*Meen meeting "fiasco"?*

# Northern municipalities confer tonight

Mayor Duby will try to arrange a meeting with the four neighbor municipalities in the New North Halton region, he told council last Wednesday. (it's now set for tonight, Feb. 21 in Georgetown.)

Council members were still upset about the meeting the night before, Tues. Feb. 13, which one of them angrily termed a "fiasco". They had changed the night of council meeting to attend a joint meeting called by Arthur Meen, parliamentary assistant to the treasurer; however Mr. Meen did not attend leaving some of his staff in charge.

Councils and town and township staffs of Acton, Georgetown, Esquesing and Nassagaweya were present although some were disgruntled and left early.

"We shouldn't have to sit through another fiasco like that," declared councillor Norm Elliott. "I resent the fact Acton was the only council that saw fit to stay to the end."

He wondered if it would be a waste of time to meet with the other municipalities before another meeting with Mr. Meen.

Mayor Duby countered that if the four municipalities had met before they might have been able to present a more united front, with prepared spokesmen.

Reeve McKenzie observed "we're not so naive as to think the boundaries will change unless some pressure is put on them!"

**North corner**

The reeve of Nassagaweya Anne MacArthur had stated at the meeting that Eden Mills and district might be better held in abeyance and in future associated with a Wellington region. "That's pretty close to our door," warned Mr. McKenzie. "We could find ourselves drawn into Wellington."

Recalling the meeting deputy-reeve Marks felt Acton council had gained benefit from the meeting from the experts who were able to answer technical questions. However Mr. Coats countered he found their answers on taxation and assessment very evasive. "They used glorious terms I barely understand and I'm a mathematician," Mr. Coats said.

Some areas are bound to be vague, was Mr. Marks' opinion. "Our questions were lousy."

Despite full calendars councillors will be working in another regional meeting.

Shaking his head councillor Elliott remarked - so much flak and so little benefit . . .

The Acton Free Press

Ninety-Eighth Year. — No. 34 ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1973 Sixteen Pages—Fifteen Cents.

# Family of seven burned out in Saturday morning fire

Fire completely destroyed the home and belongings of Sid Spear Ballinafad, in sub-zero weather Saturday morning leaving a family of seven homeless with only the clothes on their backs to show for years of effort.

Flames, which seemed to start in the rear end of the century-old home after 10 o'clock Saturday morning routed three of the Spears children and charred the two-storey frame home beyond recognition while firefighters from Acton and Georgetown waged a losing battle in sunny below zero weather.

A shaken Sid Spear, who spent thousands of dollars renovating the structure, surveyed only still blazing remains when he arrived on the scene from a repair job at a nearby home with his son Michael, 13.

"It's surprising what a fire can do in a few minutes," he told the Free Press. "The main thing is that everyone is safe, I guess."

Two of his children, John, 8 and nine-month-old Sidney Jr. were led from the blazing house by 16-year-old Rosemary who discovered the fire when she opened the door to the rear part of the house and was engulfed by smoke. She got John to carry the baby to the home of a friend, Mrs. Shirley Saunders, who lives out on the Seventh Line. Then she called firefighters and fled clad only in a nightgown.

Rosemary spent Saturday night in Georgetown hospital recovering from shock. After firefighters arrived she attempted to re-enter the blazing home and had to be restrained by O.P.P. officers and firefighters.

Mrs. Spear was in Acton getting her hair done when fire broke out while Betty, 14, was baby-sitting at a neighbor's.

The Acton brigade was first on the scene. They emptied their tank on the blazing home and chopped a hole in the ice to pump water from the creek which flows directly in front of the home, which sits on a knoll behind Ballinafad United church. Not long after they arrived, the first of the Georgetown trucks came and they tackled flames in the front end of the structure.

Two more Georgetown trucks arrived and started a shuttle water service but there was little firefighters could do but keep the flames confined. Smoke billowed across the countryside shutting out the bright sun.

"The home is one of the oldest in the village, well over 100 years," said Chester Swindlehurst, a spectator. He said he had sold the home to Sid Spear in 1966 after the Swindlehurst family lived in it for 30 years, and it had been a venerable home then.

"Sid has spent a lot of time and money fixing it up," he told the Free Press, putting in a furnace, and covering the exterior with aluminum siding. He also fixed up the rear part of the house, making it livable."

Fire engulfed the rear of the home first and spread rapidly through the frame structure, but fortunately the wind of the previous day had gone and there was little danger of flames spreading to nearby homes.

## Three alarms

Those who contend misfortune strikes in threes have the experience of Acton firefighters this week to back them up.

While one crew of firefighters was busy fighting the blaze at the Spear home in Ballinafad, another crew was called to the home of Doug Mason on Lake Ave., Saturday morning. Mr. Mason smelled smoke and when firefighters arrived it was traced to the motor on the furnace. There was no damage.

Monday night the alarm went again while firefighters were

(Continued on Page 2)

Sid Spear, a well known furnace repairman and plumber, said he was partially covered by insurance but all his records and personal belongings were lost in the blaze.

O.P.P. officers on the scene assisted him in locating the insurance adjuster and directed traffic on the Seventh Line. Village residents and neighbors from the area were offering Mr. Spear accommodation, while the flames still raged through the house.

Although it seemed to start in the rear end of the house, it is believed the fire may have started in the basement. Investigators combed the remains to see if any evidence could be found.

Firefighters were coated with ice as they fought the flames. Welcome cups of coffee were served by members of the Ballinafad United church women.

The family stayed at the home of Mrs. Spear's father, G. Barac, in Acton after the fire.

Friends and neighbors of the family are arranging a dance to aid the Spear family at Ballinafad hall Saturday evening.

# *Red Cross aids homeless family*

A few hours after fire destroyed the Spear home Saturday, the Georgetown and district Red Cross drove Mrs. Spear to Georgetown and bought $400 worth of new clothing for Mrs. Spear and children Rosemary 16, Betty 14, Michael 13, John 8, and nine month old Sidney Jr. Sid Sr. was to be outfitted Monday.

The Red Cross also supplied bedding and bought food to tide the family over, looking after other needs as well.

The society's president, Elaine Sales R.N. lives in Ballinafad. She said the money came from the society's disaster fund built up through annual collections door to door, and is available to anyone in the area where disaster strikes.

Blanche Goudeketing is in charge of the committee which looks after minor disasters such as the Spear fire. Sandwiches and coffee were served to chilled firefighters.

Neighbors and friends also offered assistance of furniture and clothing and offers aid are still coming in.

**ACTON AND GEORGETOWN FIREFIGHTERS tried to stem the blaze at the Spear home in Ballinafad Saturday morning with little success. Flames had the century-old structure in their grip and left the Sid Spear family homeless with all their possessions lost in the flames.**

**—H. Coles Photo**

*Queen of the Snow*

SNOW QUEEN of the Acton High school winter carnival "Ookpik 3", Kathy Fuchs, a 13 year old Grade 9 student was crowned and robed at the school dance Thursday night by Miss Acton Fair 1972 Valerie Mitchell. Kathy was chosen over five finalists, Ann Luty, Diane Timbers, Judy Thibodeau and Roma Kuchmak. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Fuchs, R.R. 4 Acton.

(D. Gibbons photo)

# Council prepares for storm of protest

Esquesing Council is preparing itself for a storm of protest expected to result from the recent announcement that Metro Toronto garbage may be shipped in the form of compacted bales to worked-out quarries at the Indusmin operation on the Third Line, near Acton.

Council decided Monday night to ask Indusmin for copies of all engineering and hydrologists reports connected with the proposal and also to write the clerks of Acton, Georgetown, Milton and Nassagaweya advising them of the proposal and asking them to support a separate council resolution aimed at provincial government departments.

That resolution allowed for letters to be written to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of the Environment, Halton East M.P.P. Hon. James Snow and Halton West M.P.P. Hon. George Kerr advising that council is concerned about the proposal and wishes to be consulted before any decision is made. The letters will also ask for any available information on long range effects such an operation could have on the environment.

**Surprise visit**

Discussion of the proposal was prompted by a surprise visit to the council chambers by former Deputy-reeve Russell Miller, who asked if council had yet taken a stand on the matter.

Reeve Tom Hill said council had hoped to reserve comment until after the public meeting, scheduled for Stewarttown, Wednesday, February 28.

"We've had no letters on it Russ. The only thing we got was an endorsement from Speyside ratepayers," the reeve said. "They were in agreement because it wasn't going to be in Speyside."

"That's not exactly true," interrupted Deputy-Reeve Len Coxe. "They agreed with the proposal in principle, but asked for certain investigations first."

Deputy-Reeve Coxe felt council would have to come up with a good reason for opposing the proposal other than the fact that it's Toronto garbage.

"Now's the time to stir it up, before they get a strong hold on it," he added.

**Metro pits**

Miller suggested that if the compacted garbage was such good landfill, it could be better used to fill abandoned pits in the Metro area.

"There are several between here and Toronto," he told council. "Personally I feel the original rehabilitation plans Indusmin presented to council were the best."

Miller went on to suggest that if the proposal is approved, council obtain some kind of a bond to protect itself against possible pollution problems in ensuing years.

Deputy-reeve Coxe showed some concern about how the blame for any pollution might be shifted.

"Everybody's plaster's falling off their walls and they tried to prove it wasn't their blasting. There's a 40 mile speed limit. They say their trucks aren't exceeding it, yet I have to drive 60 to keep up with them. I'm concerned about the time you might turn on your water tap and get a banana peel stamped "Antonio's Fruit Market" and they'll probably try to prove Antonio put it in himself," he said.

"I sat here and was told 65 per cent of their products went out by rail. Now they say they'll bring the bales here by truck. I was under the impression we had no trucks coming back from the city," he added.

**What requirements?**

Councillor Dick Howitt said he'd like to know the requirements the site passed, according to a letter from Environment Minister James Auld.

"We may find out their requirements aren't too stringent at all," he said.

Reeve Hill said he couldn't see how Mr. Auld could give the site the immediate endorsement he did.

Councillor George Maltby felt that if council took too strong a stand on the matter so early, not many people would show up for the public meeting.

Deputy-reeve Coxe suggested council hire an engineer now to advise them in the upcoming discussions.

# Highway 7 stays put

There's no immediate likelihood of Highway 7 bypassing Acton. The possibility was discussed at a special afternoon meeting called by the development commission.

M. R. Ernesaks, head of the environmental and feasibility studies office of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, met with some development commission members and councillors in the town office last Thursday afternoon.

A possible bypass was discussed in detail but Mr. Ernesaks indicated that at the present time money would not be available from the Ministry for building the bypass. He also wondered how businessmen would react to traffic missing the main street.

Mr. Ernesaks explained a feasibility study can be done by his department on a cost sharing basis. He will get in touch with the town later with an estimate of the cost. His departmenmt will also do parking and mall studies.

# *Drug mart break-in*

Estimated $900 worth of goods is missing following a breakin at Glenlea Drug Mart. Taken are cigarettes, watches, electric shavers, a cassette recorder and portable radio.

About 6.30 a.m. Monday the breakin was noticed and police called. The intruders had broken in the front door and apparently left by the back door in the early hours of Monday morning.

Police are still investigating.

# Postpone snowmobile events again

To date, the weather hasn't favored Acton Y's Men's Club with enough snow to guarantee operation of the scheduled snowmobile races February 24-25, so the club is again postponing them until March 3 and 4.

The new dates will, of course, again depend on the availability of snow.

The club still expects to hold the snowmobile races on Fairy Lake Sunday, March 4, in the event there is not enough snow to stage the cross country events on the Saturday.

Next week's Free Press will keep readers posted.