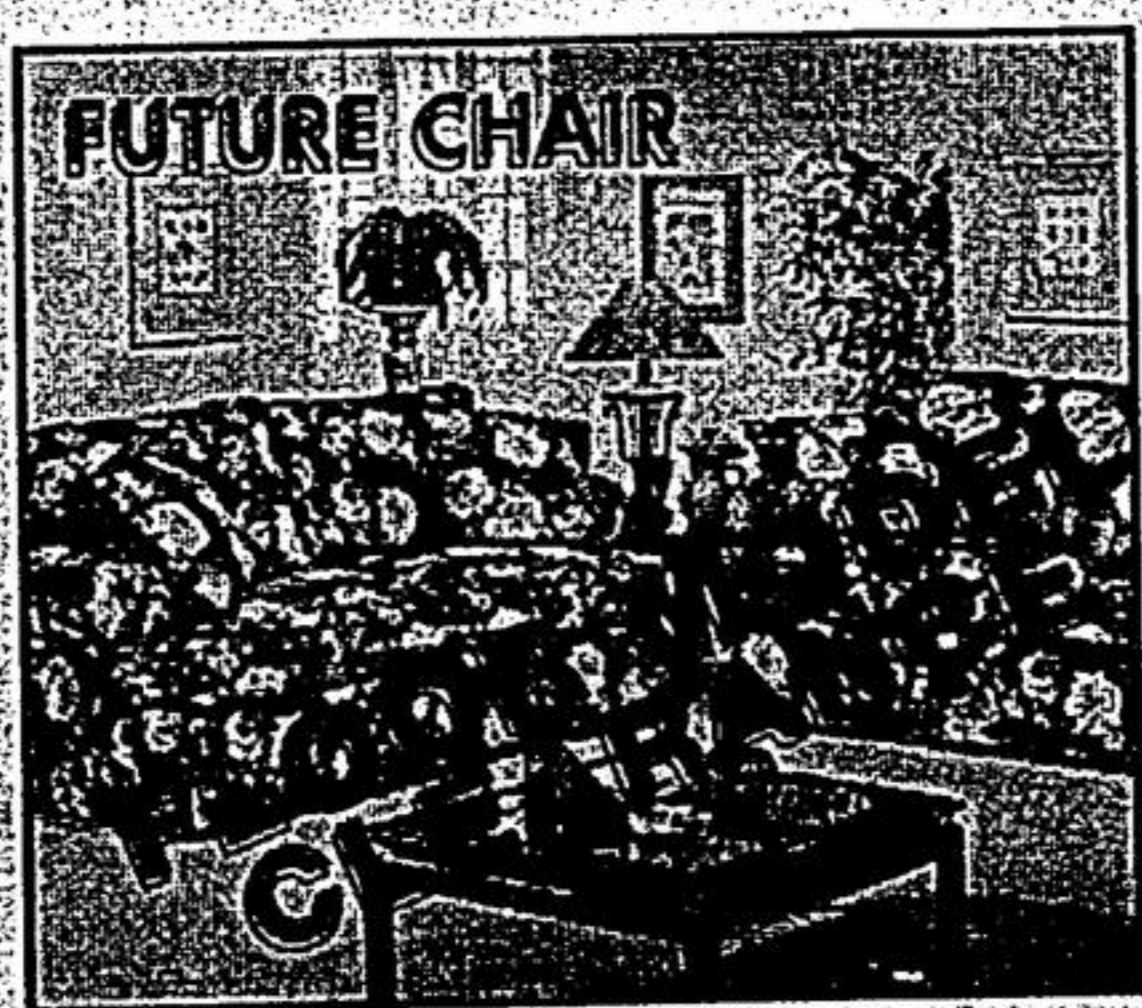
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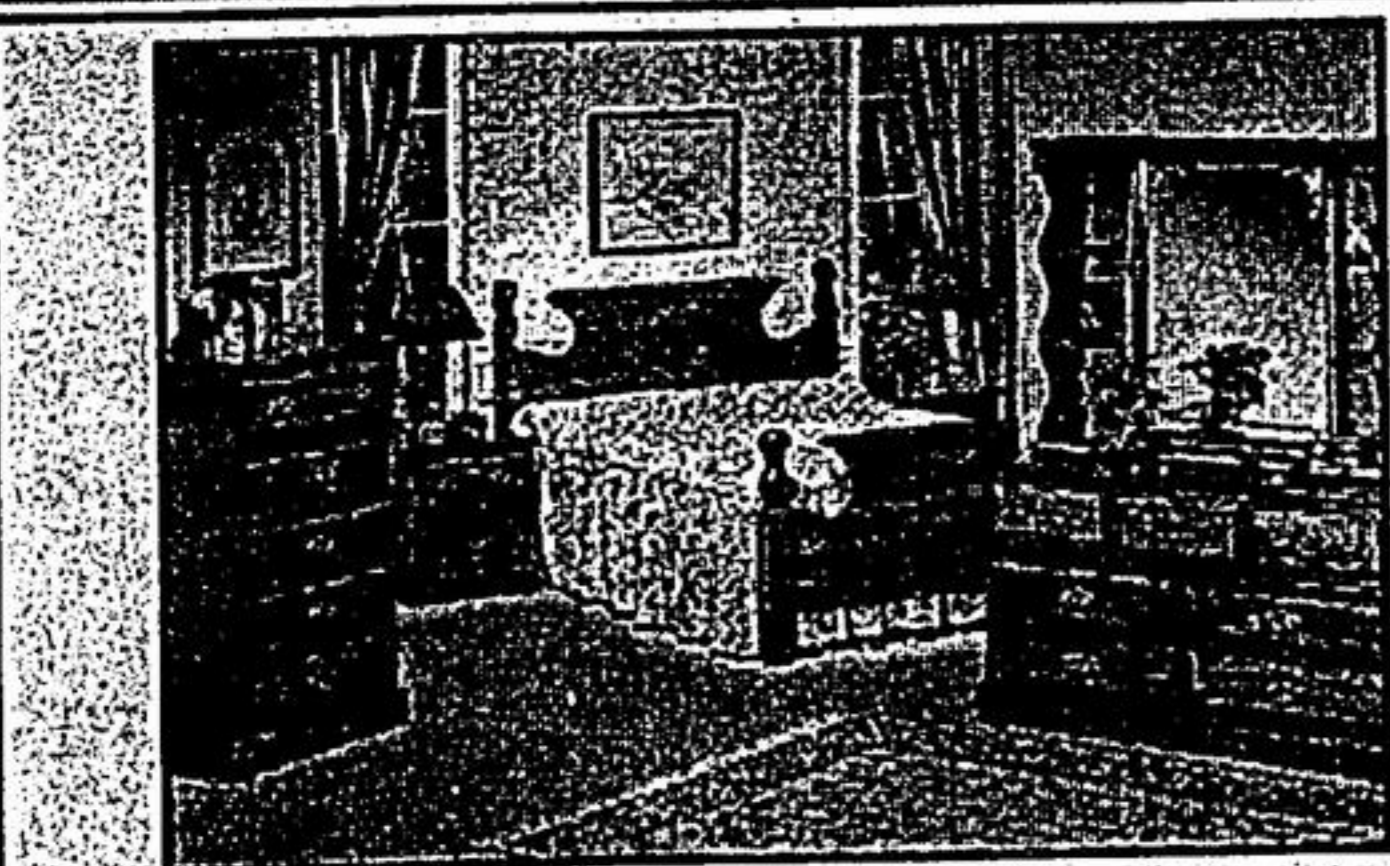
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