

Weather hampered voting by high school teachers

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The board has refused to issue the report cards without comments. Last week, teachers officially refused to lead extra-curricular activities, but many of them had already abandoned those duties.

Meanwhile, board negotiators have reached a tentative two-year agreement for nearly 2,000 instructors in 23 high schools.

The secondary teachers were to vote on the agreement Tuesday, but the weather interfered. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation was still tallying the votes yesterday.

It hoped to present the results at last night's board meeting. If the teachers ratified the agreement, trustees were to vote on it.

Chairperson Bill Crothers said he thinks that deal, coupled with others across Ontario, will put pressure on elementary teachers to settle their dispute, dismissing a claim the board is responsible for the lack of a settlement.

"There's no reason why we can't reach an agreement. We should have had an agreement with the elementary people months ago," he said, adding the teachers understand the need for stability in the school system.

"We have maintained from day one that we will not treat our teachers unions differently. We have already got one agreement. How many do they have?"

No details of the high school teachers agreement have been released. According to board officials, it does not strip away any of the benefits teachers previously enjoyed.

Negotiators have tried for nearly five months to reach a deal and were stuck on salaries and workload.

Teachers wanted a 4-per-cent pay hike over one year but the board has offered 2 per cent in each of three years. Teachers also wanted limits on administrative duties but the board wasn't willing to entertain the idea.



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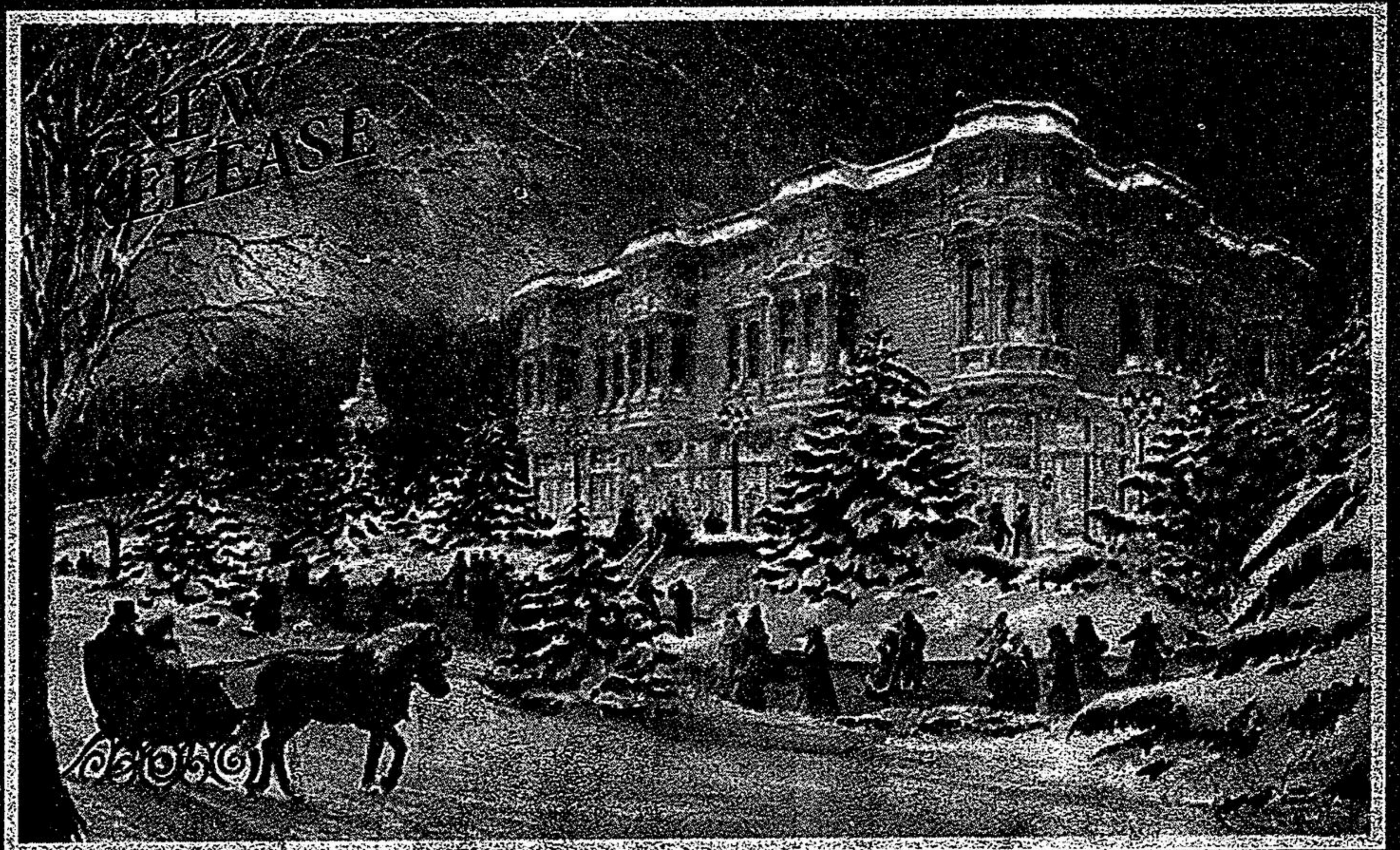
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