

# Fed Up With Conditions, Man Sparks Probe Of Public School At Blairton

Jack Jones was fed up with conditions in the public school Blairton, near Crowe Lake east of Havelock, where his seven-year-old son, Martin, is a pupil.

He and other parents of children attending the school had given up hope that the local education or health authorities would ever act on complaints about unsafe and unsanitary conditions in the 70-year-old schoolhouse.

Just before Christmas, armed with a petition signed by a majority of the parents, Jack Jones decided to take more direct action.

## TOV TO TORONTO

He drove to Toronto, to Queen's Park, and stalked into the office of Health Minister Arthur Dymond.

But the minister was in conference. And, said his secretary, he couldn't be disturbed. She agreed, though, to arrange an interview with the education department nearby.

Mr. Jones went there. He told his story. But nothing happened. "I was told it was really a matter for the local authorities," he recalled this week.

Frustrated once more, he returned home, sat down and wrote to Health Minister Dymond. So far he has had no reply.

But he has received some attention. For two years, he claims, efforts had been made to have a representative of the Ontario Fire Marshal's office inspect the six schoolhouses in the Belmont and Methuen No. 2 school area. Recently, this request was met. To date, the inspector's findings have not been made known locally.



—(Yunge-Bateman Photo)

## JACK JONES Sparked Action

...some of this be spent on primary needs—the cleaning-up of conditions in the rural schools?" he asks.

As matters stand, he stressed any repairs that are done to these old school buildings must be paid for directly out of the local taxpayers' pockets. And school boards were often reluctant to spend the necessary money.

G. A. Pelletier, said today from the fire marshal's office at Toronto that report of an investigation by the department of several schools in the Blairton area was being sent out to officials concerned.

The report would likely go to the fire chief in the area, the school board, and two copies to the department of education in Toronto. The education department might send out a copy to the school inspector in the Blairton district, he said.

Mr. Pelletier said that he would write to Mr. Jones explaining why a copy of the report was not being sent to him.

The fire marshal's office only sends reports of its investigations to those who can take official action on them, said Mr. Pelletier. The department then follows up to see that its recommendations are carried out.

## T AND WAIT

Now Mr. Jones and the 10 other family heads — representing of the school's 28 children — signed the petition must sit and wait.

The petition they signed asks: Can we be compelled to send our children to a school which operating in direct contravention of the fire laws in that it is only one door and that door being partly obstructed by an old box stove with stove pipes running the length of the school."

It adds: "Furthermore, can we be compelled to send children to a school where sanitary conditions are such that the county inspector (K. O. Birkin) states the conditions are something worse than disgusting. Also, in order to maintain efficient heat for anything approaching comfort the students have to keep their overshoes on and quite often their snow-suits, too."

## COOL ROOM

Mr. Jones said Thursday a thermometer placed on the floor Blairton school had failed to register more than 40 degrees anytime in the past week. And ten it was closer to 30 degrees.

This, he pointed out, was despite a wood stove that was kept burning at peak temperature. "It's just that the floors are so old they can't be heated," he declared.

According to Mr. Jones, education department regulations call for a minimum tempera-

ture of 68 degrees to be maintained in the schools.

"How is this to be achieved in unheated, outdoor toilets in sub-zero weather," he queried.

"They're talking about spending \$2,500,000 on a new technical school at Madoc. Why can't