

McNAB TOWNSHIP HAD BUT 3 SCHOOLS HISTORY REVEALS

Today bigger and better school areas are being devised for McNab township's more advanced pupils; they are brought into Renfrew or Arnprior by bus and in the evening set down again at their own farm gates. That is probably as it should be because of the better facilities and broader curriculum possible in these larger schools. It would, however, probably enable both pupils and parents to better appreciate these present-day advantages were (they to understand what their forbears, the pioneers of McNab, endured to give the pupils of that day even a smattering of the three R's amid the primitive conditions that existed not more than ten years following the Laird o' McNab's misrule of the township he had founded.

Among the faded tomes and documents recently recovered from the old and original township hall in McNab, on the property now being developed and harnessed to produce upward of 100,000 h.p. for Ontario's hydro, there is one official record that tells of McNab's earliest school days around those rapids that first attracted the settlers to what we know as Stewartville, then Balmer Rapids, now the pulsating centre of Ontario's \$10,000,000 power development.

On paper that still crackles and in ink that is almost as legible as when it was written on September 1st, 1856, there is set forth what provision should be made to aid the three schools that then comprised all the centres of learning they had in that new township of hills, valleys, virgin timber and the Madawaska.

John Paris, the same sturdy oak who came over from Beck-with township to establish a sawmill and grist mill, against the threats and fulminations of Chief McNab, the same Paris who was persecuted by the Chief and who in turn led the assault that led to the Chief's departure, friendless and alone in 1841, was Reeve of the new municipality in 1856 and A. H. Dowsdell was township clerk.

In that old disintegrating town hall that still stands as a monument to the rugged men who planned a municipality of 88,000 acres and charted its future, the elected governors of the scattered settlement sat long and deliberated wisely. The present appearance of the township speaks volumes for their vision and foresight, they built well an enduring foundation.

At this particular meeting upward of a century ago Reeve Paris and his Councillors were as scrupulous in the matter of detail as they were of the script-like character of their penmanship. Thus they set out that "Under authority of an Act passed during the twelfth year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, entitled an Act to provide by one general law for the erection of municipal corporations in Upper Canada and the establishment of regulations of police, that the sum of one farthing and seven pence in the pound be collected for county purposes, the sum of one farthing in the pound for township purposes as an equivalent to the Legislative grant for school purposes and the sum of six pence to be levied for the asylum tax." Evidently what asylums there were in those formative days of Upper Canada were maintained by direct tax on the municipalities.