

Nearly 2,400 Persons Attend Formal Opening of Paisley and District War Memorial Community Centre

Largest Indoor Sports Crowd In History of Bruce County Packs Fine New Building for Impressive Ceremonies—Weather Favorable to Everything but Ice Surface—Many Notables Present for Occasion—Additional Government Grant Is Promised.

The rugged determination and the unselfish co-operation of the people of Paisley and surrounding district was amply repaid on Saturday night, Feb. 19th, when more than 2,350 men, women and children crowded their way into the War Memorial Community Centre to witness the formal opening of that fine, new structure. Feb. 19th is, to residents of this area, a date that brings heart-chilling memories. For it was on that date, just one year ago, that roaring flames razed Paisley's first War Memorial Community Centre—a \$40,000 structure that had been erected largely through local planning and labor, and by the contributions of local and district people who had decided to pay honor to the dead of World War II by building a community centre that would provide clean and wholesome, all-the-year-round recreation for the boys and girls. The Centre was finally opened officially on Feb. 14th, and then, just five days afterward, the fire demon laid claim to the memorial structure, and in less than five hours there remained nothing of that proud building but a mass of tortured and twisted steel, great heaps of smoking embers, and an apparently undamaged concrete foundation. That night of Feb. 19, 1948, was certainly one of the most tragic in the history of this community.

The entire cost of that building had been raised by public subscription—now it was all gone—all but \$14,000 of insurance money. Could one dare to voice the hope that it might be possible to rebuild?

It was—and they did!

Within 24 hours after the terrible conflagration it was apparent to observers that the people of the community had been thoroughly aroused by the disaster, and urged on by their encouraging comment, members of the committee which had supervised the erection of the ill-fated structure, immediately moved to secure a general and concrete opinion of the people on the matter. Smoke was still rising from the ruins when the first unofficial gathering of committee men decided to exert their every effort to rebuilding, and as soon as humanly possible.

There followed public meetings, attended by great crowds of men and women, not only of the village, but of Elderslie, Bruce, Greenock, Saugeen, Arran and Brant. The opinion was unanimous—"Go ahead and re-build!"

And so the decision was made—and just exactly one year after that fateful night of Feb. 19th, 1948, Paisley and district's second memorial community centre was officially opened and solemnly dedicated.

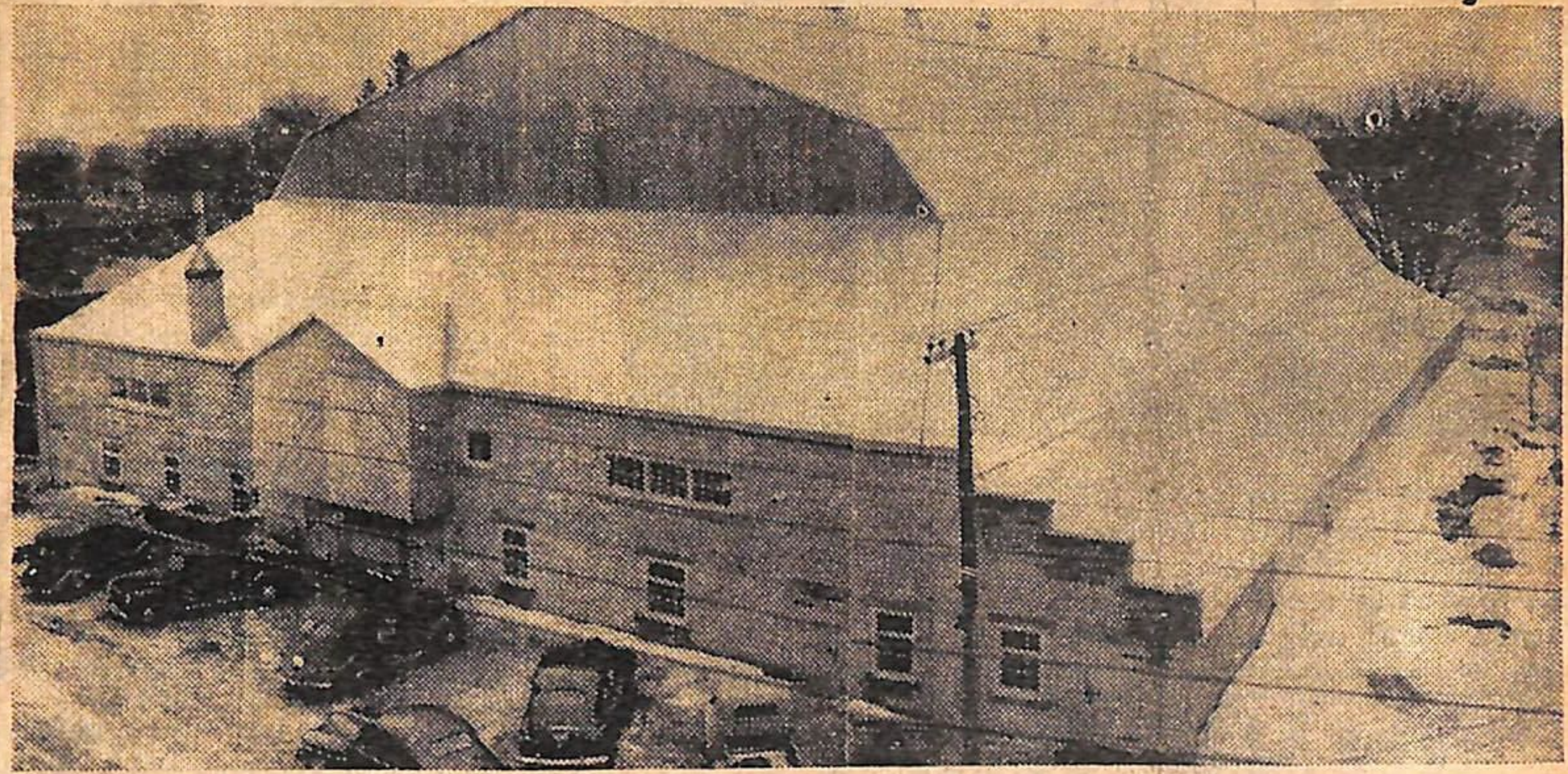
It has been a difficult job, this matter of beginning a new and building all over again. It was, in fact, a task that would have been insurmountable, but for the absolutely unselfish, whole-hearted co-operation of the people of Paisley and the surrounding rural areas. It is very true that sympathetic neighbors in Bruce, Grey, Huron and many other counties, aided materially in the drive for re-building funds—

and it is also fact that some of the most generous contributions were forthcoming from Paisley and district old boys and girls, most of whom had previously forwarded cheques to assist in building the first community centre. But the driving force behind the campaign was the almost 100 per cent unanimity of the village and the country folk in supporting the project by action, by cash donation, and by their enthusiastic support of the various committees set up to carry on the preliminary planning. This achievement was realized only because Paisley and its rural friends and neighbors made up such a co-operative alliance as was impossible to deny. Now the task is almost complete in every detail—and as an achievement, is a magnificent one. Indeed, Paisley and district can be intensely proud—not only because of what they have accomplished, but because they have in their midst, the finest Memorial Community Centre in this part of Ontario.

The official opening of Paisley's War Memorial Community Centre was favored with excellent weather for travel, and with roads bare all over the district, the crowd came from almost every centre in this part of Western Ontario, while scores reached Paisley from Toronto, London and even more distant points. The mild weather did not assist the ice-makers and it was found necessary to abandon plans for gaily decorating the big sheet of hockey ice. It was almost too soft for the

two performing teams, while the Owen Sound figures skaters performed miracles in providing a half-hour program of fancy ice capers. But nobody cared about the ice, and by the time the ceremonies began at 8:30 p.m., the ticket office had sold 2,264 tickets! There was another group of guests, and with news men, hockey players and fancy skaters, the attendance was actually in excess of 2,350.

With Tory Gregg of CKNX acting as master of ceremonies, the proceedings included short addresses by W. S. Forrester, Reeve of Paisley, Walter E. Hall, M.L.A. for Grey-Bruce, Kenzie Foster, M.L.A. for Bruce, W. T. Cruickshank, general-manager of CKNX, John H. Stafford, Toronto, as well as a number of Paisley old-boys back home for the occasion, and including Angus P. MacKinnon, O.B.E., Schofield Russell and Hugh McArthur of Toronto, C. Bruce McKenzie of Owen Sound, and Duncan McArthur of Ripley, as well as Jack Park, sports editor of the London Free Press, and Chick Appel of the Stratford Beacon-Herald. Earl Rushton, manager of the building, and chairman of the general building committee, voiced thanks to all who had helped to build the arena, and paid tribute to N. O. Hipel Co. of Preston, the contractors, and to the engineer, W. C. Beattie, and the foreman, Jas. Snyder. Mr. Snyder then presented Mr. Rushton with the key to the building.



PAISLEY & DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

was popped in with only seven seconds left to play in the final period. The Group 5 goals were scored by Threndyle of Kincardine, with Schrank taking Dudgeon's pass to count the only goal for Group No. 3. Referees were Harry Doughty of Walkerton and Wm. McArthur of Owen Sound.

Aubrey Stauffer of Walkerton, who donated the fine \$700 public address system to the building, was also a speaker during the opening ceremonies.

Following the hockey game, Jack H. Stafford of Toronto, former Paisley and Saugeen Township boy, was first to the Community Centre executive, members of both teams, the referees and a number of guests, at a fowl supper held in the Central Hotel dining room. Mr. Stafford also presented each of the players with a box of the fine sundae sauces which is one of the specialties of his manufacturing company. Tory Gregg acted as chairman of the informal talk-fest that followed the dinner, and among those who were heard speaking briefly were Mr. Stafford, W. T. Cruickshank, R. G. Grant, Pelt McCoy, Angus MacKinnon, Chick Appel, S. F. Ballachey and W. S. Forrester.

The plaque, in honor of the Paisley and district men who died during the Second World War, will be placed at the entrance to the Community Centre. It was not ready for the opening of

the building, but will be put in place later, when an unveiling ceremony will be held. The names of the following men will be inscribed on the plaque: Paisley—Lloyd Dudgeon, Fred Hawkin, Wilfred Rolston; Elderslie Township—Nelson Howe, Ray Jackson, Donald McKillop, Robert McGill, George Nicoll, Gordon Powell, Leslie Thompson; Greenock Township—John Clark, Frank Cooper, Roy Leeson, Victor Lemont, Edward Lehman, Earl Reid, James Steffler; Bruce Township—Robert McDougall; Saugeen Township—Gordon Weeden.

Following the opening ceremonies, the dedication of the building took place. Led by Pipers Stewart Muir and Wm. MacDonald, fifty members of the local branch of the Canadian Legion, paraded on to the ice, with a color guard of three ex-servicemen in full uniform—Malcolm McNeill, the army, Laurence Stark, the air force and Lloyd McNeill the navy.

The brief, but impressive dedication ceremony was conducted by the three ministers, Rev. H. C. Linstead, Rev. W. H. Chambers and Rev. D. G. Archibald. Mrs. Wm. Rolston, whose son, Pte. Wilfred Rolston, was killed at Dieppe, assisted with the raising of the large Canadian Ensign donated to the Community Centre by Vancouver Bruce County Old Boys and Girls Association. Two minutes' silence was observed by the huge gathering and Last Post and Reveille were sounded by Ken Iles of Chesley.

Members of the Georgian Figure Skating Club of Owen Sound presented a half-hour performance of fancy skating, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the crowd.

The sports' feature of the evening was a hockey game, with an all-star team from Group No. 3 of the W.O. A.A. taking on an all-star club selected from Group No. 5. George Grant, veteran Paisley ice star, was in charge of the former, and also took his turn on the ice, while Pelt McCoy of Lucknow, handled the No. 5 club. Despite the heavy ice, the players turned in a sparkling performance, with the team from the southern group, No. 5, taking a 2-1 verdict when the winning goal