

The N. A. Enlightener

Montieth, June, 1924

The Staff of The Northern Academy



A. ARCHIBALD, B.S.A., H. E. GRAYDON, L. G. BLACK, B.A.,
F. C. HARTLEY, B.A., B. M. SCHAFFNER, M. A. CLARK,
J. A. MCLEOD, M.D., C. L. CONNELL,
G. S. JOHNSON, B.A., PRINCIPAL.

THE STORY OF THE NORTHERN ACADEMY

It would be difficult to say accurately, just when and with whom the idea, which resulted in the Northern Academy, originated. Certain it is, that it was the outcome of a double problem which faced the Department of Education as the pioneer settlers of Northern Ontario became increasingly numerous. This was the problem of High School Education for all children who were beyond reach of a Collegiate or Continuation Class, and public school education for those who were beyond reach of any school whatever. The growing population of the North made both of these needs urgent and the answer which seemed to fit both cases was—a residential school. The idea was mooted about more or less vaguely for considerable time before it assumed the definite proportions of a project, and even then it hung fire while the pros and cons of building such a school were debated. All this was during the Hearst Government. But it remained for the Drury Government to carry the project into effect, and the way of it was this. While down in Toronto certain men of affairs were deliberating over the desirability of building a school in the North, a certain man in the North, in charge of a building whose usefulness as it stood, was

questionable, saw in that same building the possibilities of housing a school. This building was the Soldiers and Sailors Training Home at Monteith, located on the Government Farm. It was the union of these two ideas that eventually materialized in the Northern Academy.

Thus we see that it is scarcely accurate to apply the title of founder to any one name in particular. But while this is so, it is certain that there is one man who bore the project ever in mind, working endlessly to further its development and doing more than any other one individual to bring it into actual being. This was Chief Inspector Dr. John Waugh, of Toronto. He it was who forced its discussion ever to the front when it showed signs of lapsing. It was his contagious enthusiasm which persuaded Mr. George S. Johnson to resign an excellent position in Whitby to become the first principal of the new school, and it is he who oftener than any other has come personally to visit the Academy, and identify himself with this, his avowed "favorite child."

With a full fledged plan to establish a school by the Department and a ready built building in which to begin, a principal promised to take command and a chief inspector who spared no energy in bringing all these together, it was a matter of only a

few months before everything was ready to begin, and the school opened on January 4th, 1921. On the opening day the school consisted of two High School teachers, one Public School teacher, ten pupils in residence and five day pupils. Before many weeks the number had grown to forty pupils and four teachers.

When the school re-opened after the summer vacation to begin its second year, the number of pupils had more than doubled. Before the close of that term the building was taxed to its utmost capacity. Those were the days when the one building served all purposes. Everyone—principal, his family, staff, pupils and employees—all lived under one roof. Many were the makeshifts and adjustments to make the old building yield room for everything. Classes were held in the recreation room, the basement, even around the dining room tables. Often a curtain was all that divided one class from another. The dormitories overflowed into the halls, and the old long unused laundry in the rear, afterwards dignified by the name "The Annex", was pressed into service sometimes as a dormitory, sometimes as a school room. Reports of rapid growth and crowded conditions brought a party of members of parliament up from Toronto to see for themselves, headed by the Minister of Educa-