

Worst Winter Storm On Record

(A few notes gathered by Journal-Argus writers.)

Fortunately, as of this Wednesday morning, the only serious accident reported has been one which took place around noon Tuesday when five cars were involved in a pile-up along James St. North. Randy Forman is reported to have had both legs broken and Jay McCauley a bad forehead gash as a result of the mishap, but details are sketchy.

The work of St. Marys police during the storm has come in for considerable praise. Police

assisted in every way possible including a bus transport, led by a snowplow, to get youngsters home from local elementary schools Tuesday afternoon. A snowmobile service was organized with a number of local citizens, including downtown merchants Eleanor Albert, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Smith and Percy Becker getting home via this transportation. The cruiser was kept on the road as much as possible, checking trouble spots, giving lifts home and generally making every effort to assist the situation. Wednesday morning, police reported that no persons had been reported missing and things in general were better than they had expected they would be.

A tree, or large limb, is reported to have fallen across the front of the home of Mr. Bert Douglas, Jones St. East, causing considerable damage.

Peter Newton, among the busiest men in town during the storm as was every service operator with towing equipment, told the Journal-Argus Wednesday morning that a snowmobile trip to the 7th Concession of Nissouri, taking Eric Richardson home, gave an indication of just how seriously this storm has affected the area. Pete believed a snowplow would never clear the seventh, it would take a bulldozer.

The P.U.C. line crew had a cold hour or two. At 1:30 a.m. Wednesday they were called to repair a blown transformer fuse that had left a section of Jones St. East without power and thus largely without heat for over an hour. The town snowplow crew assisted P.U.C. equipment reaching the scene and then re-

mained on the job, clearing as many streets as possible or at least putting a track through the snow.

In numerous instances, we know of the Bank of Montreal and Stonetowne Chev-Olds at least, staff members were unable to get home and made the best of the situation by remaining in the business premises overnight.

Out at the 40 Winks Motel, Highway 19, all motel accommodation was taken and some fifty or more stranded travellers were staying in the home and office by late afternoon of Tuesday. At Elginfield some seventy-five travellers were said to have spent the night in a service station.

Area central schools kept students overnight while rural Collegiate students were billeted in St. Marys. Bus travel was impossible from noon on.

Mr. Ern Carter, Campbell Soup plant manager, told us that the whole plant (110) spent the night there. The employees were all in good spirits, even played cards, with cards they made themselves. Food was no problem what with chicken, eggs, tomato and mushroom soup etc., on hand and a good warm place to sleep - even if it was on the floor. They carried on until this morning when the snow plough got through, and all but 35 were able to get to St. Marys behind the plough this (Wednesday) morning. Mr. Carter said plans were being made to get the balance of employees whose homes are in Mitchell and other places, to St. Marys via ski-doo's where they would have more comfortable accommodation. He said there was no production in the plant Wed. or on Thursday. Storm conditions were still bad at this time Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Murray Jones, Principal of Wildwood School kept 170 pupils overnight at the school. The storm was so bad at 1:30 Tuesday he knew plans would have to be made to "stay put." So they had plenty of food sent

in, all the neighbors rushed to their aid before things got too bad. Then Mr. Mac Robson, a member of the East Nissouri Council organized arrangements and with the help of the county snow plough and the Hutton Transport Ltd. got everyone out with the exception of thirty who made it this morning (Wednesday). Mr. Jones described the weather conditions as terrible both yesterday and still as bad today.

The men at Baird Lumber and the office staff had problems in trying to get home. Some made it to the Curling Club and had to "stay put", while three of the men braved the elements and walked into town - half-frozen upon arrival.

Then one of our local taxi drivers had a call from a mother-to-be who just had to get to our hospital. The driver could not make it, but called for police assistance and everything was under control in short order.

Worst storm in fifty years? Don't let them kid you - this was the worst winter storm on record according to the weather man. So don't let anyone tell you about something they remembered away back when - 'cause this was the big storm, period.

First word came to the Journal-Argus about how bad the weather was on Tuesday morning about ten o'clock when Hugh Munro drove in from Uniondale. Hugh said the storm and bad visibility were then the worst he had seen them in many years. From noon Tuesday onwards, things gradually worsened until by three p.m. a trip across the street in downtown St. Marys was an uncomfortable adventure.

St. Marys District Collegiate pupils were accommodated excellently for Tuesday night. When we phoned Vice-Principal Eldon Alderson about four p.m. he said that everyone was looked after and "people had been really great" in offering their homes to rural students and others who could not get home.

Out at the Golden York Egg Limited plant the staff of seven women and three men, including manager Clarence Giesbrecht were stuck for the night and had three or four visiting out-of-towners to put up for the night also. These included a truck driver from Moorefield, a Union Gas man, and a government inspector from Exeter. Food was sufficient to start with since they are not more than several hundred yards from Adrian's Esso Service on Queen

The storm this past week has really upset the life of the community. We now find ourselves at the mercy of the elements. The roads are impassable for cars and the weather will have to change before things are better. It has caused a lot of anxious moments for both young and old. School children in the country were housed at the school and high school students were billeted at different homes in St. Marys for several days. We have one snowmobile in this community that is busy hauling food for people and feed for the stock, oil for the furnace, also brought mail which was delivered at the north end of the 11th about one mile down.

Today, Tuesday, Feb. 2nd is Ground-hog Day and it appears that he will see his shadow, which means six more weeks of winter.

The Ryerson Press Sale FEB. 3, 1971

Canada will survive the sale of The Ryerson Press to McGraw-Hill, writes W. C. Heine, editor of The London Free Press, in the current issue of The United Church Observer.

Mr. Heine writes: "What Canada needs is not anguished screams when individual economic takeovers occur, but carefully-prepared legislation which will mark out those areas of our national life where Canadians feel we cannot tolerate economic domination — broadcasting, newspapers, basic communications systems, publishing, magazines, oil and gas, hydro-electric power, water and many others — and where we demand that economic development be under the majority control of Canadians.

"If we can do that, and we must if we are to survive as an independent nation, The Ryerson Press sale will be a mere incident in a great country's development. "If we don't act, Ryerson's fate won't matter."

Mr. Heine was chairman of the church's division of communication at the time the decision on the Ryerson sale was made. He resigned at that time because he said he felt the decision would muzzle the church in speaking out on the issue of Canadian economic nationalism. "The money, though great, was less important than the principle," he says. The U.S. offer, he reports, was \$1 million higher than the best Canadian offer.