Education Facilities in Schreiber Are Continually Being Updated

BY INEZ McCUAIG

The surest indication of progress in Schreiber is the increasing improvement in the school system. The buildings in themselves are proof of this.

These include a public school with eight classrooms, separate school with 10 classrooms and auditorium, high school with nine classrooms, a library, and gym-auditorium.

This spring an addition of 10,000 square feet, to the public school will be opened. This will include two classrooms, one kindergarten, one general purpose room (gym facilities and auditorium) a library resource centre, health unit, and two change rooms and showers. It is of cement block construction and has electric heating.

All this, in a village boasting some 2,000 population!

Schreiber's concern for their children's education began before the town was incorporated, when, in July, 1888, Secretary-treasurer J. E. Walker wrote the Minister of Education for instructions as to the proper steps to take to collect our school taxes. We have a school section, duly registered, but we are in an unorganized district. So far we have collected our school money by subscription—what we want to do is assess the property in the usual way and levy a tax. Will you kindly give us the necessary information how to proceed? Can we assess the Canadian Pacific property, that is to say, station, workshops, round house and etc. By giving the desired information you will confer a favor."

It is assumed that Mr. Walker must have been, then, secretary-treasurer of a board governing the first public school, then being conducted in a small building, the former office of the C.P.R. resident engineer, donated by the Company.

In passing, one notes that Mr. Walker was the owner of the famous Corner Store in Schreiber, and the letter was written on his stationery, bearing in the corner, James E. Walker, Gents Furnishings, Dry Goods and Groceries, Boots and Shoes, Provisions, Hardware and Crockery.

This letter was followed by another, in 1897 by reeve Alex McGregor. By 1902 it was apparent, from overcrowding that due to increase in population, that more room was needed and the board decided to build a four room school, again, on property, donated by the C.P.R. for school purposes, and in 1903 the move was made to the new building.

This school was adequate until 1912 when the same problem of space forced the addition of two rooms and an enlarged entrance. While this was being done classes were held in the rink, the town hall, and the Methodist Church.

These changes, at the elementary level, continued until 1923. But during the previous five years, George Evans, the first principal who served for 37 years in that office, started a group of advanced students, ones who had passed the provincial entrance examinations meaning entrance to high school, in what he termed junior and senior fifth classes, teaching the rudiments of algebra, geometry, etc. thus becoming the father of secondary education in Schreiber.

The school board again decided to expand and in 1924 opened the continuation school which with four rooms was annexed to the public school.

The public school now with six rooms, was still finding it difficult to cope with the continually increasing enrolment, and in 1943 a separate school section was added.

And, on August 31, 1963 the Schreiber High School was opened. An interesting feature of the event was the presence of seven students who had attended the first little one room school, Mrs. Tom Arnot (nee Mary Hawkonson), Mrs. Percy Sully (nee Agnes Scott), Mrs. George Moore (nee Margaret Hogg), Mrs. Jack Corbett (nee Louise Riley), Mrs. J. E. Thompson (nee Otto McCuaig), Mrs. Wally Simon (nee Kay Walker) whose father wrote the original 'school' letter, and, George Riley.

One of the latest moves has been the creation of the Lake Superior Board of Education, (doing away with individual boards) which is in charge of schools in Schreiber, Terrace Bay, Marathon, and Manitouwadge. Rossport students now attend school in Schreiber.

And, this year, the high schools in Schreiber and Terrace Bay have been joined in the Lake Superior High School, a school with two campuses, one principal.

This big step has been accepted most amicably by the students, who have worked out the problem of student association and a new name, but are presently bogged down in the matter of school colors.

Buses convey students from Rossport, Schreiber, and Terrace Bay back and forth between the schools, cementing individual friendships, an awareness of each other, and the growing pride in belonging to, in Northwestern Ontario.

It is a matter of gratified pride, to Schreiber, that many of the teachers who come here, because of the salaries, remain for years, because they have fallen in love with the people, the advantages of year-round sports activities at small or no cost, and decide to remain until their families are at the university level. Many due to their record here receive wooing offers from other larger centres.

As one teacher put it, "To park my sailboat in my backyard where else could I do it?"

In both the public and the separate schools, the third generation are students, with grandparents to cast a wary eye on each and every change in methods.

And, one of the greatest tributes to the continually improving methods in education must have been paid by parents in Schreiber, who have paid since 1888 to educate children who could never remain in their own community due to limited resources, but, who have brought renown to their birthplace.

The latest biggest stride in education was the amalgamation of Schreiber and Terrace Bay high schools into the Lake Superior high school, one school with two campuses. The board, very wisely, permitted the students to choose by voting the name for their new school, and they have settled, very comfortably into the new status, organizing their various student organizations, uniting in some areas for strength, but retaining invidual interests and associations.

E. E. Forgues, the principal, faces the challenge, with a solid background in education: 1952-55, teacher principal in St. Mary's School, Cornwall; 1955-57 with the Nickel District Collegiate and Vocation Institute; 1957-65 with the North Dundas District High School Board; 1965-67 principal of Schreiber High School; 1967-68 principal of the District High School, Caselman, Ont.; 1968 chief supervisory officer, Hearst Board of Education; 1969 director of education, Hearst; 1971 principal Lake Superior High School.

Mr. Forgues, as additional professional affiliations has served with Ontario Education Officials, the American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, and the Association for the Mentally Retarded.

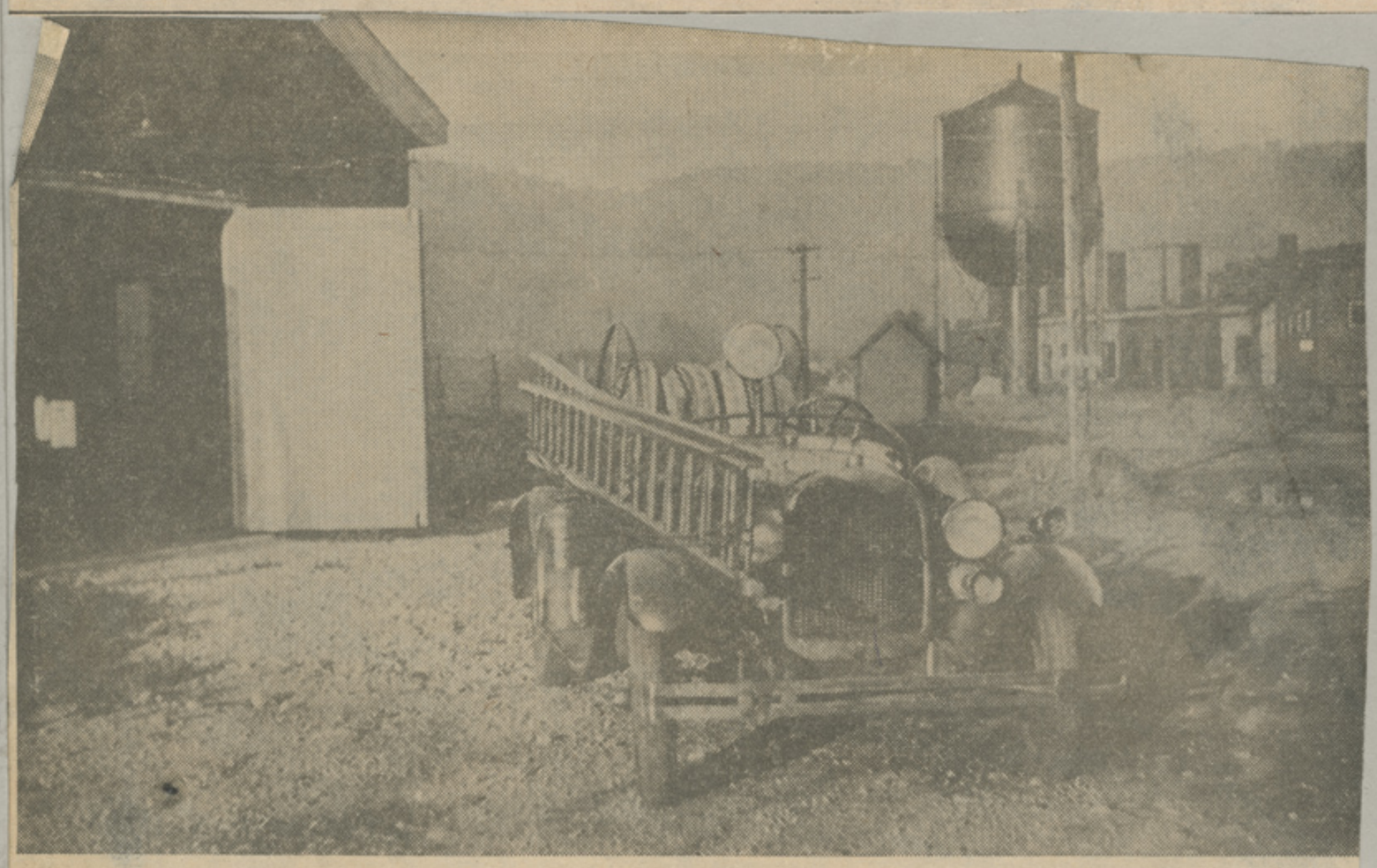
He holds the rank of Major with the Stormount, Dundas and Glengary Highlanders, Cornwall (having served as commissioned officer in the Canadian Army (Regular) on active duty) and is now on supplementary reserve.

Mr. Forgues has also been president at both district and branch levels in the ODDTF, and worked on numerous other programs immediately concerned with education.

A curiousity in Schreiber Public School is that there are at least 14 families with the third generation attending, whose grandparents are still in the town.

And, some of the fourth generation families have crossed to a bewildering extent to anyone attempting to make a survey.

At one time there were 10 sets of twins attending Holy Angels' Separate School in Schreiber, a few identical twins!



FIRE EQUIPMENT—These three pictures from Schreiber illustrate how fire fighting equipment has changed over the years. The first hose reel used by the town is seen in the TOP LEFT PHOTO with Hugh Stewart. In the TOP RIGHT PHOTO is the town's first fire truck. The present fire truck (BOTTOM PHOTO) is seen with driver Wesley Clements and standing from left: Bruce Carmichael. Jack Richardson, Floyd Caldwell, Albert Bourguignon and Burton Phillips, and front: Hugh Stewart, Peter Halonen and George Riley.

—Photos from Inez McCuaig