



OUR "CITY" HALL

The above photograph is an excellent picture of the Town Hall which should, perhaps, be more properly designated as a "Community Hall" because of its many and varied services to the Village people as well as the several organizations scattered over a much larger area.

The front portion of this structure was erected by the Township of Asphodel about 1870 and at the time of Incorporation in 1878 it was purchased from the Township at a price of \$500.00. From its very beginning, the building has been used for many types of public affairs, priority being given to Council meetings, Elections and the Division Court sittings or other open meetings held in the interest of a growing Community. It was also in considerable demand by travelling troupes for putting on "shows" of many varieties for the entertainment and amusement of the general public.

After the incorporation of the Village of Norwood in 1878 the popularity of this building rapidly increased until it was deemed necessary to increase its capacity. Accordingly, in 1906 a contract was awarded to the late Harold Elliot for the erection of the rear portion at a total cost of \$3,500.00 plus materials for the roof. After the addition was completed, the Hall had a seating capacity of 375 to 400 without crowding. On one occasion within the memory of the writer, the Hall was engaged by a troupe known as "The Arlie Marks Show" for a three night stand. So popular was this troupe, that the Hall was filled to its limit on the first night and on the succeeding two nights. Planks were suspended from several chairs to add to the seating arrangements and resulted in an actual count of 475 paid admissions. Had it not been for Police interference, the management would have sold standing room in an effort to reach a total of 500 persons - a dangerous crowd in case any type of accident should occur.

The Basement too, has had many and varied uses. The front part was divided into three rooms, one being used for housing the "Mechanics Institute" a type of Public Library widely recognized in that era. Another "room" was equipped with three "Cells" made of heavy Oaken Planks, barred doors and windows and used for the detention of "unruly persons". During its usefulness for that purpose, the "Pokey" has housed, briefly, two persons convicted of murder and one who took his own life in a fit of "temporary insanity". The third room was used as a store-room for Municipal tools and equipment. At this writing, the latter two rooms have been converted into our present Fire-hall as indicated in the picture and the Mechanics Institute room is now the Council Chambers and the business office of the Municipality. The rear portion of the basement now contains a Store-room for materials required by the Public