



Charred ruins remain

Given loan by province

Local industry granted \$500,000

Weber Tool and Mould Limited has been granted a \$500,000 interest bearing incentive loan from the Ontario Development Corporation (ODC) that will translate into 20 to 25 new jobs for Midlanders by 1979.

According to a news release distributed by Midland Chamber of Commerce Industrial Commissioner William Vidler at a press conference Thursday, the loan will be put toward the second phase of a \$2.2 million expansion program, the largest ever at the Weber plant.

The announcement marks the second time this month that the ODC has assisted a Midland industry with an expansion program.

On January 20, Furnitex Corporation Limited received notice of approval for a \$60,000 loan expected to be used for expansion purposes.

The first part of the Weber expansion was completed at the end of 1977, with the addition of 5,800 square feet to the factory and the installation of two large boring and drilling machines, a 37,000 pound capacity overhead crane, a new electrical power supply and a general realignment of work space and production equipment at a total cost of \$600,000.

Phase two of the expansion calls for the purchase and installation of the largest two-spindle copy-milling machine in any Canadian mould making facility, at a cost in excess of \$1.5 million.

The machine is expected to arrive in Midland in late November of this year and be assembled by January of 1979.

Mr. R. Weber, the company president said in the release, that the firm is planning to hire three to five additional staff members this summer to begin training them for the

arrival of the new equipment.

Phase two's completion should see the Weber work force grow by roughly 25 employees.

"We are extremely fortunate that the demand for our product (steel moulds to produce plastic parts) is increasing sharply and at the same time, extremely difficult to satisfy due to the high capital cost of equipment and the scarcity of skilled tool and mould makers," Mr. Weber said in the release.

He went on to add that since the company began its apprenticeship program three years ago it is providing better than 50 per cent of the firm's skilled labour requirements.

"No longer will we import people from other areas so long as we find sharp and

enthusiastic young people locally," Mr. Weber said.

He said he had selected Midland as a new location for the plant in 1967 for the "quality of life that one can experience in this area".

Mr. Weber also extended thanks to Midland town officials, the chamber, the Ministry of Industry and Tourism and Simcoe East MPP Gord Smith for their cooperation in seeing the expansion program to completion.

According to the release the expansion will mean Weber can begin producing the largest injection and compression moulds in North America.

Mr. Weber said that he hoped the company will be able to assist in the greater need from the automotive industry for plastic parts which are being incorporated in cars to increase gas mileage.

PUC says no to finance committee

A motion to form a Public Utilities Commission Finance Committee was defeated by a vote of four to one at a regular meeting of the PUC on Tuesday night.

All of the commissioners with the exception of Charles Parker, felt that the practice of having the chairmen of the various committees, as well as commission chairman Claude Buck and general manager Art Evans, carefully scrutinize vouchers for expenditures before cheques are issued is a close enough check on the PUC's finances. This practice started in December of 1977, after a discussion on finance at a regular meeting in November.

Commissioner Parker put a motion on the floor calling for a Finance Committee during a meeting late in November. At that time, he explained that the commissioners weren't doing their duty to the public unless they formed a Finance Committee to keep careful watch on the expenditures. Mr. Parker felt that the commission wasn't always getting the best value for their money and tenders should be taken on each and every item they spent money on.

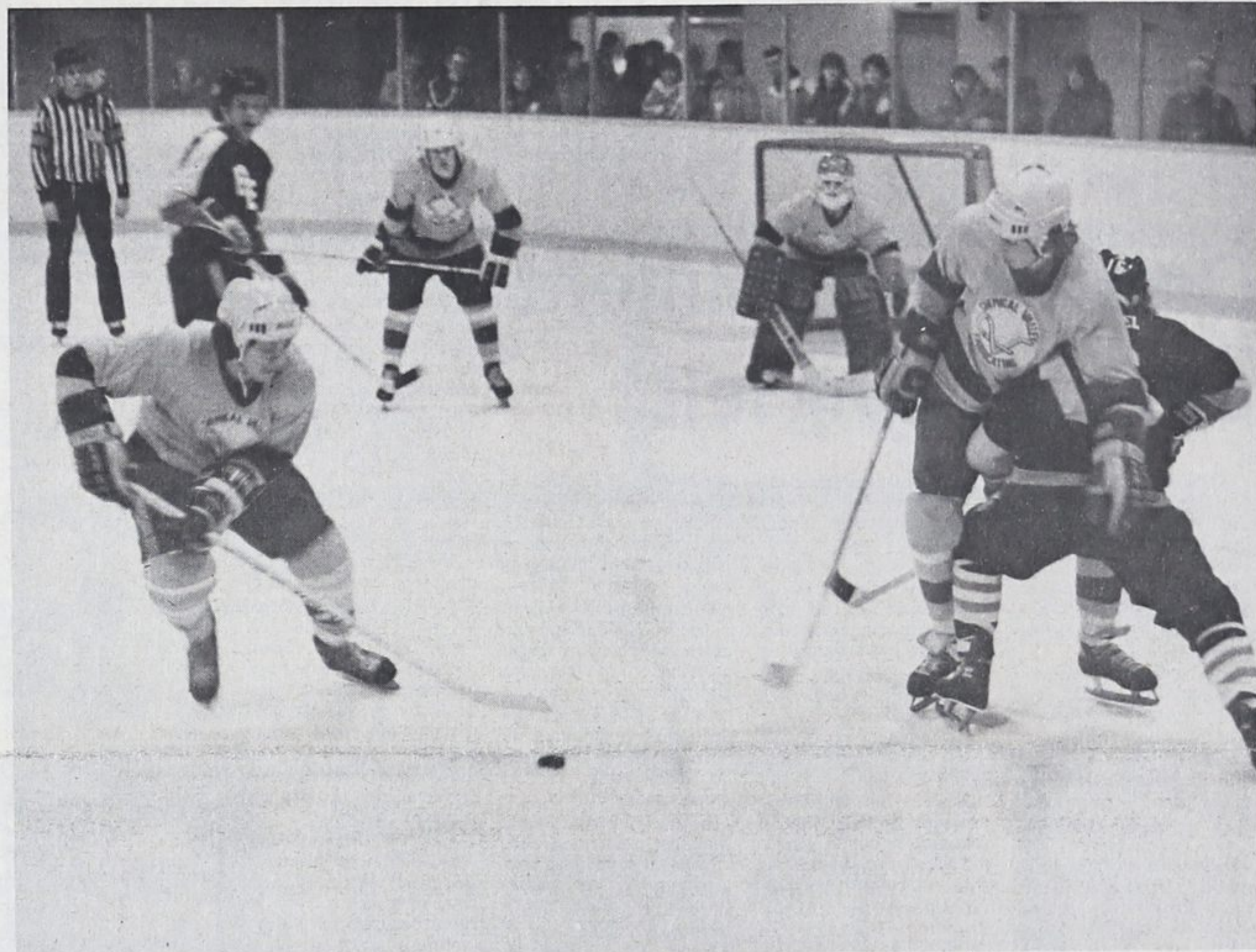
The motion was tabled to the inaugural meeting, Tuesday night was the first meeting of 1978 and the motion was once again brought forward.

The motion said the purpose of the finance committee would be to examine commitments made by the electrical and waterworks committees and vouchers before cheques are issued. It also said the finance committee would examine the complete financial picture when cheques were issued. Two commissioners and Chairman Buck were to sit on the committee.

At Tuesday's meeting Mr. Parker said "I want to indicate and I want it recorded, this is my thirteenth year on the commission, and I'm not satisfied with my contribution. I wasn't satisfied with the fact that the accounts weren't being checked and I'm not satisfied with the way the commission is being run."

The other commissioners pointed out that since the November meeting the accounts were being more closely scrutinized. Prior to that only Mr. Buck and Mr. Evans checked them over. They also indicated their willingness to pass a motion at the next meeting with some sort of policy statement regarding the checking of vouchers and finances.

Commissioner Parker was not satisfied with this. He said "I want to see the cheques, I want to see everything." He said he would



Andy Seeman makes a last minute pass to teammate Andy Zurawski at Penetanguishene Junior Kings game with

Bracebridge Bears Wednesday. Kings broke out of a three game winless streak to hammer Bears 11-2 at the Penetanguishene

arena. See story page 5. Staff photo by Dave Fuller

Newsmakers

by Howard Elliott

The burning of the Sandy Bay Hotel is still shrouded in mystery. The fire devastated the hotel, and that is making the fire marshal's job very difficult.

Primarily the job of the fire marshal is to discover the cause of the blaze.

When the structure is completely destroyed—as the hotel was—it is often difficult to find out where the blaze started.

The fire marshal investigating the Sandy Bay Hotel fire is John Mackenzie, from Bracebridge.

"With this much damage it's hard to make any definite decision. The wiring in the place is so badly damaged that we can't tell whether that was the cause or not," the marshal said.

According to Mr. Mackenzie, as soon as the insulation burns off an electrical system, the wiring begins to short circuit, and that along with the fire itself destroys the electrical system.

All that remains of the hotel is the foundation and a stone chimney. The rest of the hotel was wood, and it now lies in a heap of ashes on the ground.

Half-burnt chairs and picnic tables are littered around the site, which is now enclosed by a wooden fence warning people to

keep out of the hotel ruins.

In trying to discover the cause of the fire, the fire marshal "covers a lot of area" according to Mr. Mackenzie.

"We have to talk to witnesses and anyone who might know about the fire," he said. The fire marshal sifted through the ruins on Wednesday morning, but he wouldn't comment on anything he'd discovered there.

"It's a process of elimination. We have to investigate all the possible natural causes of the fire, and eliminate them one by one, until we discover the cause," he explained.

Another important factor that must be considered, is where the fire started in the building. This too, is hard to determine with the Sandy Bay fire, according to Mr. Mackenzie, because everything is so thoroughly burnt.

At present, the fire marshal has no definite proof of what started the fire, or even where it began.

"All we can do is speculate right now, and we can't give information to the media without proof to back us up," he said.

When will the cause of the Sandy Bay Hotel fire be discovered?

"Maybe never," according to the fire marshal.

Chamber gives support

The Penetanguishene Chamber of Commerce is very happy about a recent Council decision to form a task force regarding revitalization of the downtown section, according to Chamber vice president Glen Bryant.

"It's too early to tell for certain," Mr. Bryant said, "because it's still in the planning stages, but I'm very pleased about the whole thing."

Mr. Bryant, a long-time supporter of a downtown renewal plan, feels that some sort of study into the subject has been too long in coming.

"I'm glad council has decided to do something about this—it's about time," he said.

He also said that a revitalization of the downtown area concerns the whole town, since it is important to give the business

section a "fresh look".

"I think it's very important—that's why we try to give the store (Bryants Jewellers) a fresh look," he explained.

Mr. Bryant said that the Chamber will be happy to give the four-member task force any advice they may need about things like distribution of monies.

The members of the task force have not yet been chosen, according to town clerk Yvon Gagne, but Mayor Moreau is in the process of talking to prospective members.

"It's an unusual procedure. Usually something like this would go before council for approval, but because of the shortage of time, it is being done this way," Mr. Gagne said.

The members of the task force should be appointed by next Wednesday, according to the town clerk. The first task force meeting will be held on February 1.

not sign his name to anything unless he did see everything. He added that he had been in the dark for an entire year now. He said this was not his way of doing business and as a

commissioner it was his responsibility to see that the people of Midland "got value".

Commissioner Lyons said he was satisfied that the public are getting value.

The motion was defeated and a notice of motion was agreed upon to deal with a policy statement at the next meeting.

Mr. Parker finished off the discussion on the issue of the finance committee saying, "I hate to sit here as a dummy, knowing what I know, and not being able to do a darn thing about it."

News briefs

The Midland detachment of the OPP says that although the condition of a Midland man rushed to Toronto General Hospital earlier this week following a car-snowmobile accident is still described as serious, medical officials are confident that he will recover from his injuries.

David Roy Langman, 25, of Hanna Street, was taken to Toronto General following an

accident, which took place in Waubausene earlier this week.

Police say that he is still in the intensive care unit, suffering from head and neck injuries, and several broken bones.

In the Monday night accident, which occurred on the Old Coldwater Road, Langman's snow vehicle received \$1,400 damage.

Vice-chairman honoured

The Simcoe County Board of Education paid tribute Wednesday night to board vice-chairman Roy Edwards, who has been awarded a Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

The well-known Medonte township farmer explained that he was "taken completely by surprise" by the honour. He said that he received a notice in the mail last week informing him of a package awaiting him at

the Midland Post Office. He said he "certainly didn't expect to find the medal" when he eventually opened it.

"This is a surprising gift to me," he said. "To me it's a very great honour."

Edwards was nominated by Medonte township council for the Silver Jubilee honour.

Board favors land exchange

The Area 1 Area Committee of the Simcoe County Board of Education has recommended that no immediate action be taken concerning a proposal for a land exchange deal made by GAL Investments Limited, an investment firm which holds considerable tracts of land in the Midland area.

John McCullough, chairman of the committee, explained that GAL approached committee members with a proposal by which the SCBE would turn over a property it owns on Manly Street, in return for a property GAL holds adjacent to the site. The SCBE Manly Street property is a piece

of land that was purchased several years ago, when the board was considering the construction of a second Midland high school.

Mr. McCullough said that the committee decided not to pursue any action at the present moment on the grounds that both properties require the appraisal of a realtor.

The SCBE property, McCullough said, has been surveyed into two lots, and for this reason, is potentially more valuable than the GAL property, which is a single parcel of land.

The SCBE realtor has been informed of the offer, and will conduct an appraisal of the properties before any further action is taken.

Ice fishing well underway

Ice fishing season is well underway, and according to Robin Craig, District Biologist for the Ministry of Natural Resources, conditions this year are very good.

Ice conditions on Lake Simcoe are generally good with 10 inches thickness in most places, according to a recent MNR press release. Georgian Bay has about three to four inches to clear ice on the bays, with about 12 inches of slush ice on top of that.

The press release also cautions snowmobilers to stick to well-marked trails considering the irregular currents in Georgian Bay.

Penetanguishene police report no ac-

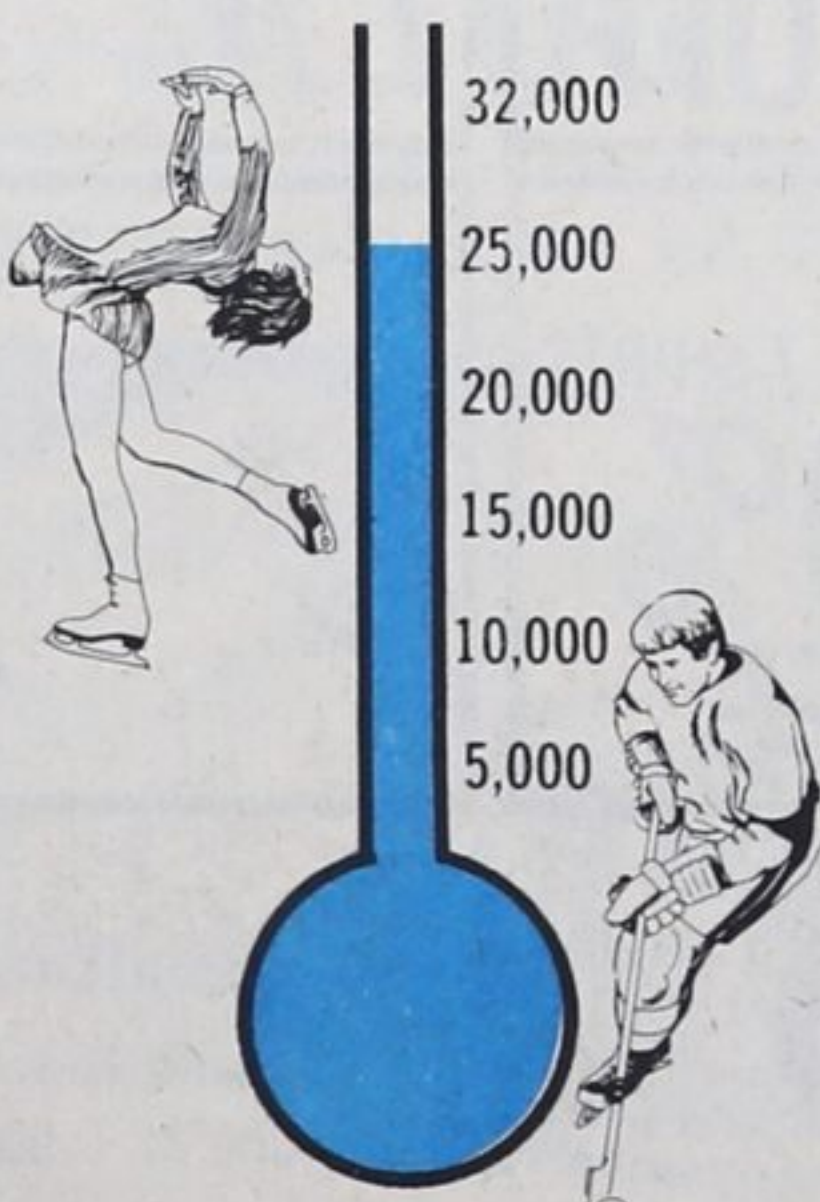
cidents involving ice fishing so far this year, but anglers are advised to use caution while pursuing this popular sport.

In Lake Simcoe, trout fishing is generally good, but most of the fish being caught are small. Herring and yellow perch are plentiful, but smelt fishing is only fair. The whitefish catch continues to decline.

The daily limit for whitefish and trout is two, but there are no limits on yellow perch, smelt and herring.

Some northern pike, and very few yellow pickerel are being caught in Georgian Bay, and black crappies are being caught in the Honey Harbour area.

Penetanguishene arena floor fund



For those who have a sweet tooth for the taste of Maple Syrup, they may have to dig deeper into their pockets to buy that gallon of sticky syrup this season.

Over sixty maple syrup producers, suppliers and interested persons from the Simcoe area met at the Elmvale Presbyterian Church on Friday to discuss many issues affecting the maple sugar farmer.

The issue creating the most discussion was that of the price of maple syrup per gallon for 1978. Due to the increased cost of containers and fuel, the Simcoe and district maple sugar farmers will recommend to the provincial directors, the price of maple syrup be raised to \$17 per gallon for the coming season. This is a \$1 increase over the price recommended by this same group last year. The price guideline for 1977 was \$16 per gallon, \$9 per half gallon, \$5 per quart and \$3 per pint. The Simcoe producers did not feel the need to increase the price of the half gallons, quarts and pints for this year. John Butler, maple syrup extension specialist with the Ontario Food Council pointed out to the group of concerned producers, the price they or the provincial directors recommended was not a fixed price, just a suggested pricing guideline. He went on to explain the provincial board will decide on a price at their next meeting to give maple sugar farmers a guideline, but producers may

charge more or less if they choose.

Ernie Danes from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources gave a slide presentation on safety in the bush.

John Butler, explained the new grades, regulations and sanitation for maple syrup and how they will affect the maple sugar farmer. Containers and how they can affect the storage of syrup was also explained by Butler.

Two new directors were chosen to serve on the board for the Simcoe and District Maple Syrup Producers. Hank Coleman a producer from Lafontaine and Paul Desrochers from Penetanguishene will serve a three year term replacing the retiring board members, Wally Greenlaw a producer from Elmvale and John Leblanc a maple sugar farmer from Penetanguishene.

Clint Nesbitt, Agricultural Representative for North Simcoe was introduced to the syrup producers. Nesbitt welcomed the group to Elmvale and brought greetings from the local agriculture office.

The Simcoe maple sugar farmers asked their board directors to apply to the Barrie Fair Board for a Maple Class in the annual fair exhibits.

Several maple syrup suppliers from Simcoe and surrounding area were on hand for the Friday meeting ready to discuss their products with the farmers. The suppliers also had displays set up in the meeting room for each maple syrup producer to examine.