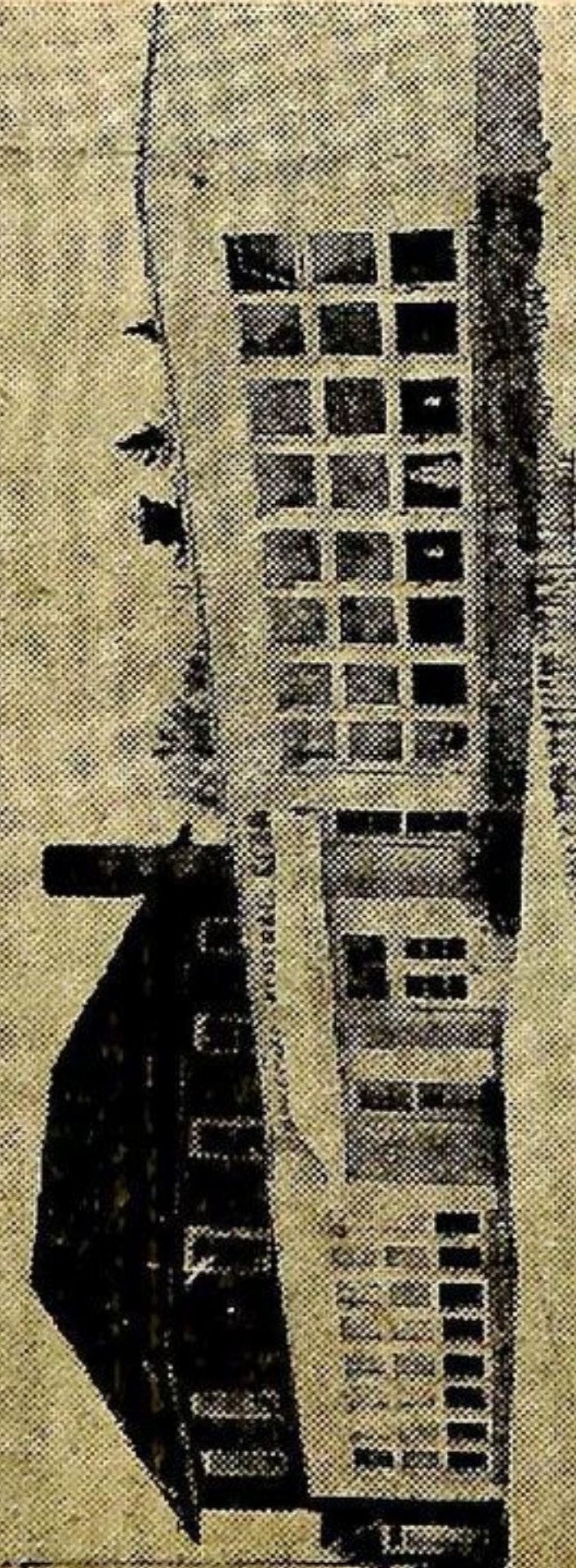
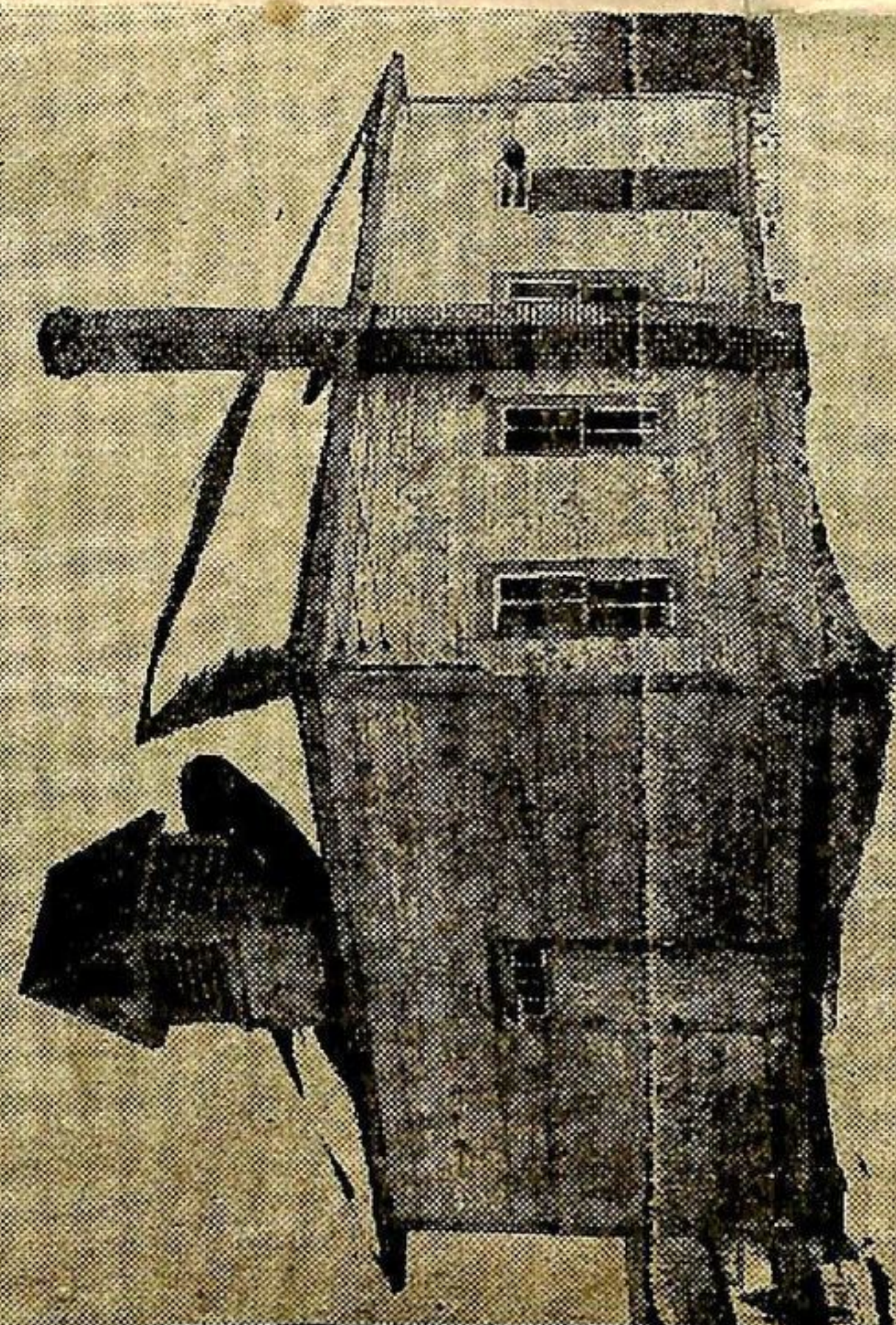


Little Red School House Soon To Be Replaced



On the Airport Road, the modern Vincent Massey rural school

Nipissing Junction boasts modern elementary school



March of Time caught Nipissing Junction school in 1947

This Is Education Week

Let's Look at Our Schools

—By J. W. TRUSLER, Inspector of Public Schools

To the casual observer, life moves along in an uneventful manner. The changes that take place from day to day and from year to year in our schools are in themselves insignificant. It is only when we pause for a moment to contemplate the trends over a long period that we become aware of what has really taken place.

Spreading over a large part of Nipissing District and extending southward into Parry Sound, is an area known in official educational circles as Inspectoral District XIV, Part 1. It comprises the cities, towns, villages, townships and isolated areas contained within a rough line drawn between Warren, River Valley, Goward, Thorne, Klock Siding, Brent, Foss Mill, Powassan, Loring and thence back to Warren. This large block contains approximately 14,000 square miles, an area equal to that part of Southern Ontario bounded by Toronto, Fort Erie, Windsor, Goderich, and Barrie. Dotted across this sprawling surface are fifty-six Public Schools, varying in size from one to twelve rooms. These are the educational institutions being considered in this article.

ENROLMENT UP

During the past 15 years the Public School enrolment has increased from approximately 3,300 to slightly over 5,000. In spite of the fact that 21 rural schools have been closed since 1940, the number of teachers in the inspectorate has increased from 117 to 168. Whereas there were 56 rural schools in operation in 1940 there are only 48 now open. Due to centralization 33 school boards have replaced the 56 we had formerly. In 1940 six children in this inspectorate were transported to school at a daily cost of \$8. Today we transport 528 Public School pupils and 378 secondary school pupils at a daily cost of \$496 or approximately \$100,000 per year.

Great changes have taken place in school organization, administration, and transportation. In the fall of 1939 Cameron Township, east of Mattawa, organized the first Township School Board in this region. This school board,

consisting of five members, took over the administration of the three, one-room schools in the township, supplanting three boards of three members each. There was some opposition to the move. A few ratepayers objected to losing control of their local schools and predicted most dire consequences if the plan were approved. Happily, the majority of those concerned were primarily interested in the education of children and placed little emphasis on who was going to run things. It was not long before the five newly elected trustees closed two of the small schools and transported all children to the main school. This commenced centralization of education in a small way. The results were immediate. More pupils created healthier competition, increased activity in sports, and provided richer social experiences. It was approximately six miles from this school to the town of Mattawa. With a school bus in operation, the next step was to commence transporting Public School graduates to the local High School. For the first time, many girls and boys were given an opportunity to secure a secondary education that had been denied their older brothers and sisters.

Township School Boards rapidly came into being in the townships of Widdifield, West Ferris, Calvin, Bonfield, Mattawan, Chisholm, North Himsworth, Phelps and Nipissing. In the Loring Area the five townships of Hardy, McConkey, Wilson, Mills and Pringle joined together to elect one board to administer all their schools. In and around Warren a Township Board was elected to take charge of the schools in the Townships of Crerar, Hugel, Dunnet, and Ratter. Not to be outdone by its neighbors, the Temagami area organized the six townships of Strathly, Strathcona, Chambers, Cassels, Briggs and Riddell under one board. Within a few years fifteen township school boards had been organized and with their advent came rapid strides in progress.

"SOMETHING CLEANER"

It must not be assumed these changes were carried out smoothly and without opposition. In some sections such a plan of ad-

ministration was bitterly denounced. On one occasion a former trustee spoke feelingly of this conspiracy to take away control of local schools and ended up by stating he was leaving the field of education and going into something cleaner—the raising of hogs. In spite of occasional local prejudice, the majority of the people gave strong support to the plan.

In most cases the newly-elected trustees were men and women of broad vision and good-will. They were interested in the education of children. Petty jealousies soon disappeared. The question of who would "board" the teacher, became a thing of the past. Long deliberations over trivial expenditures were discontinued. The new thought became, "What can we do to assist the children to secure a better education?" It all boiled down to three points. These were: better accommodation, better equipment, and better teachers. There were cases where children hadn't work-books, notebooks, pencils, etc., to do their work because in large families the parents couldn't afford to buy these articles. At that time the Department of Education paid a grant of 50% on expenditures made for such educational supplies. It was not long before practically all pupils in the whole territory were being provided with the tools of their trade, free of charge. Additional library books, new blackboards, maps, charts and other needed equipment soon began to flow into our schools. The children were being given a "new deal."

The teacher shortage commenced in the early 1940s. It was almost impossible to secure competent staff for small, isolated schools. For years we had planted schools here and there wherever there were a few children. In other words we took the schools to the pupils. In order to conserve staff and increase efficiency it was decided to close many of the smaller schools. The new policy was to take the children to the schools. Progressive trustees and parents realized the advantages of central schools with fewer grades in each classroom and larger groups of pupils working and playing together. In 1945 the West Ferris School Board built a four-room

Closed two years ago, this school was replaced by the one above

'addition to Tweedsmuir School. For a period the older pupils were transported to this school from as far away as Nipissing Junction. Calvin Township School Board followed the trend by building a two-room school at Eau Claire. In Nipissing Township they decided to close five rural schools and build a four-room central school in the village. The same year a combined public and continuation school, containing six classrooms, was opened at Loring. Widdifield School Board built their Trout Mills School and followed this up by adding four classrooms to the O'Brien Street School. The attention of trustees throughout the inspectorate was focused on these new developments. Temagami swung into line with a new five-room, central school, while the board at Warren constructed a three-room building to replace four one-room schools. Each of these new schools was equipped with all modern conveniences such as flush toilets, water fountains, modern heating and lighting, slate blackboards, and proper ventilation.

The old town hall in Widdifield Township, that had served as a school for many years, was replaced by the modern, two-room Vincent Massey School. At present in this township a small, graded school is under construction at Feronia, and plans are being prepared for a four-room school in the Gateway area. Nipissing Junction school was enlarged. Mattawa has increased the number of rooms from one to four. North Bay has added a four-room addition and playground to King George School. At Sunset Park in West Ferris they opened the new, four-room school last September. Cache Bay renovated its old building and now has a modern educational institution. Plans are underway for small, graded schools at Golden Valley and Arncliffe, while a new, three-room High School is proposed for Loring. In September, 1955, the children in Chisholm Township will forsake their old one-room schools, four in all, and will enter their new central building near Alderdale. New, modern buildings have risen in Papineau and Mattawan townships. Education is on the march.

TRANSPORT PUPILS

With the advent of central schools, it was necessary to arrange to transport pupils to schools. There were more pupils to educate and in new surroundings with better facilities now Grade VIII graduates were now showing a desire to continue their