

# Increase in calls for firefighters

The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, August 3, 1977 B3

Fire calls have increased almost 50 per cent in the first six months of 1977 compared to the same time period in 1976.

There have been 72 calls put into the Acton Volunteer fire department from January to June this year, up from 39 in 1976, with grass

fires having the greatest increase over last year.

Grass fires for the first half of 1977 totalled 18, while in 1976 the figure was only one. This was the biggest increase with car fires being the next biggest increase from eight in 1976 to 12 this year.

Although there were seven house fires in the same time

period of both years, loss totalled \$49,000 last year compared with \$12,900 this year.

Radio and television fires stayed the same, at one fire each year.

Clothes dryer fires increased from none last year to one call in 1977, and false alarms have increased from two to three. Garbage in

stores has been the scene of three fires so far this year, with only one in the same time period in 1976. Chimney fires increased to three from two.

Three areas saw calls this first half which had no calls last year. These were Mutual Aid, Georgetown, gas explosion and apartment fire (in garbage) which saw one call each. Last year in the first half, there was one electrical fire in a garage and none this year.

Factory fires increased this year. There were two fires in garbage in a factory last year, and two in garbage this year. However, there was also one fire in a dip tank.

Itural calls also increased. 1976 saw two calls to Erin and seven in Milton. This year saw five calls in Erin and nine to Milton.

Fire Chief Mick Holmes told the General Administration Committee, through his semi-annual report, that although fire calls had increased, the actual damage

was down, by approximately \$26,000.

The chief expressed concern over the high number of grass fires. "These increases in incidents are mainly in the area of grass and vehicle fires and in my estimates are due to the increase in the built up rural area and more and more vehicles on the roads. Vehicle fires are mainly defects in wiring and the grass fires are usually during a clean up period on a windy day," the report said.

Mr. Holmes reports fire prevention officer Larry Brassard and deputy fire chief Robert Hyde are a real asset to the department, and the men will be concentrating their efforts on the excessive grass and vehicle fire incidents.

Free Press files for the first quarter of 1976 show fire loss was up severely in the same time period from 1975. In 1976, from January 1 to March 31 there were nine local calls with \$30,000 damage. In the same period

of 1975 there were seven local calls with \$11,500 damage. In both years there were also calls to accidents, car fires and out of township calls. Mr. Holmes explained at the time, however, that the larger fire loss amount was due to a fire at the Dominion hotel.

## Meet in Sept.

The Acton Business Association held their July executive meeting last week. The August meeting will be cancelled and the group will gather September 7. In the meantime, any concerns can be taken to any member of the executive.

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**VICTORY TROPHY** for the winning playground in the swim meet Friday was a huge chocolate cake. Ballinafad leader Debbie Wilson accepted the award from Judy Shadbolt. Cheering their playground's championship are leader Cyndy Anderson, Stacy Featherstone, Kirk Absolom, Roddy and Tracy Hamilton, Lorne and Lorraine Buckrell, Nadia and Kathy Hrkac, Ken Toyne and Lara Goldsack. Ballinafad garnered 31 points to MZB's 30 and Robert Little's 29.

# CAS waging budget battle with ministry

Halton Children's Aid Society Board of Directors will not back down from a battle the board has been waging with the Ministry of Social and Community Services.

The battle centres over Ministry's unwillingness to approve a 39.7 per cent increase in the budget and the Society's refusal to accept the 26 per cent increase that the Ministry is willing to approve.

CAS Director Ron Coupland told this newspaper that the board had discussed the problem at a meeting Thursday night and rejected the 26 per cent offer. The society had originally asked for 60 per cent.

"We are not satisfied with their reasons. They've made many allegations about our operation, most of which they've backed down from and they are now saying our operation is as efficient as most or any in the province. The evidence they use to support the allegations is extremely flimsy."

"The board is very angry about this and the members have demanded in writing grounds for the allegations."

Coupland said the province's failure to approve the budget and the many delays that have been injected into the process is a

"clever piece of strategy". He said that the province feels the longer it stalls final approval of the budget the less money can be spent this year.

Coupland explained the Society is now working on a line of credit and having to borrow to pay the bills.

He noted the Society had hired nine new people this year and won't let them go. "We have more kids in care now than in the history of the Society."

"The crazy part is if they don't pay us they'll pay someone else. The guy on the street won't get off with paying a cent less but the kids will suffer a heck of a lot more."

Coupland summed up the nature of the problem. "They don't believe our arguments and so we sit down calling each other liars."

Coupland said he hoped the board could arrange an ap-

pointment with Ken McDonald Director of the Child Welfare Department and at that time have all the facts laid on the table.

He noted that two Ontario Agencies became embroiled in a similar fight with the Ministry last year and it took until Feb. of this year to finally get it ironed out. "It is just stupid."

Coupland has already gone through a long drawn out process to have the budget approved by the Regional Council. It was at that point that the two parties negotiated a budget that reduced requests from 69 per cent to 39 per cent increase.

In other years the region or county has faced much smaller more conservative requests and has held increases to a minimum. As a result CAS officials say the agency and the services offered by it have fallen way behind.

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## Car damaged

A car travelling down Line Five damaged its under carriage last Thursday morning.

According to police the car, driven by Philip Hoite of 200 Churchill Rd., ran over a rock, damaging the under carriage.

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